

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Stoke Row Church of England VA Primary School

Address Stoke Row, Henley, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom, RG9 5QS

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

"Shine like stars and become light in our world." Philippians 2:15-16; Matthew 5:14-16.
We aim for our children to have the brightest futures, each one nurtured individually to be a guiding light with a unique sparkle. We teach one another to live with kindness and respect. We help our children to understand that with courage and perseverance they can excel.

Key findings

- The school's distinctive Christian vision is evident in all areas of school life. The dedicated headteacher leads a strong mutually supportive team that nurtures pupils and ensures that all can shine.
- Pupils are aware of their unique value as individuals. They love school. Provision for those with additional and different needs is excellent enabling every child to flourish at this school.
- The Christian vision informs the curriculum which is enriched by partnerships with local churches and wider community. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to engage with the wide community and its diversity.
- Collective worship is inspiring. It provides a valuable reflective time for pupils and adults. Pupils have limited opportunities to influence and lead collective worship.
- Strengths in religious education (RE) include positive pupil attitudes, good progress and enthusiastic leadership. However, training for those who lead and teach RE has not been prioritised.

Areas for development

- Develop further opportunities for pupils to engage with diversity in British society to ensure that pupils understand disadvantage, deprivation and cultural diversity. This will help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Ensure that all those involved in teaching RE have relevant and recent training. This is to ensure that staff teach with confidence to a high standard.
- Enable pupils to plan, deliver and monitor collective worship. This will enrich worship and further develop the school's Christian distinctiveness.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The passionate commitment of the headteacher, supported by other school leaders, ensures that the distinctive Christian vision is at the centre of the life of the school. The school's ethos committee, consisting of school governors, undertakes a regular and rigorous focus on the monitoring and development of the school's vision. Governors know the school well and use their knowledge to promote further improvement. The vision is underpinned by well-established Christian values. Pupils talk about these with confidence. They are able to link the values to Bible stories and they are rooted in their day to day experiences.

The whole curriculum, including a wide range of extra-curricular activities, ensures that all pupils can 'sparkle like stars'. Pupils are enthusiastic about how much they enjoy school. Lessons are varied so that all pupils can access learning and make progress. Pupils experience art and drama and learning outside in many areas of the curriculum. Other activities, such as horse-riding, contribute to the provision for those with additional needs being very good. Learning activities are carefully planned, with the support of the special needs co-ordinator to ensure that all pupils flourish. Parents say that the school knows their children well and adapts their learning accordingly. For example, during lockdown school closures, many pupils received boxes of learning activities that had been specifically designed to meet their individual needs. The school has several Ukrainian pupils. They have been embraced by the school community and learning has been adapted to enable them to access the curriculum. The parent of one Ukrainian pupil explained that her child has been welcomed and is making good progress.

Spirituality has been a recent focus for development and is understood as, 'nurturing the inner life of an individual'. This is achieved through specific occasions such as regular Forest School learning. Consequently, pupils develop a sense of awe and wonder and understand their place in the natural world. The daily rhythm of the school enables pupils and staff to experience times of quiet reflection and prayer. This is evident in collective worship and at throughout the school day. In addition, times for discussion and reflection are built into the curriculum ensuring that pupils have time to explore spiritual and ethical issues. Relationships within and beyond the school are firmly rooted in Christian values. An ethos of nurturing each unique individual pervades the life of the school. Staff, parents and pupils know that they are cared for and appreciated. Pupils understand the importance of kindness and respect and are able to articulate how this influences their interactions. If pupils make a wrong choice they are given time to reflect and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. Consequently, instances of bullying are rare and quickly resolved. Parents express how the school promotes confidence, empowering pupils to live out their Christian values beyond the school gates. Links with the local community are mutually beneficial and embedded. The local community recently raised significant funds to support the school in maintaining its four class structure, rather than reduce it to three. During the pandemic pupils wrote letters of appreciation and care to local key workers and nursing home residents. Their actions were appreciated at a difficult time.

The decision to prioritise funding for an emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) has had a powerful impact on well-being. The ELSA is highly trained and passionate in carrying out her work. Staff well-being days are appreciated and staff speak of feeling highly valued. A dedicated room in school provides a safe and welcoming space for pupils to receive individualised support and parents speak highly of the impact that it has on their children.

Pupils have little engagement with difference and diversity in wider British society, limiting opportunities for them to prepare for life in modern Britain. Previously, the school had established links with schools in Reading which broadened these experiences. However, these have not been maintained in recent times. Pupils do engage with current issues via platforms such as Picture News and are courageous advocates for change in their community. Examples include leading a campaign with the local village shop to stop the use of plastic cups and to embrace 'Cheesy Tuesday', a day each week when meat isn't eaten. Pupils were proactive in creating posters, writing letters and encouraging adults to take part.

Collective worship and prayer are invitational and central to the life of the school. It is a key way in which the nurturing vision of the school is shared. The regular use of the parish church provides a quiet and valued space to pray. Worship provides a rich variety of experiences including silence and time to reflect on behaviour, attitudes and values. Biblical teaching underpins worship and provides suitable opportunities for pupils to relate this teaching to their own lives. The Open the Book team, consisting of worshippers from the local church, regularly explores Bible stories with pupils. Members of the community, including local clergy, lead collective worship regularly. Pupils appreciate worship time; one pupil explained that "it's the best way to start the day". Whilst there are meaningful contributions, such as spontaneous prayer, worship that is solely planned, led and evaluated by pupils is yet to be established.

As a result, pupils have not yet been able to fully explore their own expression of worship. RE is well-planned and delivered. The curriculum secures progression, developing understanding of skills and concepts across the key stages. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of key Christian beliefs and can relate them to their own experiences. They describe how they are confident in sharing their views and exploring new concepts in an environment based on the values of kindness and respect. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn about other world faiths in addition to Christianity. They can make appropriate links such as a comparison between the ways that Hindus and Christians pray. The RE lead has recently taken on the role. However, she has been given limited opportunities to engage in training or updates of recent developments. Leaders have recognised that this needs to be prioritised in order to further improve provision. At its heart, Stoke Row is an inclusive school focused on the unique value of everyone. The embedded vision, promoting the nurturing and confidence of all, is the driving force for all decision making.



The effectiveness of RE is

Good

Teaching and learning in RE are good. Pupils' attitudes to RE are very positive and they are keen to learn. The subject leader works closely with other RE teachers to ensure that careful monitoring of RE and effective assessment systems further promote high standards. Consequently, all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as a second language, make good progress in RE. This includes developing good skills of interpretation and analysis.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	27 September 2022	URN	123136
Date of previous inspection	25 June 2015		
School status	VA	NOR	66
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation			
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Oxford		
Headteacher	Charlotte Whittle		
Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged	Below National Average		
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Above National Average		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Joanna Brookes	No.	2110