

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Hugh Sexey Church of England Middle School

Vision

‘I can do all things through Him who strengthens me’ (Philippians 4:13)

At Hugh Sexey Church of England Middle School, we strive to create a caring Christian community, where diversity is celebrated and all are empowered to achieve their full potential. Living out our core Christian values, we aim to provide a happy, fair and safe environment to enable our children to be reflective, confident and open-minded global citizens of the future.

Hugh Sexey Middle 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 impact of the inspirational vision and its associated values is seen in the multiple ways in which pupils and adults flourish. The positive nature of relationships in the school is tangible.
- Tailored curricular and extra-curricular programmes ensure that pupils have many areas in which to grow and to thrive.
- Collective worship is sensitively invitational. The variety of approaches contribute very effectively to the personal and spiritual development of pupils and adults.
- Personal development is a hallmark of the school. Pupils and adults live out the core values with pride. This ensures a mutually supportive and equitable community.
- Religious education (RE) is energetically planned and delivered enthusiastically. Its balanced and challenging curriculum prepares pupils well for their later secondary years.

Development Points

- Devise a common language that captures and conveys the school’s understanding of spirituality. This is to aid communication between staff and pupils and to inform progress in spiritual development.
- Further embed the vision into school life. This includes the Bible verse from Philippians. This is so the vision makes even greater impact on pupils and adults.
- Develop the role of pupils as leaders in the evaluation of collective worship and Church school distinctiveness. This is to heighten pupil voice and engagement.



Inspection Findings

Hugh Sexey Church of England Middle School is at the heart of the community. Its Christian vision and associated values are central to its identity and purpose. Leaders use the 'I can' at the start of the key Bible verse to encourage pupils and adults to have high aspirations. They respond very positively to this. Pupils understand that they should strive to be the best learners possible. They also know that they cannot achieve this alone. The 'strengthen' of the Philippians verse reminds them to seek help from their community. Thus, there is a real sense of mutual support and encouragement in the school. Pupils and adults proudly explain that this is koinonia in action. Koinonia is one of the school's six core values that are caught and taught each year through the curriculum and collective worship. The others are thankfulness, justice, endurance, trust and compassion. Wessex Learning Trust enhances the vision through holding the school to account for its Christian distinctiveness. This is done, for example, through its ethos group. It also gives support so that the school is able to share its good practice effectively. A member of staff and a governor are members of the trust's ethos group. This is valuable as it uses their expertise more widely and enables the church schools within the trust to be better connected.

Curriculum planning starts with the idea from the vision of pupils being empowered. Staff make great efforts to help pupils to find the areas in which they may thrive. They are determined that each person will find at least one area. The quantity and range of extra-curricular opportunities demonstrate that this thriving is not confined only to the academic. The annual drama production gives many pupils the chance to express themselves creatively. Vulnerable pupils are helped to overcome any barriers to learning through support in the classroom in the first instance. Teaching is well adapted to pupil needs and this is a sign of how pupils are well known as individuals. They also are well represented in visits and activities beyond the classroom. The detailed personal development programme helps pupils to explore the school's values in real-life situations. Some lessons include mindfulness moments as reflection is seen as a key skill to practise. Leaders' understanding of spirituality includes reflection, creativity and awe and wonder. There is not, however, a common language that is shared with pupils about spiritual development.

Pupils benefit from an inspiring variety of collective worship. All worship, whatever its setting, focusses appropriately on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A variety of leaders invite pupils and adults to understand that there are many perspectives on matters of faith. Pupils and adults appreciate this greatly. Pupils lead worship confidently in school and in church. Collective worship in tutor groups enables helpful discussion on the week's theme. Pupils often record their thoughts, key Bible verses, prayers and subsequent actions insightfully in a class book. Each of the school's values is given a termly focus and very detailed planning breaks down the value into weekly, constituent topics. Pupils remember, for example, how service being a focus within thankfulness made them see their role as leaders in a new way. This is helpful to their spiritual development. Leaders, including governors and the trust, regularly evaluate collective worship. There is no systematic way for pupils to be involved in such evaluation.

The caring Christian community aspect of the vision is shown most strongly in the mutual respect that pupils and adults have for each other. 'Think twice' is a phrase that helps pupils to pause to consider the potential effects of their impending decision. Rewards are meaningfully linked to the values. Sanctions are applied justly and there is an emphasis on restorative measures. Some pupils are trained in restorative techniques. This, along with the very effective role of pupil leaders in the playground, creates an evidently fair and safe school. Wellbeing for both pupils and adults is a priority. There is an annual off-timetable day for pupils to experience techniques that might help



their mental health. Mental health ambassadors support adults and pupils well. Leaders listening to and acting upon the views of pupils, staff and parents is an important contributory factor to wellbeing.

The intention of the vision to produce global citizens is a bold one. Pupils show a real interest in matters of justice and injustice. This is nurtured through the values in action programme, collective worship and regular use of current affairs material. Pupils display empathy and compassion, a school value, with people in different and challenging circumstances. They find ways to highlight these, through a pupil newspaper for instance. They also are generous in their efforts, for example, through supporting a food bank at Harvest. Local churches give willingly of their time and enthusiasm to the school. The parish church is a valuable resource for both services and for RE. A Baptist church is funding its youth worker to support a gathering for Christian pupils once a week and to be a mentor across the school.

RE is a key subject at Hugh Sexey Church of England Middle School. A subject specialist teaches all the Key Stage 3 lessons. The Key Stage 2 RE lead teacher supports the class teachers in Years 5 and 6. The curriculum is informed by a local syllabus and is enhanced by national good practice. The trust ensures that there is good coherence between its first, middle and secondary schools. The school's RE programme is well balanced, both in the range of material covered and, in the skills demanded of pupils. Christianity, world religions and non-religious worldviews have adequate time allocated. There is a good balance between acquiring understanding and developing age-appropriate skills of analysis and evaluation. Enabling pupils to gain a sense of how members of religions live today is a focus of off-timetable days. Pupils remember these and value how they help them to appreciate the living diversity of religion today. Pupils enjoy their RE. They appreciate the varied learning activities and perceive that they develop good discussion and group work skills.

Information

Address	Blackford, Wedmore, Somerset. BS28 4ND		
Date	14 November 2024	URN	143329
Type of school	Academy. Inspected as Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	624
Diocese	Bath and Wells		
MAT	Wessex Learning Trust		
Headteacher	Paul Tatterton		
Chair of Governors	Sue Moreman		
Inspector	Simon Stevens		