



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Black Torrington Church of England Primary School	
Address	Black Torrington, Beaworthy, EX21 5PU

School vision

'Journeying together in Hope and Joy'

Our school vision is inspired by Romans 12 which asks us to be 'joyful in hope and steadfast in troubles'. Our school logo is a rainbow with a cross in front of it. It reminds us of the Old Testament story of Noah's Ark, where God rewards Noah's faith and hope with his promise for the future in the form of a magnificent rainbow. As a school community, we strive to find joy in our journey together by delighting in our learning, remaining steadfast in challenges and by trusting in the richness of our relationships with one another, with the wider world and beyond.

School strengths

- Pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are extremely well supported by the whole staff team. They are kept safe, and flourish personally and spiritually.
- The Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust (DMAT) supplies excellent training, mentoring and development opportunities to staff at this small school. During the recent restructuring, they and school leaders offer highly effective support to staff. This helps their well-being and mental health.
- Collective worship strongly reflects the school's Christian vision. This contributes to pupils' good spiritual development. Pupils enjoy a wide range of creative experiences of worship, including at the local church.
- Religious education (RE) is well-led. Learning experiences and resources are varied, relevant and help pupils to learn well. They are taught about Christianity and a wide range of world faiths and worldviews.
- Excellent community links and partnership with the other hub schools and DMAT gives pupils good experience of the wider world. Visits, residentials, workshops and joint sporting events gives pupils joy in their learning and hope for the future.

Areas for development

- Embed the new local governance committee so that it effectively monitors and evaluates the school 's Christian vision. This will accurately inform DMAT Trustees in their improvement planning.
- Further develop the formal curriculum to offer pupils more planned opportunities to grow in their spiritual lives. This will give them greater appreciation of the world they live in.

Inspection findings

The strong Christian vision underpins daily life at this school. The vision is well known and understood by staff and pupils, inspiring them to have high aspirations and therefore to flourish. There is a strong sense of community at Black Torrington. Pupils learn and play together in harmony. Parents are rightly highly appreciative of support given to their children with SEND. This is because staff know every pupil, guiding their personal learning journeys and giving them a window onto the world outside their village. Leaders use the vision to drive their curriculum choices, planning learning experiences which give pupils joy in their learning and hope for the future. Extra-curricular clubs, visits and residentials are organised with the DMAT hub schools. This gives pupils in this very small, rural school a valuable window onto the wider world. In addition, pupils are successfully introduced to diversity and difference in the UK. This is done by using of a variety of reading materials, a specialist programme provided by DMAT, and visits to local large cities. School leaders' determination that pupils are taken on a journey of discovery of the richness of the world around them ensures that they flourish personally and spiritually. Effective opportunities are taken to offer pupils spiritual experiences through clubs, visits and collective worship. However, spiritual growth is not yet formally planned into the taught curriculum. School and DMAT leaders have successful systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Christian vision in school. However, there has been a very recent re-structure of governance. This means that there is currently insufficient evidence that the local 'advocates committee' is providing knowledge of how the vision is enabling pupils to flourish to DMAT Trustees.

Collective worship is creative, spiritual and gives pupils valuable time to reflect and consider the vision and values of the school. Even with only 8 pupils, school staff ensure that this time is meaningful, reflective and relevant to the lives of the children. Worship is inclusive and care is taken to give pupils a window onto a range of experiences. This sometimes includes online contact with other hub schools to give them an opportunity to sing or pray with a larger group. Worship regularly takes place at the local church, and parents also attend for special 'festival' occasions in a café-church style. This cements relationships with the community, many of whom get practically involved at the school. For example, a church member runs a hand-bell club, and pupils use these skills in their worship. In this way, the school uses local partnerships to enhance the worship and spiritual growth of the pupils.

This is a happy school. Pupils and staff rightly see themselves as a 'team' working together to teach and to learn. Relationships are good. The approach to behaviour management is based on forgiveness and reconciliation and is working well. This means that children are given time to consider their actions, how they affect others and in what ways they could change. This means that they are kept safe. Teachers are fair and approachable if they have any problems or concerns. School and Trust leaders have managed recent re-structuring and changes to staffing well. This means that staff are supported and happy, because their well-being is given a high priority. Pupils with SEND have their learning and behaviour needs met by skilled staff who carry out detailed consultation and planning for their needs. This ensures that they enjoy their learning. They are provided with appropriate challenges, but also confidence on their learning journey.

Pupils take responsibility for various aspects of school life and also act to be agents of change in their local community. Every child is a member of the school council, which is empowered by school leaders to make decisions. For example, they plan to further enhance a 'garden' area in the playground that is used for those who wish to be reflective or for quiet play. In this way their spiritual lives are enhanced by their environment and their sense of responsibility for it. Pupils also have a strong sense of justice linked to their local area. The school council vote on which charities they wish to raise money for. The Air Ambulance charity has been selected because of personal links



the pupils have to it, and a recent rescue of a local resident. Children make items to sell to raise funds. They also act to clear and clean the neighbouring church and grounds after they noticed how much litter was there. Pupils also support the local foodbank, with Year 6 pupils visiting to deliver the donations. In this way they fulfill their Christian vision by bringing joy and hope to their community.

RE is valued at this school, and is given a high priority in terms of time and resources. The subject is well led, with good provision of varied and relevant resources. This means that pupils enjoy their learning and engage well with the subject. The RE curriculum is well sequenced for the mixed age class. A wide range of world faiths and worldviews are studied as well as Christianity. Teachers take advantage of good quality training provided by DMAT and the Diocese. This means that the RE curriculum is well planned, accurate and challenging for pupils. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to share their views and opinions which they do with confidence. RE lessons allow pupils to discuss questions of meaning for their lives. In this way, the subject helps their spiritual as well as academic growth.

The inspection findings indicate that Black Torrington Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	11 January 2024	URN	145341
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	8
Diocese	Exeter		
MAT/Federation	Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust		
Academy Hub Principal	Jo Luxford		
Chair	Tania Skeaping		
Inspector	Judith Larrington	No.	948