

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Stoke Canon Church of England Primary School and Pre-School

Vision

Our vision: **‘Nurture and grow through compassion, integrity and kindness’** reflects the love and teachings of God. These values guide our actions and relationships, creating an environment where everyone can flourish. The parable of the sower illustrates this well. In the story, the sower spreads seeds across different soils, and only those that fall on good soil grow and thrive. Likewise, when we cultivate hearts filled with God’s love, with compassion and integrity, we create the conditions for true growth. By living out these values, we honour God and help others reach their full potential, contributing positively to our world.

Stoke Canon Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The Christian vision inspires and guides compassionate pastoral care, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Integrity and kindness motivate the way members of the school community are treated, especially the disadvantaged or vulnerable. Because of this, pupils and staff feel safe and supported, allowing them to flourish.
- The school’s Christian values underpin the school’s curriculum. This provides a safe learning environment where pupils can explore new ideas and varying viewpoints. Spiritual development is a priority. The curriculum allows pupils to broaden their horizons and develop skills to help them manage their emotions.
- Close partnerships with the church, families and the local community support this small, rural school. Pupils and staff live well together in a caring and positive atmosphere of trust. Good relationships underpin the carefully targeted support which nurtures pupils’ personal and academic development.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum addresses a range of religious beliefs. It makes a strong contribution to pupils’ spiritual development. Teachers receive highly effective training and resources. This enables them to help pupils to explore and make sense of a rich diversity of a range of religious beliefs.

Development Points

- Build on existing opportunities for projects which encourage pupils to act justly as agents of change in the world beyond their school. This is to build their self-belief and confidence so that they can influence incidents of injustice and make a difference.
- Further embed a knowledge and understanding of non-religious worldviews in the RE curriculum. This is so that pupils can fully access the diversity of views in Britain’s cultural climate.



Inspection Findings

Inspired by Jesus' parable of the sower, the Christian vision at Stoke Canon underpins many aspects of life at the school. Staff and pupils fully understand and support the vision. They are motivated to have compassion, integrity and kindness at the heart of all that they do. The outworking of these values is discussed with, and taught to, pupils both in lessons and collective worship. Staff treat pupils with compassion. There is a warm welcome at the school gate in the morning, and calm encouragement in lessons. The school environment is characterised by integrity, which pupils describe as 'doing the right thing'. Partnerships are important to the school. Staff network with their federation colleagues, and are engaged effectively with the diocese. In this way, the school is outward looking, taking and using advice and new ideas. Staff support individual pupils with kindness, especially those with SEND, who are offered individualised support for behaviour and learning. Leadership and governance are highly effective. The activities of the school are rigorously monitored and evaluated by them, so that the Christian vision is fulfilled. Thus, the school provides an environment where individuals can grow and flourish pastorally and academically.

The school uses the curriculum effectively to prepare pupils for life beyond the gates of this small, rural school. The Christian vision and values ensure a curriculum and learning environment where pupils feel safe to discuss and develop their ideas and opinions. Spiritual development is an important part of the curriculum. During lessons, pupils are given opportunities to appreciate the beauty and wonder of scientific experiments, geographical features and the skill of artists. They are encouraged to express and explore their emotional responses to their learning. Due to this nurturing, they grow in their spiritual lives, while making academic progress. Pupils with SEND, and those who are vulnerable, are appropriately included in all aspects of the curriculum. They are given individualised learning activities as needed and are well supported by staff in the classroom. At lunchtimes, quiet areas and alternative activities are provided for pupils who find a busy playground challenging. In addition, time is set aside for pupils to reflect on topics such as 'what gives me joy?' or 'what can I do for someone else?'. Their responses demonstrate their capacity to think deeply and respond practically by supporting each other. The extra-curricular activities on offer help to broaden pupils' horizons and give them an understanding of the diversity of British culture. These include trips to London, Dartmoor and a local National Trust property.

A longstanding and secure partnership with the neighbouring church shapes pupils' experience of collective worship. This is appreciated by the many parents and carers who attend special celebration services with their children at the church. A pupil-centred ethos group works with clergy to plan and deliver worship, develop prayer spaces and plan church-based activities. They have a sound understanding of Christian teachings and what spirituality means in both a religious and non-religious context. This group effectively drives developments in school to help pupils focus on their spiritual lives. Daily collective worship is highly inclusive, with nursery children joining in with enthusiasm. Teachers are well supported with training and resources to provide classroom-based worship. This has a focus on discussion and inspires reflection on local news and world events. In this way, worship enhances and fulfils the Christian vision (of the school and enables pupils and adults to flourish spiritually).

Pupils are developing a strong sense of justice. They recognise that it is their responsibility to make the ethical choices that support this understanding. They care about environmental issues and that how we treat God's creation can have an impact on nature, and our own lives. Recently, pupils have studied the cause and effects of flooding in their village. As a result, they have been writing to their member of parliament. There also are strong links with a school in Tanzania. They share videos and photos to successfully compare their lives with those of children on the 'other side of the world'. In this way, they develop their understanding of both local and global



issues. However, activities that show to the pupils themselves, that they can learn to promote justice beyond the world of school, are limited.

The RE curriculum provides pupils with a rich and varied knowledge and understanding of a range of religious beliefs and practices. Teachers receive high quality training and resources that enables them to deliver a relevant and challenging learning experience. RE is given an appropriate time allocation. It also enables pupils to discuss and develop their ideas on a range of ethical issues through 'big questions'. For example, they recently explored whether scientific and religious beliefs are incompatible. However, this study of non-religious worldviews is not fully exploited. The curriculum does offer interesting opportunities for pupils to discuss and develop their own views and opinions on a range of issues that affect their lives. In this way they develop their own moral standpoints, and their spiritual lives are enhanced.

Close relationships and an environment of trust between members of the school community and parents are at the heart of this school. Pupils and staff feel safe and their mental health and wellbeing are nurtured. Leaders build relationships with families that act as a strong foundation for discussions on attendance, academic support or providing pastoral care. Leaders show compassion, kindness and practical help to staff and pupils who are undergoing difficulties. Staff appreciate the strong ethos of teamwork across the federation. They correctly identify that 'there is no fear here' and that they can ask for help from leaders whenever needed. Pupils actively help each other in the classroom and the playground. They take responsibility for their own learning and that of their classmates. They willingly give help and show kindness in supporting their peers. Thus, inspired by the vision, the learning environment at Stoke Canon is calm and ordered. Pupils rightly see staff interventions as positive and fair. A parent correctly acknowledged that the school 'takes time to care about the children and shows them how to be kind.' In this way, the school successfully lives out its vision to 'nurture and grow through compassion, integrity and kindness.'

Information

Address	Stoke Canon, Exeter, Devon, EX5 4AS		
Date	18 March 2025	URN	113367
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	90
Diocese	Exeter Diocese		
MAT/Federation	Three Rivers Federation		
Headteacher	Louise Herbert		
Chair of Governors	Tanya Smith		
Inspector	Judith Larrington		