

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Coombes Church of England Primary School, Arborfield	
Address	School Road, Arborfield, Reading, RG2 9NX
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

School's vision
<p>'A love of learning grows here'.</p> <p>We seek to achieve academic excellence and provide the good conditions described by Jesus Christ in the parable of the sower (Mark 4: 3-8) where each child can grow and thrive. We aim to see each child grow in character, confidence and understanding, grow in appreciation of who they are and acquire the skills needed to succeed in a changing world.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision underpins the academic and spiritual growth of the school community. Its recent thorough implementation is moving the school rapidly forward. • Pupils access a new, robust, and rounded curriculum that incorporates the school's unique outdoor setting. However, there are limited opportunities to explore courageous advocacy through the whole curriculum. • Collective worship is inclusive and supports pupils' understanding of the school's vision and its associated values. It includes opportunities to pray, however places for prayer beyond this are limited. • Leaders have created a whole school approach to spirituality. However, a clear understanding of its intent and implementation is yet to be developed. Therefore, opportunities to maximise pupils' spiritual experiences are missed. • Through high quality provision, pupils are inspired by religious education (RE). They actively explore different worldviews and feel empowered to ask significant questions of meaning in a safe environment.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the school's shared understanding of spiritual growth to facilitate deeper spiritual development for all. • Enable pupils to develop as agents of social change through greater engagement and ownership of the school's ethical and charitable activities. • Increase opportunities for the school community to experience moments of stillness and prayer.



Inspection findings

The Coombes Church of England Primary school is a member of the Keys Academy Trust. The trust's vision of excellent learning and pastoral care for its community, complements the school's intentions well. The school has been through a period of instability. However, it is now emerging confidently as a welcoming place that exemplifies its vision, 'a love of learning grows here' based on Mark 4: 3-8. This is promoted as the foundation for learning at the school.

Trustees and governors work diligently to improve outcomes for pupils. The recent financial commitment invested into the school is producing rapid and tangible improvements. Furthermore, recent consistent and comprehensive application of the vision, creates an environment where all have an opportunity to grow and flourish.

The trustees' appointment of a new headteacher and changes to the leadership team is creating capacity for whole school improvement. As a result, the school is benefiting from a relevant and updated curriculum. This has included new reading books that supports the pupils' phonics learning. Pupils are excited by their new books and explain how they contribute to a love of learning. Parents who have had children at this school over a longer period applaud recent improvements in communication and attitudes.

Class teachers are developing and adjusting the curriculum so that it is accessible to all pupils. One example is the introduction of knowledge organisers. Pupils say they are helpful to aid recall of prior learning and for identifying their next steps. Such initiatives support their academic growth, helping them to flourish. Learning experiences incorporated within the curriculum embrace the school's unique history and setting. Through thoughtful and courageous decisions, staff are extending their use of the school's extensive outside space. Pupils express pleasure and excitement when discussing the variety of outdoor activities accessible to them. Lessons create a safe space to share ideas. They enable opportunities for growth. This reflects the school's vision well. Pupils who need additional help with learning are aptly supported by skilled staff who quickly respond to their needs.

This school welcomes everyone and has expectations that all will develop a love of learning. Good mental health and wellbeing are important aspects of the curriculum. Through a new initiative, staff are equipping pupils with increased mental resilience. This is consistent with the school's vision of continued growth. In addition, extracurricular provision is also explicitly designed to help pupils further develop resilience and build character. This takes pupils into new areas of personal growth and helps them to flourish.

Governors understand the needs of their school. They are well-informed and ensure that spending decisions link closely with the school's vision. An excellent example of their work is leadership in developing the school's grounds. The school's unique outdoor area lends itself well to woodland and horticultural learning. Governors recognise the advantage this has for pupils' academic and spiritual growth as well as their mental health and wellbeing. Consequently, they have courageous plans for ongoing fundamental changes to all outside places. The plans are purposely designed to reflect the school's vision so that everyone has opportunity to grow a love of learning. Governors work hard to ensure the school continues to develop in all areas. Through regular visits to the school and via conversations with pupils, they skilfully evaluate the impact of the curriculum. Pupils' ideas are listened to and influence subsequent actions.

RE has high status because senior leaders understand the value of the subject. The RE subject leader has a depth of knowledge and a contagious passion for her subject. She engages with RE training delivered by the trust and diocese and cascades this to staff,



equipping them to deliver lessons. Pupils enjoy RE and collaborate well, respecting each other's views. RE enables them to develop a clear understanding of Christianity and other worldviews. Their individual learning needs are catered for in a way that ensures that they grow and flourish. Robust assessment of RE gauges pupils' progress and informs teachers planning. RE meets statutory obligations and reflects the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement.

Pupils are encouraged to think about the needs of others and they support a variety of charities. One such charity is a local premature baby unit. Pupils help organise different events to support this work and are proud of their achievements. However, social action initiatives are not broad enough for them to recognise that they too can be agents of social change.

Collective worship is held in high esteem. Pupils look forward to it as a joyous experience. The collective worship leaders have ensured a well-balanced programme of worship that is inclusive, inspirational, and invitational. Worship benefits from a strong team of clergy who bring different expressions of worship to the school. The school's vision and values, deeply rooted in biblical teaching, are promoted exceptionally well. Pupils lead aspects of collective worship daily and evaluate its impact through pupil conferences with governors. At the end of each act of worship everyone is reminded that they should act on what they have learnt. This allows children to live by their values and vision and therefore flourish.

Leaders have created a whole school approach to spirituality. However, a clear understanding of its intent and implementation is yet to be developed. Consequently, while opportunities for spiritual development clearly exist, these lack the impact of a consistent, shared understanding. As a result, opportunities to maximise pupils' spirituality are missed. Additionally, the school has limited opportunities set aside for its community to experience spirituality through moments of stillness or prayer.

Relationships across the school community are strong and supportive. Several of the local churches support the school in prayer. Staff feel valued and respected. A focus on good mental health and wellbeing is actively promoted. Additionally, staff members are encouraged to develop their subject expertise by taking on new roles in a culture of nurture and appreciation. Therefore, staff development aptly expresses the school's vision of growth for all.

The Coombes is an effective Church school where everyone is cherished. It is a place where the vision inspires and encourages all to grow to be the best that they can be



Information			
School	The Coombes Church of England Primary School, Arborfield	Inspection date	2 February 2023
URN	144637	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Oxford	Pupils on roll	403
MAT/Federation	The Keys Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Luke Henderson		
Chair of Governors	Louise Connelly		
Inspector	Delia Sheppard	No.	942