

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dartington Church of England Academy

Vision

Dartington Church of England Academy nurtures growth, giving courage to face challenges, and abundant opportunities for unique strengths to blossom, feeling valued able to make wise choices for themselves and others, and trust in the brightest future. Led by our vision **'Together we grow, together we flourish'** and inspired by the Parable of the Sower, our school is the good ground allowing all to grow deep roots. Its seeds are given a rich diet to thrive into the best 'plant' possible, cared for during all 'seasons' growing deep roots of strength, resilience and peacefulness, living joyfully with those around them.

Strengths

- The leadership team, driven by a clear and purposeful vision, have enacted significant change within the school. The influence of their vision extends beyond the school walls, positively impacting pupils' progress and the wider community.
- The school prioritises disadvantaged pupils, reducing barriers and improving outcomes, especially by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school's provision is highly inclusive. The curriculum has been specially adapted to allow pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and who find learning difficult, to work alongside their peers. This means they can fully access the curriculum and promotes equality of opportunity for all.
- Warm, nurturing relationships are evident across the school community. This supportive atmosphere fosters growth and development. This is reflected in improved attendance rates. Calm, respectful behaviour is evident in and outside lessons.
- A broad and engaging curriculum enables pupils to flourish spiritually. The school's belief, 'you cannot be what you cannot see,' inspires pupils to aim for great achievements.

Development Points

- Develop more effective methods to systematically monitor the quality and impact of collective worship. This will enable leaders to shape it. This is to extend pupils' understanding of the importance of religious prayer and reflection and foster greater spiritual development.
- Enable pupils to develop a greater and more active role in justice and responsibility beyond their own school. This is so that they can advocate for those in need or facing injustice.
- Ensure the religious education (RE) curriculum develops pupils' knowledge of non-religious worldviews. This is to increase their depth of understanding of different people's perspectives.



Inspection Findings

The vision at Dartington drives leaders and inspires them to make decisions effectively. They work with the mantra, 'If we get it right for our most vulnerable, we get it right for all.' They work hard to remove barriers and ensure pupils can 'realise the possible.' This inclusive approach means pupils develop their aspirations. The use of the parable of the sower gives pupils a language to describe the rich experience they receive. Parents value the school's effort to get to know each child. They feel the school truly 'sees the actual pupil' and ensures that inclusion is met in its broadest sense. Consequently, pupils learn in an environment where they feel valued and safe, with adults holding high expectations. When the school joined the Learning Academy Partnership Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), they received a lot of support from external partners. They work in dedicated partnership with a range of stakeholders, most notably the MAT and diocese. Consequently, they have continued to grow in line with their vision and now provide support to a range of schools. This strengthens their links across and beyond the MAT.

The curriculum, reflecting the vision, helps pupils understand how working together can help them grow. Pupils value sharing ideas, noting that if you do something good alone, together it would be amazing. Classrooms are calm and purposeful, and displays reflect pupil thinking, helping them to understand their learning. Formal and informal experiences enable pupils to see themselves as learners who begin as seeds but leave as flourishing flowers. At the heart of this is removing barriers. For example, pupils learn five instruments at school, at no cost to the family. The school has recently rolled out a model of 'in, out, and up' to help pupils understand spirituality. Although pupils do not use the word 'spirituality,' this is already having a strong impact. Pupils can talk about how different things influence their own actions, feelings, and responses. In turn, they reflect on how this may impact, or be driven by, the actions of others within their class and school.

Daily collective worship is well planned, taking into consideration the diverse nature of the school community. Assemblies are delivered by a range of leaders from the school and the local community. Planning of assemblies considers the important events of the Christian liturgical year, enabling pupils to develop their knowledge. Time is taken to help the pupils understand the relevance of the school's vision and values to their everyday lives. Pupils can articulate the impact of collective worship on their own thinking and from this their spirituality is developing. However, currently some pupils do not always see the personal value of prayer or reflection time. Leaders monitor the impact of collective worship through conversations and observations. This monitoring does not take pupils' views into account strongly enough. Pupils enjoy singing assembly. Local clergy play a significant role in the development of collective worship. They are building links between the school and church community.

Pupils and parents recognise Dartington is growing in size because families know they will be listened to and cared for. They acknowledge that the provision for pupils with SEND is a strength. The school ensures this provision is integrated into everything they do. This ensures these pupils fit seamlessly into every lesson alongside their peers. Pupils' interests are met through a range of clubs held during the school day. For example, gardening club is a popular activity. Pupils become engaged in maintaining the grounds and learn the benefits of being outside for their well-being. Staff are given varied opportunities to flourish. This may be within or outside the school, but often affects schools across the MAT and local area. For example, some teachers are now champion teachers across the MAT and diocese. The impact of this is clear. Staff talk about how they feel valued and that they truly work as a team to enable pupils to grow.

There is a strong culture of developing a sense of justice and responsibility in pupils within school. This can be seen in many aspects of the school day. For example, the pupils talk with ownership about the school charter. The impact of this is clearly evident in all lessons, where pupils respectfully work collaboratively. Pupils understand that they don't all need to be treated the same. They recognize that pupils are treated well, in a



manner that meets their needs. Pupils take an active role in enacting change within the school. They respond responsibly to clearing an excess of waste around the school. Recognising a need for change, they raised money for recycling bins for every class. They took this further, to keep the action live, by setting a competition to see which class can recycle the most. However, currently they take little action beyond the school environment.

RE is valued within the school and consequently well supported. Leaders knowledge is kept up to date through partnerships across the MAT and diocese. The RE lead values this support. Leaders cascade their training and subject knowledge to all staff through regular short briefings and longer training sessions. This has ensured that the RE curriculum is challenging and well sequenced. Curriculum planning ensures pupils study a range of faiths and beliefs, with Christianity being studied for over 50% of the year. However, there is less emphasis upon non-religious worldviews. Regular monitoring supports developments in the subject. RE books, which contain pupils work and thinking, show a respect and passion for the subject by teachers. Pupils show pride when they discuss the work in them. RE learning walls reflect engaging lessons based on key questions. Pupils are encouraged to respond in different ways to the questions, beyond written responses.

Information

Address	Shinner's Bridge, Totnes, TQ9 6JU		
Date	18 October 2024	URN	148490
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	298
Diocese	Exeter		
MAT	Learning Academy Partnership South West		
Headteacher	Co-headteachers: Charlotte Huish and Catherine Eversfield		
Chair of Advisory Board	Debby Forsyth		
Chair of Board of Trustees	Joanne Tisdall		
Inspector	Nikki Prentice		