

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

### Otterton Church of England Primary School

#### Vision

'Growing Stronger Together' is theologically linked with the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32). We believe, much like this parable, that given guidance and support even the smallest can flourish and grow.

Our School Values: Thankfulness, Courage, Trust, Hope, Compassion and Respect

Otterton Church of England 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

- The Christian vision, with its focus on growth in community, has created a strong staff team. Adults' consistent modelling of the Christian values inspires pupils as they experience the vision in action.
- High-quality religious education (RE) fosters a love for the subject and a respectful curiosity about people's lived experiences. It equips pupils to reflect on their own worldviews and those of others.
- Meticulously planned collective worship helps people to grow stronger together. Thoughtful, respectful leadership, supported by a strong partnership with the church, enables pupils and adults to flourish.
- The Christian vision drives the school's inclusive approach to delivering the curriculum. Respect, hope and trust are evident in the way pupils and adults listen, encourage and celebrate together.
- Leaders at all levels act with compassion, respect and hope as they nurture the wellbeing of pupils and adults. Support from the multi-academy trust (MAT) ensures that support for wellbeing is secure.

#### Development Points

- Evaluate and develop the school's provision for spiritual development by identifying potential spiritual moments across the curriculum. This is to help pupils flourish through a wider range of opportunities. It is also to help leaders plan for progressively deeper spiritual experiences.



## Inspection Findings

### Vision and Leadership

The Christian vision inspires members of this small school community to work together to achieve great things. The MAT vision, with its focus on schools flourishing at the heart of their communities, aligns well. The vision of 'growing stronger together' gives pupils and staff confidence and resilience. Pupils compare themselves to the tiny mustard seed in the Bible that grows very large and significant. Reflecting on this image helps pupils to develop an appropriate self-assurance and belief in their abilities. This supports them to be ready to learn. Leaders teach and model consistently the associated Christian values of thankfulness, courage, trust, hope, compassion and respect. Pupils understand and practise the Christian values because they experience them. Structures are in place to inform leaders of the ways in which the Christian vision enables people to flourish. The school ethos group, comprising senior staff and clergy, plays a key role in monitoring. Feedback from pupils regarding collective worship provides additional information. The MAT RE lead has a created a detailed system for evaluating the impact of the school's Christian vision. Work to delegate this to the school ethos group is in progress.

### Vision and Curriculum

Doing things together matters in this school. The Christian vision of 'growing stronger together' is evident in leaders' decisions. It underpins their commitment to enable pupils with additional needs to learn in the classroom alongside their peers. Mindful of Otterton's small, rural context, leaders have designed a curriculum that enables pupils to 'grow' through rich experiences. Colleagues from the MAT support well-trained school staff to address individual pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those deemed disadvantaged or vulnerable have the same opportunities to flourish. A reflective culture exists throughout the school. Inspired by adults, pupils are happy to think deeply about things. Teachers take advantage of spontaneous opportunities or specific topics to nurture spirituality. This is particularly evident in art. A shared language supports people to express themselves. One striking example is pupils' willingness to reflect on and talk about their personal worldviews. However, the school does not plan systematically for spiritual development. This means that opportunities to provide progressively deeper experiences are sometimes missed.

### Worship and Spirituality

Sensitively planned collective worship enables pupils and adults to 'grow stronger together'. A deeply reflective atmosphere encourages careful listening. Pupils respond well to the comments of others. Christian values of trust and respect are evident. Leaders regularly review and improve provision to make worship more welcoming and accessible. One example is the creation of the school's own simple, inclusive liturgy which allows all who choose to join in with integrity. High-quality collective worship is the result of thorough planning by a number of people. Thorough briefing of all worship leaders ensures consistency. The weekly involvement of clergy and of church members in the Open the Book team enriches the worship life of the school. Adults lead with energy and understanding of the purpose of worship. Their example inspires pupils to participate and also to lead. Pupils of all ages are keen to lead spontaneous prayer. They do so confidently and with spiritual sensitivity. Well-trained and organised pupil ethos leaders work hard to fulfil their role. Their preparation for leading worship is thorough. They do valuable work in conducting pupil surveys to monitor worship. They are proud of their contribution.

### Vision and School Culture

This is a happy school. Prompted by the vision and Christian values, pupils and adults treat one another with respect, understanding and compassion. The school's approach to managing behaviour follows MAT policy. With its emphasis on building strong relationships, this mirrors the school's Christian values, although without explicitly referencing them. Wellbeing has a high priority. Older pupils train as mental health ambassadors. MAT



support for adults' wellbeing acknowledges the pressures of the workload in this small school, with the demands of mixed-age teaching. This recognition is enabling staff to thrive. Adults benefit from generous professional development and leadership opportunities through the MAT. A frequent comment is that they love their jobs.

#### Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Pupils at Otterton know that they make a difference. The school's Christian values inspire them to act to bring hope in a range of situations. These include toilet twinning around the world and cleaning local beaches. Adults create opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of global issues at the same time as equipping them to make a difference locally. Well-placed displays remind pupils of their success in helping to make the world better. One example is the school's successful involvement in an international project to plant trees. Adults are skilled in building on pupils' interests to promote deeper learning. Environmental projects, for instance, have involved litter-picking, consultation with people in the community and raising others' awareness. They also provide opportunities for pupils to voice their concerns about issues such as poaching. Pupils live out the vision as they create their own initiatives to promote fairness. One such initiative, a book swap, offers a sustainable way for every pupil to have a new book.

#### Religious Education

Pupils find RE exciting. Leaders have constructed an effective curriculum, based on the syllabus provided locally by the diocese. It includes units on Christianity from a well-respected source. Leaders have wisely chosen to include specific optional units to enrich pupils' experiences in this small rural setting. This well-balanced curriculum sparks pupils' curiosity and deepens their respect for religions and non-religious worldviews. RE has a high profile and is well resourced. A programme of visits and visitors enables pupils to engage meaningfully with people of different faiths. A visit to a mosque prompted pupils to respond with curiosity and respect. Teachers encourage and value individual responses. Some pupils wondered about boys and girls sitting separately. Others enjoyed feeling the thickness of the carpet. Pupils value opportunities and a safe space to reflect on their own worldviews. Some pupils are able to identify how their worldview has changed during their time at Otterton. A noticeable feature of the curriculum is the frequent reviewing of previous learning. This is enabling pupils from a range of abilities to learn well and remember more. The school benefits from support and training from the MAT and from the diocese. Leaders are also increasingly sharing their own expertise in RE with other schools in the MAT.

Teaching is good. Teachers make effective use of different means of 'capturing' pupils' learning. RE books enable pupils to observe and reflect on their own progress as they move into higher year-groups. Teachers include questioning in their marking which provides increased challenge for some pupils. It also prompts pupils to think more deeply. Lively and accurate teaching inspires pupils and engagement is high. Pupils listen well and spontaneously build on others' comments or questions. In the younger class, for example, one asked about the relevance of the Christmas tree. In response, another wondered aloud whether its evergreen nature might symbolise the ever-present nature of Jesus.

## Information

Address	Church Hill, Otterton, Budleigh Salterton, Devon EX9 7HU		
Date	2 December 2025	URN	147496
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	41 including 2 pre-school
Diocese	Exeter		
MAT	Link Academy Trust		
MAT Chair	Cheryl Mathieson		
Headteacher	Anne Pelosi		
Chair of Governors	Corinna Tigg		
Inspector	Penny Burnside		