

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Preston Church of England Primary Academy

Vision

‘Let your light shine.’

At Preston C of E Primary School, we are committed to providing the best education for our children so they may be happy and successful in life. Through high academic standards and an exciting, enriched curriculum, our children will flourish spiritually, emotionally, physically and academically. They feel valued in our safe, caring environment, and develop a love of learning and a desire to make a positive impact on their community and beyond. The children lie at the heart of everything we do. We aspire for our pupils to be the best they can be, in an inclusive Christian learning environment.

Strengths

- The Christian vision underpins the school's belief that every pupil is precious, unique and valued. This raises pupils' aspiration and grows self-belief, so all thrive.
- Leaders are inspired by the vision to create a balanced and exciting curriculum that enables pupils to recognise their talents. This develops a love of learning, so everyone can be the best they can be.
- Worship is at the heart of daily life. It deepens pupils' and adults' understanding of the importance of the vision and what it looks like. Worship informs and shapes pupils' attitudes and actions.
- Mental health and wellbeing are regarded as an essential part of learning and given a high priority. This enables pupils to become resilient learners who flourish.
- Leaders, at all levels, are totally committed to the work of this Church school. They lead by example, creating an inclusive, caring school and make significant contributions to the local community.

Development Points

- Extend and develop the school's culture of justice and responsibility. This is to enable pupils to become independent agents for change and make a difference for others.
- Ensure opportunities for spiritual flourishing are an intrinsic part of the curriculum. This is to allow pupils to express their thinking, so the impact of these experiences is clear.
- Enable pupils to explore themes in religious education (RE) using a variety of approaches. This is to allow pupils to appreciate differences in beliefs and understanding.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision of enabling pupils to 'let their light shine' inspires this thriving Church school. It shapes a distinct culture where everyone is seen as unique. Leaders draw on the story of Jesus the shepherd, rescuing one who is special to God. They take the view that everyone has God-given talents, helping pupils to discover and grow these. There is a tangible culture of being successful, which raises pupils' aspirations. This extends their awareness of what they might do in life, enhancing self-belief. Pupils use the language of the vision, showing their gifts and encouraging others. One pupil articulated, 'God put talents into us so we can be happy.' Pupils make links between their studies, the vision and Christian values, creating a love of learning and resilience. Leaders perceive their role as sharing God's love. Enthused by the vision, leaders are totally dedicated to pupils' flourishing. They have grown a staff team who see their responsibility as living out the vision. Staff feel valued, with opportunities to thrive, some moving on to become leaders in other schools. The depth of school leaders' evaluations is impressive, ensuring initiatives address local needs. This drives improvements, for instance, enriching support for pupils who have diverse needs and extending the nurture for families. Governors effectively support the school. Their monitoring led to the number of Christian values adopted being reduced. This enables core values to be understood in greater depth.

Leaders follow Jesus' example of reaching out to those who face challenges on life's journey. Effective screening identifies pupils' needs, enabling well-focused support to be put in place. This involves leaders drawing on external expertise and introducing new approaches. These are often individualised, enabling pupils to grow in confidence. Staff nurture pupils to recognise their emotions and verbalise them. Together, they agree strategies, which help them to be ready to learn. Leaders create dedicated spaces that support pupils' needs well. The vision is lived out in the way pupils, who need a new start, are welcomed. This transforms lives and attitudes, so they can 'shine'. Positive mental health is a high priority. Regular opportunities enable pupils to identify the tools they know help them to be calm. Pupil wellbeing ambassadors act as guides in class, signposting peers to helpful activities. Systems to support staff mental health are effective and well developed. Drawing upon the talents of others comes from the vision. This drives leaders to make partnerships, enriching their provision. Being part of the Preston Primary Academy Trust brings a wealth of expertise and guidance. Support for subject leaders and sharing expertise is invaluable, where staff nurture colleagues in other schools. The curriculum is broad, balanced and exciting. Outdoor activities are woven into learning, engaging pupils. Experiences, such as fencing and drama, ignite pupils' enthusiasm. Visitors widen horizons of what they might do in later life, so pupils appreciate the importance of learning. There is a growing understanding of spirituality. Staff are aware of activities that contribute to spiritual flourishing. However, these are not an intrinsic part of the curriculum. Neither are pupils given time to express their thinking. Therefore, the impact of these opportunities is unclear.

Collective worship plays a central role in daily life. It makes a major contribution to deepening pupils' understanding of the Christian vision and what it looks like. Pupils of all faiths recognise how values shape their relationships and actions. Collective worship is invitational, enabling all to contribute with integrity. It is inspirational and challenges pupils to take action for local issues. An understanding of what spiritual flourishing looks like is in place. Increasingly, staff draw on these ideas to shape worship. For example, pupils reflect on the wonder of God's world and their role in safeguarding it. Pupils of all ages plan and lead worship. They pose 'big' questions that stimulate discussions, whilst reflection journals allow ideas to be recorded. These enrich their own and peers' spiritual flourishing. The diocese enhances worship with well-focused training, offering clear structures and guidance. The trust identifies high-quality practice in other schools, which leads to new initiatives, such as reflection journals. The local church enables pupils to understand the significance of Christian festivals. Leaders know that collective worship makes a difference to pupils through ongoing discussions. This has led to pupils taking a greater role in leading worship and re-wording the school prayer. The vast majority of pupils, articulate that they enjoy collective worship and think it makes a difference to their choices.



Preston is an inclusive, caring community shaped by its vision. Pupils show one another a high degree of dignity and respect, work collaboratively and celebrate one another's success. There is a sense of being a school 'family' where everyone has a part. Pupils articulate with maturity when talking of diversity. Literature texts raise questions about refugees or different cultures that enhance empathy and understanding. This is where the vision stands out.

Pupils show some understanding that the vision of 'shining your light' involves using talents to make a difference for others. Eco warriors identify projects to care for God's world in the locality. For example, making bird boxes and picking up litter. The pupils' council suggest projects, such as 'school in a bag', supplying resources for children in different parts of the world. However, this culture of justice and responsibility is not fully established. Pupils are not confident to become independent agents for change.

The pride pupils take in their RE work is impressive, they have a thirst for learning. The subject leader's enthusiasm contributes to the high profile of RE. For instance, a new initiative encourages pupils to think more deeply about questions raised and their significance. These reflection and discussion opportunities enhance understanding. Pupils listen to different views, shape their opinions and learn how to disagree well. The RE curriculum is broad and balanced. Key vocabulary is identified, enabling pupils to develop a good understanding of its importance. Pupils have a growing awareness of core Christian concepts and Christianity as a global faith. However, pupils do not have opportunities to think about religious questions using different approaches, such as ideas from philosophy. Pupils talk thoughtfully about worldviews. They make insightful connections between beliefs, recognising similarities, aware of how these shape actions. Pupils and families share their religious festivals, so their importance is clear. Leaders draw on expertise from the diocese and local hub, cascading ideas and effectively supporting staff. New schools joining the trust receive invaluable support from Preston in RE, whilst enabling them to deepen their Christian distinctiveness.

Information

Address	The Toose, Yeovil, Somerset. BA21 3SN		
Date	08 October 2024	URN	140305
Type of school	Primary Academy	No. of pupils	417
Diocese	Bath and Wells		
MAT	Preston Primary Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Claire Hodgson		
Chair of Governors	Lynn O'Dwyer		
Inspector	David Hatrey		