

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Morchard Bishop Church of England VA Primary School

#### Vision

'Deeply rooted, individually nurtured, inspired to flourish.'

Christianity is at the heart of all we do: Jeremiah 17 v 7-8 uses the image of a deeply rooted tree to describe someone who places their trust in God – stable, nourished and fruitful even in difficult times.

Christian values: Curiosity, kindness, courage and resilience.

Morchard Bishop Church of England VA Primary 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.

#### Notable Strengths

- A strong Christian vision and related values drive policy and practice. The vision is understood and acted upon by staff and pupils. This creates a supportive, nurturing and caring school culture.
- Leaders are inspired by the Christian vision to take bold decisions. They make positive changes to enrich the curriculum, strengthen the vision and put in place positive behaviour policy and practices. This results in pupils being able to develop academically and to flourish personally.
- This is a happy school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported and nurtured. They embrace difference and diversity in the school population and help to support their peers, actively demonstrating their Christian values.
- Religious education (RE) is well led, planned, and taught. Pupils enjoy the diverse range of experiences it provides, including debate and visits. This enables them to deepen their understanding of a variety of religious faiths and other worldviews.
- Collective worship is inspiring and relevant. Pupils enjoy taking an active role and also the opportunities offered to reflect on their own lives and spiritual journey.

#### Development Points

- Increase opportunities for pupils to encounter spiritual experiences in the curriculum. This is to facilitate further spiritual development.
- Enrich pupils' understanding of questions of justice in the world. As a result, they can learn how to use their sense of personal responsibility for the good of others.



## Inspection Findings

### Vision and Leadership

The Christian vision is expressed meaningfully through the school logo of a tree which has strong roots to nurture it and allow it to flourish. There are new leaders at Morchard Bishop. They have made some bold decisions which have provided the school with 'strong roots'. There is now a theologically strengthened vision, and an effective behaviour policy based on nurturing relationships. An enriched curriculum now promotes an exciting enquiry approach to learning. This gives pupils the ability to develop well and flourish. The language of the values is used consistently by staff. This helps pupils to understand these concepts and successfully apply them to their own lives and learning. In this way they grow and flourish. Pupils and staff understand and enact the vision, meaning that this is a happy school where pupils learn in a safe and caring environment. The ethos committee is highly effective in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Christian vision on the work of the school. This includes involved and well-informed governors who champion the needs of their school to the multi academy trust (the trust). They successfully hold leaders to account and promote the development of the school as a Church school.

### Vision and Curriculum

The curriculum is shaped well by the Christian vision. The content inspires curiosity, and pupils are specifically taught strategies for resilience in their learning. This means that they 'dig deep' to research, challenge and discuss the big questions in the enquiry-based curriculum. An increasing number of practical tasks are used to inspire pupils and develop their courage as they learn. There are some opportunities in classroom-based learning for spiritual development, but these are not fully developed across a range of subjects. The trust provides effective curriculum support. School staff are confident to contact trust advisors for help and advice. A mixture of provision is highly effective in allowing pupils to access the curriculum and be nurtured according to their individual needs. Where appropriate, some pupils with SEND are provided with specialised and supportive learning opportunities in 'the orchard'. Pupils in mainstream classes are given adapted learning resources as needed.

### Worship and Spirituality

Pupils value collective worship which is relevant to them and enhances their spirituality. Bible stories are used to illustrate the Christian values. Pupils are inspired by these to reflect on their lives and identify how they can improve and develop positive attitudes or behaviour. In this way they grow personally and spiritually. In turn, this has a positive impact on their relationships with each other and how they behave around the school. Worship is well structured and planned to help pupils to grow in their spiritual lives. There is a strong partnership with local churches, which includes mentoring and support as well as leading worship times. Pupils make regular visits to the parish church for festivals and special events which help to develop their links to the local community. In addition, weekly classroom-based worship gives pupils opportunities to consider current affairs, or inspirational people. They are able to reflect quietly or to pray and consider their own impact on the world around them. Those who wish to can use these moments to develop their relationship with God. Pupils and staff have a shared understanding of what spirituality is, and collective worship gives adults and pupils a chance to grow in their spiritual lives.

### Vision and School Culture

This is a happy school, where pupils and staff are valued, nurtured and treated well. It is a highly inclusive school where pupils, including those with a range of needs and abilities, are made welcome and thrive. Pupils trust staff to help them in times of difficulty or distress and as a result feel safe and secure. In addition, pupils who need it are supported by personal mentoring from a local church. This means that their wellbeing is effectively developed and enhanced. Close knit relationships across the school enable effective communication. This in turn



supports good mental health for both staff and pupils. Staff are supported in difficult times and can 'share the load' with peers and colleagues. For example, the trust makes provision for staff who request support. Also, partnerships with Exeter Diocese and other schools in the local academy 'cluster' help them in their work.

#### Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Relationships are generally good throughout the school. Pupils are very supportive of their peers, particularly those with SEND. Pupils exhibit kindness in their acceptance of difference and diversity. They show responsibility by their compassion towards those who need it. For example, pupils play together well across year groups in the playground. Older pupils are members of an 'ethos champions' group which aims to promote the Christian values across the school. They have taken responsibility for organising some fund-raising events for national charities. Younger pupils are taught about fairness, sharing and helping others, and the effect of this is demonstrated in their responsible behaviour in classrooms and the playground. Older pupils discuss issues such as women's rights in Middle Eastern countries and study the lives of influential women who fight for those rights. However, overall, there are only a few opportunities across the curriculum to learn about issues of justice and where it is lacking in the world. Consequently, pupils have limited understanding of promoting justice or using their sense of personal responsibility for the good of others.

#### Religious Education

RE is a popular and vibrant subject which is given high priority in the timetable. The curriculum is challenging for pupils. It is balanced, relevant to their lives and encompasses a wide range of faiths and worldviews. The subject is well planned and led. Staff are provided with relevant training and a wide range of resources to make the subject interesting and inspiring. The trust provides invaluable advice and guidance to support the curriculum. The subject leader meets with colleagues from other trust schools and wider afield, which means that good practice is shared. Recent training focused on the use of artificial intelligence in RE which teachers have used in their planning to positive effect. This ensures that the curriculum is relevant and current. Visits and speakers are used effectively and often enhance spiritual development. For example, a recent mosque visit, which included a time of calm, quiet prayer and reflection.

Teaching in RE is well informed, lively and inspiring. Pupils very much enjoy the lessons and confidently take part in animated discussions and debates. Teachers skillfully use questioning to draw out less confident pupils, and to challenge and reinforce learning for the class. Pupils are given good quality opportunities to reflect on their learning. They record their reflections on the big questions of life in their books. This process means that pupils identify their spiritual journey, and pinpoint changes to their own views and opinions as they learn. Assessment of pupil progress is made through a variety of relevant written, oral and creative tasks. From this evidence, pupils make good progress overall in their learning in RE.

## Information

Address	Church Street, Morchard Bishop, Devon, EX176PJ		
Date	16 March 2026	URN	148743
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	105 (including pre-school)
Diocese	Exeter		
MAT	LINK multi-academy trust		
MAT Chair	Cheryl Mathieson		
Headteacher	Hannah Bancroft		
Chair of Governors	Jo Hooper		
Inspector	Judith Larrington		