

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Cainscross	
Address	Church Road, Cainscross, GL5 4JE
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Excellent

School's vision
Our vision is to support our school, children and families to flourish and thrive in a complex world. We know that, for our children and school community to live life in all its fullness, we need to be the wider family, to nurture and support all in the St Matthew's family, to raise aspirations so all can fully embrace their successful futures. With Love & Faith, We Aspire & Achieve. (John 10:10)
Key findings
• Pastoral care and support for wellbeing are a tangible and effective outworking of the vision of nurture. All ages watch over one another with love. • The Christian vision makes a profound difference, but this is less evident in development plans. Leaders work tirelessly and ensure pupils and staff flourish in personal and academic terms. • The quality of teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is excellent. Pupils' written work demonstrates that their learning is extensive and secure but less so on diversity within Christianity. • Collective worship contributes to pupils' ability to reflect on their own and the lives of others. Opportunities for pupils to encounter the many examples of the teaching of Jesus are less well developed. • Spirituality is developed across the school day as pupils are guided to reflect on what they call the 'ows, wows and nows' of life in their lessons and at home.
Areas for development
• Relate the Christian vision more clearly to strategic plans so the vision and its theological roots continue to drive the school as a Church school. • Review the planning and provision for collective worship so that pupils have more regular experiences of explicitly Christian teaching and traditions. • Ensure pupils deepen their knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith so that they better understand their role as global citizens in a diverse world.

Inspection findings

The vision at St Matthew's reflects the needs of its local community. Life may present significant challenges for pupils and parents and the school is very much at the heart of overcoming these. The vision uplifts those who find that the fullness of life has been stolen away, like a thief in the night. This is the deeper Bible root of the vision. It aptly captures the mandate to give pupils a full, rich education that equips them for the future. The school has itself been through dark days. This darkness has not dimmed its light one iota. St Matthew's is a beacon of hope, shining Christ's light in a secular world. Governors know the school well and are actively involved in maintaining its Christian foundation. As a result of their monitoring, playtime support is in place to ensure lunchtimes are more enjoyable for all ages. Governors successfully worked with staff, parents and pupils to embed the Christian vision and values, determining scripture to be at the heart of these. Policies and school development plans, however, do not sufficiently relate actions to the Christian vision of the school. Partnership with the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust (DGAT) enables the school to thrive. Parents know and appreciate the impact of working with the Trust. Many see huge progress in both the pupils' confidence as well as in their written work since St Matthew's joined DGAT.

Leaders start from the commitment to cherish each individual. As a parent said, 'They go a whole continent for my child, not just an extra mile.' Leaders have rightly focused on improving academic outcomes in recent years. Allied with compassion, adults enable pupils to be confident and to know that they matter. The Christian vision to aspire and flourish is intrinsic to the work on wider character development. Leaders invest in expertise such as play therapy and other support to secure positive mental health and wellbeing. As leaders describe, 'the school breaks the chains of trauma'. Several pupils who have found school difficult elsewhere join St Matthew's and are transformed. Staff give pupils faith in themselves, and so academic outcomes continue to improve. Staff harness the power of aspiration to ensure pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils are excited to learn and are motivated by the positive role models of staff. For example, the wonderful range of reading books inspires pupils to read for pleasure as well as to gather information. In this way, there is deep spiritual nourishment from the curriculum. It is clear that spiritual growth abounds as pupils are confident to use the language of 'ows, wows and nows.' Older pupils are ready to explore their understanding of spirituality beyond these useful starting points.

Another indicator of the effective vision is that attendance is good, including for those pupils who may be vulnerable. This demonstrates that pupils enjoy school. Adults describe the 'warm hug' that is so generously offered by those members of the St Matthew's community. Staff flourish in their professional role and personal lives. Several staff are working on national qualifications to enhance their careers, as the school has faith in them. This is actively supported by leaders at all levels and is testament to the vision for everyone to experience fullness of life. The vision for adults to have faith in each other transmits to the pupils in their care. As a result, all ages are intentional in the way they show genuine care and forgiveness. High self-esteem and progress in learning walk hand in hand as a result of the vision to have faith in everyone.

Religious education (RE) makes an excellent contribution to pupils' development. Leaders safeguard the high quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The subject helps pupils consider and develop their own views. It also means they make connections from the wide range of different cultures and beliefs across the world. However, pupils have less awareness that Christianity is itself a diverse world faith.

Collective worship is an expression of the vision to act with love and faith. Acts of worship

are valued parts of the day. This is due to the commitment of leaders to ensure an inclusive worship experience for all. As the worship lead commented, 'We want children to catch a glimpse of God.' Planning for worship time is comprehensive and makes good links to the chosen values. Worship is creative and relevant. It marks the main events in the Christian calendar, so pupils have some understanding of the events that Christians hold dear. Worship makes a positive impact on the way pupils thrive. Pupils are fascinated when exploring themes like the 'Kindertransport' rescue of Jewish children in World War Two. They are intrigued by inspirational people who act because of their faith. Class worship continues themes introduced at the start of the week, so pupils reflect on the aspects covered. Pupils talk freely of the impact of worship. They give examples of deepening their knowledge of others' views and of how they are 'not scared anymore' to speak up in the hall. During worship each value is explored through a Bible story. Pupils' eyes sparkle with delight when talking of why Peter sank in the waves 'because he stopped believing in Jesus.' Not all acts of worship have clear Christian links and so pupils' breadth of knowledge of examples from the Bible, the life and teaching of Jesus is limited. Time for prayer or reflection is integral to worship. Pupils enjoy taking the lead in worship and this builds on the other leadership opportunities across the school.

Pupils respectfully share their views, and this is enhanced by the chance to take on additional responsibilities. They articulate that fullness of life means learning from mistakes as well as successes. There are many pupil leadership roles. Pupils actively campaign on eco issues and are deeply concerned about food poverty. In talking of the vision to aspire, they know that aiming high means more than learning.

St Matthew's is an inclusive and loving community where all are safe, secure and so thrive. As a governor said the school is all about, 'flourishing together or not at all'.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Excellent	
	The RE lead is a specialist. She supports colleagues to gain a breadth of subject knowledge and to make lessons engaging for pupils. Work in books and learning evident through discussions is impressive. Pupils deepen their understanding of the religions and worldviews studied as they move through school. Monitoring of progress in RE is highly effective. Assessment processes capture development of skills as well as knowledge and this is a significant strength of the system.			
Information				
School	St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Cainscross	Inspection date	26 January 2023	
URN	147360	VC/VA/ Academy		
Diocese/District	Gloucester	Pupils on roll	199	
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust (DGAT)			
Executive Headteacher	Richard Lucas			
Chair of Trust Board	The Venerable Hilary Dawson			
Inspector	Allyson Taylor	No.	768	