Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ellacombe Church of England Primary Academy

Vision

Rooted in John 10:10, the vision is to serve the community and enable every child to achieve their potential, flourishing in life in all its fullness. Grounded in the belief that all are created in the image of God, the school draws on Matthew 16:18, where Jesus speaks of building on a strong foundation. Through faith, love and reflection, pupils develop strong foundations from which they can grow, open their hearts to transformation and make positive imprints in the lives of others. Pupils understand the impact of their 'footprints'. Together, the school community takes 'footsteps towards a brighter future', flourishing and positively influencing the world around them.

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

Notable Strengths

- Leaders have a deep understanding of Ellacombe's Christian vision, rooted in the biblical example of the Apostle Peter. They consistently model its principles. As a result, the vision informs decision-making, shapes relationships and guides the school's ongoing development.
- The warm welcome experienced by adults and pupils during collective worship creates a strong sense of togetherness and celebration. It inspires the school community to live life in all its fullness.
- The school's vision and associated values sit at the heart of its provision. This creates an inclusive culture in which dignity and worth are affirmed. As a result, relationships are meaningful, nurturing and responsive to individual needs.
- Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of fairness and compassion through their empathy and kindness towards others. In this diverse community, they confidently advocate for those in need and make a positive difference to others' lives.
- Religious education (RE) is highly valued and prioritised. Strong leadership enables pupils to engage deeply with theological concepts, ask perceptive questions and demonstrate a secure understanding.

Development Points

- Deepen a shared and meaningful understanding of spirituality. This is to strengthen the consistency and purpose of spiritual expression and growth for pupils and adults.
- Broaden pupils' experience of diversity through collaborations and partnerships beyond the local area. This is to enable pupils to gain a richer understanding of their wider, interconnected world.

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Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Ellacombe's Christian vision provides a strong theological foundation for the life of the school. It draws on Matthew 16:18, in which Jesus teaches about building on rock. The Apostle Peter provides pupils with an accessible model of perseverance, transformation and learning from mistakes. Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of this theological basis and consistently model its principles. As a result, the vision influences decision-making, strategic direction, relationships and ongoing school development. Leaders use formal and informal processes to monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision. Their theological understanding informs their service to the wider community. Pupils confidently use the language of foundations, footprints and taking strides towards a brighter future. They show care for one another across age groups. Staff cherish the school's vision, recognising how it supports their own journeys and those of pupils. Pupils explain how secure foundations enable them to grow and influence others positively. Three mosaics displayed on the school building demonstrate pupils' sense of belonging and pride in their community. Created through pupils' dedication and hard work alongside an artist, the mosaics celebrate Ellacombe's history, vision and values.

Vision and Curriculum

Pupils' individual gifts are developed through an ambitious curriculum, which enables them to thrive. Leaders identify pupils' strengths and provide opportunities for them to flourish. For example, pupils across the school participate in an end-of-year showcase at the local theatre. This helps to remove barriers to the arts and provides a platform for pupils' talents to be celebrated. This commitment is evident in practice through a clear focus on nurture and inclusion. Staff adapt provision to pupils' individual starting points, enabling them to access learning while maintaining consistently high expectations. This approach is particularly effective for pupils considered to be vulnerable. The Harbour and the Nurture rooms provide carefully considered spaces where pupils can regulate, reflect and receive support. This enables pupils to experience belonging and participate successfully in school life. Curriculum experiences encourage pupils to connect learning with the vision. For example, during learning about creation, a pupil connected perseverance and trust with the Apostle Peter. Such connections demonstrate pupils' ability to apply theological understanding across their learning. However, opportunities to encounter communities and perspectives beyond the local area are limited. As a result, pupils' understanding of their wider, interconnected world is underdeveloped.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship provides a strong expression of Ellacombe's vision. It is led by a wide range of adults and pupils, creating a sense of togetherness, celebration and shared purpose. Pupils are encouraged to consider how they can live life in all its fullness. They understand that their choices can create positive footprints in the lives of others. A thriving partnership with local churches enriches the life of the school. Clergy make meaningful connections between biblical teaching and pupils' experiences. For example, they have compared pupils' perseverance with Peter's experience of learning from mistakes. Pupils confidently describe how they can be 'carried by God' during times of difficulty. They also understand that secure foundations can enable them to take large strides towards a brighter future. Consequently, collective worship makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development and understanding of the vision. The school also weaves spirituality into worship and the curriculum through its window, mirrors and doors approach. This enables pupils to reflect regularly on themselves, others and the wider world. However, opportunities for pupils and adults to express their spirituality in different ways remain limited.

Vision and School Culture

A deeply inclusive culture is evident in the way pupils and adults are valued and treated with dignity. Clear communication, an open-door approach and a warm welcome help parents and pupils feel valued and listened to. Staff know pupils well, respond compassionately to individual needs and model the school's values through respectful interactions. The school's nurture approach reflects its vision, affirming the God-given worth of every person. It helps remove barriers to learning and participation, enabling pupils to flourish. The impact of this approach is particularly evident in support of pupils considered to be vulnerable. The Harbour and the Nurture rooms provide supportive environments in which pupils can access learning and build relationships. Families are also central to the school's culture. Staff go 'above and beyond' to provide support that responds

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sensitively to individual family circumstances. Parents and carers value the trusting relationships they develop with staff. Former pupils' continued connection with the school reflects the lasting sense of belonging it fosters. Some return to share plans for travel and ambitions they had never expected to pursue. This reflects the confidence and sense of possibility that the school seeks to nurture in pupils. Together, these relationships contribute to a culture of belonging, care and mutual respect.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Pupils increasingly recognise their capacity to make a positive difference through their choices and actions. The school encourages pupils to consider how their actions affect others and the wider community. Pupils engage with local and global challenges and use their values to support those in need. This is demonstrated through the school's ethos work with the local council. For example, pupils have engaged in discussions about the regeneration of Torquay and their own local area. Decision-making throughout the school is democratic and inclusive, with adults listening carefully to pupils' views. Consequently, pupils are increasingly confident in expressing their views and contributing to change. Their responses demonstrate empathy, fairness and compassion towards others. Pupils increasingly understand their responsibility to use their voices and gifts for the common good. Together, these activities strengthen pupils' sense of responsibility to contribute to their community.

Religious Education

RE is highly valued and prioritised within the school. Pupils study a broad range of religions and worldviews through a variety of themes. Leaders ensure that learning enables pupils to engage meaningfully with Christianity and develop their understanding of diverse beliefs and perspectives. Professional development through the Learning Academy Partnership and the Diocese of Exeter strengthens teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. This supports leaders in developing a challenging and well-sequenced curriculum. Leaders draw on the school community's diversity by inviting speakers from a wide range of faiths. These encounters help pupils engage with perspectives beyond their own experiences and develop a more informed understanding of a range of beliefs. However, opportunities to extend these experiences beyond the school's immediate context are underdeveloped.

RE lessons promote questioning and meaningful theological discussion. The school's approach to oracy strengthens pupils' ability to articulate their thinking. They are encouraged to consider alternative perspectives and justify their views. Pupils confidently express what matters to them in RE and listen respectfully to differing viewpoints. Pupils build on prior learning and make thoughtful connections. For example, a pupil drew connections between the significance of Zamzam water in Islam and the concept of sacredness. As a result, pupils demonstrate thoughtful understanding and confidence when discussing theological ideas.

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National Society for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales

Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Ellacombe Church Road, Torquay, Devon TQ1 1TG		
Date	6 October 2026	URN	138047
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	290
Diocese	Diocese of Exeter		
MAT/Federation	Learning Academy Partnership		
MAT Chair	Joanne Tisdall		
Headteacher	Alison Helm		
Chair of Governors	Sue Davis		
Inspector	Jane Bird		

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