

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ellacombe Church of England Academy			
Address	Ellacombe Church Road, Torquay, TQ1 1TG		
Date of inspection	12/06/2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VA. Learning Academy Partnership (LAP)
Diocese	Exeter	URN	138047

Overall Judgement	Grade	Excellent
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Ellacombe is a primary school with 382 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is well above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are above national averages. The school was designated as a church school in September 2016 having previously become an academy when it joined the Learning Academy Partnership in September 2013.

The school's Christian vision

Together we take steps towards a brighter future

As Jesus said.....'I came that they may have life and have it to the full' John 10:10

All are inspired to fulfil their aspirations through the associated values of love, stewardship, hope, trust and perseverance.

Key findings

- The exceptionally skilful head of academy and all leaders have created a vibrant, dynamic Christian learning community which lives out its vision enabling every member to flourish.
- The partnership between the school community, churches and the Learning Academy Partnership is exceptionally strong, mutually beneficial and having a tangible impact on all involved.
- The school's vision creates a highly spiritual dimension to every aspect of daily life at Ellacombe.
- The substantial support given to families is having a significant impact on the lives of pupils and demonstrates the way this school is a centre of reconciliation and support.
- Religious education strongly reflects the school's vision by developing a deep love of learning about people of other faiths as well as Christianity and thus of being 'together'.

Areas for development

- Enrich pupils' active experience of planning and leading worship by creating new opportunities for them to take a greater lead in its development within the school.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Ellacombe has a vision which is deeply rooted in the school's local context and biblical teaching. It is driven by its strong partnership with the Learning Academy Partnership (LAP) of church schools and its local churches. These partnerships are at the heart of Ellacombe's inspirational impact as a church school. The vision is integral to every aspect of school life enabling all members of the school community to live life to the full. Collective worship and religious education (RE) are given the highest priority in development plans. The school's self-evaluation process is rigorous and deeply embedded. Leaders' strong drive for improvement is demonstrated by its decision to join the LAP and more recently become a church school. Since then, it has been transformed from a failing school to one where in some subjects, results are well above national averages. Staff as well as leaders, work in key roles across the LAP by sharing their expertise, developing that of others and their own. Continuing professional development is fully embedded and integral to life at Ellacombe. Leaders often share their learning at a national as well as a diocesan level.

The school's own creative curriculum is a highly innovative and holistic expression of its Christian vision. Christian values and spiritual reflection are seamlessly threaded through the curriculum strengthening the impact of the vision. In this way, pupils' behaviour, attitudes and aspirations are transformed including those with highly complex vulnerabilities, including those suffering from trauma. Disadvantaged pupils are extremely well supported in line with the whole school vision's focus to remove and reduce barriers to learning. An exceptionally wide range of imaginative strategies are used to differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of each child, enabling all to flourish. Learning activities are fully engaging and enhance pupils' very positive experiences of school life. The curriculum is continually enhanced by visitors including a Buddhist and from an author for Roald Dahl Day. Visits such as to the seaside for a 'beach clean', and to the mosque in Exeter also challenge pupils thinking. In this way, pupils deepen their understanding of other cultures and faiths as well develop a love of literature. The older pupils' experience of sailing in Torbay has a huge impact on building their confidence. The school has an exceptionally deep understanding of spiritual growth. The vision's symbol of the footprint is highly effective in developing pupils' understanding of their place in the world. They understand that, just as you need all five toes for walking, all their values are equally important for learning about life.

Pupils recognise and understand that the 'brighter future' of their vision means that their dreams and hopes can be fulfilled through learning. The curriculum at Ellacombe empowers pupils to be confident skilled learners who challenge themselves to be the very best they can be, as God created them to be. The school's value of hope creates a highly aspirational community. Families are fully involved in their children's learning and achievement. For instance, they are invited secretly to Friday's Praise worship to surprise their children and share their celebrations. The Christian value of perseverance in particular has a significant impact. Using Big Questions enables pupils to explore and respond to global, spiritual and ethical issues in an exceptionally secure setting. As a result, pupils are able to develop and justify their viewpoints and disagree politely. They are passionate in their adoption and pursuit of causes which support their vision and challenge social injustice. For instance, they have a good understanding of current global issues of disadvantage and deprivation from their good links with a school community in Tanzania. In pursuit of social justice and equality they have funded the transformation of a chicken shed into a classroom and provided clean water for the community. They are fully committed to working together to conserving the planet's resources by reducing, reusing and recycling waste. In this way their value of stewardship is understood to be leaving their footprints on the planet as well as on 'peoples' hearts'.

The vision of being 'together' creates a very nurturing, caring community affirmed by family groups, used for example, for weekly worship. Pupils are exceptionally supportive of one another, recognising and understanding the way the curriculum is differentiated. As a result, relationships throughout the whole school community are strong. Pupils talk of the Christian values of love and friendship as an integral part of school life. The school's proactive support for all families and in particular, those who are disadvantaged, is exceptionally strong. This is having a powerful impact on pupils' academic achievement and personal development. Staff wellbeing policies reflect the school's vision and create a culture where all are supported in practical and compassionate care. As a result staff morale is high. Regular workshops promoting wellbeing for families are led by a member of the family support team and are highly valued. The open respectful culture, promoted by the vision, is apparent in pupils' strong understanding of equality. Curriculum themes such as refugees, visits to places of worship and Inter-Faith weeks deepen their understanding and acceptance of difference and diversity.

Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school community. Pupils recognise how the central Christian message infuses and sustains the school's vision. For example, being 'together' embeds the vision into the context of the church school family. Worship promotes Christian values exceptionally well, rooting them fully in biblical

teaching. Pupils' attitudes are exceptionally positive because all feel included and actively engaged. They particularly value the varied and supportive opportunities to be still, reflect and pray which are available throughout the day as well as during worship. The high degree of spirituality promoted by worship is inspirational. Spiritual development is also promoted in an exceptionally transformational manner through singing. This is described by pupils as filling 'the school with joy and happiness'. Planning, monitoring and evaluating worship involves the church team of clergy, as well as staff and pupils. The church team meet with the head of academy and other leaders on a regular basis, reviewing and evaluating the impact of worship rooting it in biblical teaching. Their involvement is a real strength. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the Trinity from a form of liturgy at the start of worship. The Anglican practice of sharing the peace is used very well to promote the value of Christian fellowship. The pupils' ethos group support worship leaders and monitor and evaluate worship. However the role of all pupils in leading worship is as yet, underdeveloped.

Religious education is recognised as an important and exciting core subject which strongly reflects the school's vision by contributing to hope for 'a brighter future'. Whilst learning about the Christian concept of salvation pupils recognised the links between the Christ's resurrection and their vision. The curriculum is appropriately balanced and in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Teaching is highly motivating and challenging. It enables pupils to be fully engaged, reflect deeply and critically explore their own beliefs and those of others. Consequently RE makes a substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual growth. The leadership of RE is of the highest quality. The subject leader ensures that professional development is integral to her role by coaching staff and sharing her expertise with her shadow leader. In turn, the nationally recognised RE leader for the LAP, who has a high level of expertise, ensures that the pupils at Ellacombe benefit from the most up to date thinking in the subject. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

Religious education teaching and learning is consistently graded at least good by school leaders.

Assessment strategies are exceptionally rigorous providing a very clear overview of attainment and progress and identifying strengths and areas for development. Attainment and progress for all pupils is at least in line with other core subjects measured against local expectations. This is due to a concerted approach by all staff which enables pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to flourish academically in RE.

Head of Academy	Evie Semmens
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Spitzer No 37