



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Churchmead Church of England Voluntary Aided Secondary School

Address Priory Way, Datchet, Berkshire, SL3 9JQ

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

Excellent

The impact of collective worship

Excellent

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Excellent

School's vision

John 10:10 - Life in all its fullness.

The vision is underpinned by the values of courage, commitment, compassion.

Key findings

- The vision and supporting values are at the heart of every activity and decision made. It is characterised by the vibrant, unique offer Churchmead presents, as a church school, to all members of its community.
- Leadership at all levels, including governance, is a strength of the school. Leaders including governors are ambitious to continually develop and improve so that the vision is even more explicit in their work.
- Religious education (RE) is excellent. It is well led and managed with the needs of all pupils planned for effectively. Their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and world faiths is impressive, supporting the fully inclusive ethos of the school.
- Collective worship is recognised as the heartbeat of the school and central to spiritual development. Adults and students of all faiths and none say it provides a focal point for their daily lives.
- Links with local churches are exceptionally strong. This is enhanced by the work between school and the vicar, on wellbeing and mental health, who assumes a chaplaincy role. This was particularly evident in enabling staff and students to be well supported during lockdown and subsequent return to school. Plans to develop this further are in hand.

Areas for development

- Further develop governance through ongoing training and support so that link between the vision, leadership and school improvement practice and policy is even more explicit.
- Develop the role of the chaplain to become a bridge between school and church.

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

Churchmead School is a vibrant Christian community enabling its members to flourish through the deeply rooted and authentic application of its vision and associated values. What makes for excellence is how these are translated into the everyday life of the school. They form the language used by the whole community to encourage, challenge, and admonish when necessary. Churchmead's position as a church school provides a unique offer to pupils in the community it serves. It has had a transformational impact on many pupils. They are supported to achieve more than they ever anticipated and have high aspirations for their futures. The school itself has also undergone a transformation. This includes the significant rise in admissions over recent years, and numbers are now oversubscribed. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors live out the vision daily. Governors apply the values when decision making and make bold financial choices, such as jointly financing a chaplain with the church. This will further ensure greater pastoral support.

Outward facing, the school's online presence makes clear its Christian distinctiveness. The Twitter feed is widely followed, promoting activities across the virtual community. As a result, there is a greater understanding of the positive work the school is engaged in, leading to more engagement with the community. Staff routinely work with other schools, sharing online collective worship during lockdown, for example. The Diocese of Oxford is grateful for their positive contributions. Relationships with the local church are exceptionally strong, including valued chaplaincy and other support from the vicar. A new chaplaincy post, jointly funded between church and school, will bridge the two communities, cementing relationships further.

Thirty-two nationalities attend the school as pupils or staff. The community is made up of members of all world faiths, those with alternative beliefs or none. All co-exist in an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and trust. Similarities and differences form part of the rich fabric of this inclusive school, appreciated by all. Within an overtly Christian environment, members of world faiths are confident of their contribution to Churchmead's distinctiveness. They 'always take away something' from participating in Christian worship, knowing that their own beliefs are equally valued. All are exhorted to live life to the full and are reminded of this daily through collective worship, conversations, and lessons. The significant number of opportunities provided within and outside the curriculum are explicitly aligned to the vision and values. They test courage in trying new things, commitment to learn, and promote compassion.

The spiritual life of the school is integral to its purpose. The vision of 'Life in all its fullness' is used as the shared definition of spirituality. All curriculum departments plan for spiritual development, providing time and space for reflection and discussion. Provision for well-being is a strength. Among other strategies, staff use their training in mindfulness and meditation to support the wellbeing of pupils and colleagues. The newly refurbished chapel is seen as a place of safety where anyone can go for private prayer and reflection in times of challenge. This was particularly well used during the return from lockdown. Staff are passionate in delivering the best provision possible and see their roles as a vocation. They take joy in their work and in seeing pupils and colleagues succeed. Where difficult conversations take place, compassion is exercised.

Pupil learning behaviours and conduct are exemplary. They appreciate and acknowledge the work undertaken by staff to ensure their academic and pastoral needs are met. They talk about a collaboration with staff, noting the mutual trust and respect between them. This contributes to a culture of learning where all thrive. Where incidents occur, a restorative approach is applied. One pupil commented that the 'school is big on forgiveness and fresh starts.' Pupils are as keen to resolve problems for themselves and others, working collaboratively with staff in the best interests of all. They understand that this is a link to the biblical principles behind their values.

All pupils receive guidance on making their best life choices. For those following a vocational path, opportunities are sought out or created to suit their needs. Links with employers led to apprenticeships being established. Academic

expectations are high, and pupils strive to achieve a grade above predicted. The implementation of an online programme researching career options encourages hope and aspiration from year seven. The curriculum is planned and delivered creatively to meet the needs of all pupils. In RE, pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. They respond to challenging topics delivered through inspiring teaching. Healthy debate and discussion of opposing ideas is positively encouraged so that pupils learn to disagree well, respecting the opinions of others. Opportunities for this are built into the curriculum. As well as tackling big questions in RE, ethical discussions take place in other subjects.

Pupil voice is strong and authentic. Wanting to enable all to live life to the full, they become courageous advocates for change. They suggest and implement improvements to the school, fund raise and become active participants in local, national, and global issues. When a nearby tree was under threat, pupils joined efforts to successfully save it. Acting with compassion, helping others is instinctive. Year 7 pupils cleared up storm damage in their own time, as an act of kindness, for example. All are conscious of being role models for each other, presenting ways to promote the common good.

Collective worship is inspirational. Those of all faiths and none take up the invitation to participate in their own way, reflecting on the relevance of biblical passages to their lives. The theme of the week is taken back into tutor groups for reflection during subsequent days. Written responses in reflection diaries enable ongoing contemplation. Pupils take part by writing and reading out their ideas, thoughts and prayers based on the theme. These send powerful messages to their peers. Collective worship is led by a range of staff, including those from other countries and denominations with different traditions. As a result, pupils experience a wide range of worship styles. Thus, they understand Christianity as a living faith across the world.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

RE is well led and managed. It is rigorously and regularly monitored by leaders including governors. Monitoring judges teaching as consistently good or better. As a result, work produced is excellent. Outcomes are robustly measured against expected standards. Pupils make at least expected progress and achieve well in public examinations. The school was recently awarded a Gold RE Mark.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	10 March 2022	URN	133580
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2015		
School status	Voluntary aided secondary school	NOR	425
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Chris Tomes		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Rachel Beeson	No.	952