

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chesterton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address	Chesterton CE Primary School, Alchester Road, Chesterton, Bicester, Oxon , OX26 1UN		
Date of inspection	26 November 2018	Status of school	Voluntary Aided
Diocese / Methodist District	Oxford	URN	123101

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Chesterton Church of England Primary School has 123 pupils on roll. The school has very low levels of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.

There has been a considerable change in staff since the previous SIAMS inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher in 2015.

The school's Christian vision

'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.' Philippians 4:13

Using the example of Jesus' teachings, the cornerstone of the Christian faith, our pupils are equipped with the spiritual foundations and values to flourish as they meet the challenges of the modern world.

Key findings

- The school's newly drafted Christian vision effectively encompasses the aims and values of the school. It is supported by a strong set of Christian values that are well established and evident throughout all areas of school life.
- The school's collective worship rota ensures that key Christian celebrations are observed. Additional themes within the worship rota relate to the values of the school.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is consistently graded good with a high proportion that is better than good. As a result, the school is facilitating all its pupils to succeed academically in RE.

Areas for development

- Embed the school's vision into all school policies and other key documents so that it can effectively support the life of the school as a church school.
- Increase pupil involvement in leading collective worship to engender deeper engagement with worship and thus enhance their spiritual development.

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

Supported by a strong governing body and senior leadership team, the headteacher has created a Christian ethos that embraces all stakeholders. Leaders, including governors, have carried out extensive preliminary work to underpin a vision which will clarify the purpose of the school. From this healthy starting point an overarching, biblically rooted Christian vision is emerging. Although it is in very early stages this vision effectively encompasses the aims and values of the school. Leaders recognise that more work needs to be done to embed the vision securely into school policies and other key documents. The governors are effective at supporting and challenging the headteacher.

Leaders, staff and children spoke of the importance of the ethos that helped create the new vision. They explained that the beliefs that underpin the vision have created a close community where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. As one child expressed it 'our school is caring to everyone ... this is not based on background or race'. It is evident that the school has created a place where its community can live well together. Consequently, children and adults thrive.

Collective worship is an important part of the life of the school. By using the teachings of Christ as its cornerstone, collective worship clearly reflects the school's vision. It is varied, well planned and linked consistently to the school's values. The school's collective worship rota ensures that key Christian celebrations are observed. Delivery of collective worship is supported by clergy whose contribution is greatly valued by staff, parents and children. The children's worship council spoke with enjoyment of the tasks they carry out to support the daily act of worship. Staff spoke with enthusiasm of the school's prayer week and the opportunity this gave adults and children to reflect and pray.

Senior leaders ensure that the curriculum encourages a respect for difference and diversity in age appropriate ways. For example, children in the reception class learn to discuss different feelings and share likes and dislikes. Children in Key Stage 2 explore the rule of law and democracy linked to mutual respect and tolerance. All of this is understood within the context of the school's Christian vision and its associated values. Leaders, governors and staff use the school's vision to strive for academic success for all the children in their care. Therefore, the school supports every child, including those with special educational needs and those in vulnerable circumstances, to succeed. As a result, attainment at the end of all key stages is broadly in line or above the national average. This year, in Key Stage two, there have been significant improvements in attainment in reading and maths. Writing is now the school's focus and part of the school's development plan. This demonstrates the school living out its vision that all pupils are prepared for their next steps in learning.

Through consistently good or better teaching, RE makes a constructive contribution to the Christian character of the school. Children are enthused by RE, they rise to the challenge of new concepts such as how might Christians respond to the plastics industry. They spoke of how, through their actions, they could make the world a better place. The school's vision is successfully employed to help children 'meet the challenges of the modern world'.

Work on comparative religions promotes respect and tolerance so that every individual is valued. Children were able to articulate that whatever one's faith 'you are welcome at our school'. Therefore, RE makes a distinct impact on the spiritual, social, cultural and moral development of pupils.

Scrutiny of RE books and conversations with children confirmed that valuable opportunities are created for deep thinking in response to big questions. Children said they liked to think about difficult questions. For example, 'if God had given (other mammals) the power he gave man, would they have made the same mistakes'? When asked how they knew if they had made progress in RE the children explained the school's marking system. They also spoke of talking with and listening to their teacher. One child said, 'I know I've progressed because I now ask why instead of how'.

The school, through engagement with its vision, has been successful in creating strong relationships between all stakeholders. This is characterised by the care and trust between children and adults. Adults recognised the school's vision as the cornerstone of children's spiritual, emotional and academic growth. Therefore, they model relationships that are underpinned by the school's values and this makes a positive contribution to the pupils' personal development. One child expressed this as '(we learn that) you can disagree but still be friends at this school'. Children expressed clearly how the values helped them to be the person God intended. They explained how, through their actions, they could make their community a better place.

The headteacher is well respected by colleagues and parents because of his strong determination to do the best for all the children in the school. Through the priority given to those he serves, he has engendered a deeper understanding of what it means to be a church school. All staff spoke positively of their experience of working at the school. They cited strong relationships, professional development opportunities, and support by others as reasons adults live well together. They felt that children and adults were given time within the curriculum to reflect and pray. They all agreed that the Christian foundation of the school's vision was lived out in their lives together.

The school has successfully built on previous inspections through formulating its strong set of Christian values. Children say the values improve their academic performance. For example, one child explained she could be generous with her time by helping those who did not understand work set. Another child explained that he used perseverance when he knew he had to try hard to be successful with his school work. This attitude was evident on walks through school where children were deeply engaged in their studies, including debate and discussion.

The dignity and respect enjoyed by staff and children is extended to their families. Those in need are offered appropriate and generous emotional and practical support. The school's commitment to its vision, founded on the teaching of Jesus, ensures it reaches out to vulnerable members of its community. This was explained by staff as going above and beyond general expectations.

Other charitable actions encourage children to think globally and recognise that Christianity extends beyond the school and local church. This is particularly apparent through the school's link with a South African school. This has allowed the children to consider similarities and differences between themselves and children on the other side of the world. Equipped with the spiritual foundations of the school's vision, children have a clear, age related, understanding of global needs. Consequently, they take on age appropriate challenges to support change in today's wider global community.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

Pupils have an excellent understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. In reflecting the principles of the school's vision, RE has become a 'cornerstone' to children's growing understanding of their place in today's society. They are enthused and inspired by RE. They shared the content of their books with pride; keen to show the depth of their studies.

RE teaching is consistently graded good or better than good. The school has an excellent RE leader who attends good professional development which impacts the practice of teachers she supports.

Since the last inspection the school has successfully developed the RE assessment system so that RE progress is clearly recorded. The system demonstrates that progress in RE is often even better than in other subjects. The school is enabling its vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and its more able children to flourish academically in RE.

Headteacher	Iain Horner
Inspector's name and number	Delia Sheppard
Quality Assurance assessor	Allyson Taylor 768