



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Checkendon Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Checkendon, Reading, RG8 0SR
School vision	
<p>To unlock the unique voice within each child fostering a lifelong aspiration of learning excellence. Striving for an inclusive school family where everyone can flourish and experience life to its fullest. We aim to grow within the natural beauty surrounding us, safe in the knowledge of God’s love.</p> <p>“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)</p> <p>Our chosen values, Respect, Integrity, Compassion, Courage and Hope.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision is inspiring and lived out by the Checkendon school community. Through this, adults and pupils have the opportunity to ‘live life to its fullest’ in any way they can. • Pupils and adults value one another as they seek to enable everyone to flourish. This results in relationships that are strong. • The Christian vision shapes the curriculum. The well-planned range of experiences including visitors within it enables pupils to flourish. • Worship provides calm and reflective opportunities to consider the school’s vision and values in ways that are inclusive and invitational. Pupils and adults value the time to come together as one in collective worship. • Effective leadership in religious education (RE) has established a well-sequenced and balanced curriculum. It develops knowledge and understanding of major world religions. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that leaders’ monitoring of the school's Christian vision is robust and systematic. This is to evaluate and increase its effect on the flourishing of pupils and adults. • Develop an approach and common language for spirituality. This will deepen the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults in collective worship and across the curriculum. • Extend the breadth and scale of opportunities for pupils to develop as agents of change for global issues. This is so they have a greater appreciation of the power of their voice. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The school’s vision to ‘unlock the unique voice within each child’ permeates school life. Leaders have crafted a Christian vision which embodies their high aspiration for learning and personal development. Curriculum expectations are high. Pupils rise to the challenge because they are given opportunities to excel, for example in sports teams, music, art and drama. The school's vision reflects the opportunities presented by its natural, rural context. There is an ambition for all pupils</p>	



and adults to experience God's love. This is explained through knowing that 'God is found everywhere. Outside, inside, in children, in staff – threaded through everything'. However, leaders' evaluation of the impact their Christian vision is having is limited. This lack of evaluation restricts their understanding of the full extent to which it enables pupils and adults to flourish.

The Checkendon curriculum is rich in memorable experiences including engaging visitors. This creates exciting learning opportunities that enable pupils to flourish, whatever their 'unique strengths'. Nothing is seen as an impossibility at Checkendon. Pupils and staff know and apply the power of the phrase 'not yet,' meaning they can always improve. This exceptionally positive approach ensures the school's vision to foster an aspiration for lifelong learning is having a strong impact. Stakeholders value the outdoor learning opportunities. These build resilience, increase courage and develop skills, whilst appreciating the natural beauty of the local environment and God's world. Staff have received training on spirituality and have an understanding of the breadth of experiences available. They recognise spontaneous moments that allow for spiritual growth, such as an early morning frost or the beautiful shell of a snail. Pupils' understanding of spirituality, though, is more limited. The school does not have an agreed language and approach. This restricts the planning of opportunities across the curriculum, and the extent to which pupils understand and recognise their own spiritual development.

Collective worship is firmly rooted in the school's vision and values. Careful planning results in effective provision which reflects the Church's year. Pupils understand the importance of biblical texts and messages. They appreciate that the 'the stories of Jesus and the morals behind them are still relevant to today's life'. Acts of worship are inclusive and invitational. Pupils and adults are invited to take part, for example in a time of prayer or to focus on the candle flame. Pupils appreciate that some will use this as a time to pray while others will not. They respect the choices that everyone makes. The partnership with the neighbouring parish church is strong. The school community uses the church for their act of worship once a week, led by a member of the church's ministry team. The parish, too, makes use of school facilities, for example their Good Friday family activities. This strong mutual partnership enriches the work of both. Parents value the opportunity to share in collective worship at church festivals and regularly in school. Pupils selected as School Value Ambassadors take a role in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship. This supports their personal spiritual flourishing. Their evaluations also aid school leaders' reflections on their own practice. However, a lack of formal monitoring by adults of the impact of the vision on collective worship limits provision.

When anyone joins Checkendon, they become part of 'a family'. This is demonstrated by older pupils who support, care and play together with younger pupils. They rejoice in sharing one another's successes. 'Zones of regulation' are used for pupils to recognise and regulate their emotions. This increases their level of self-awareness. Staff support pupils as the unique individuals they are. They know pupils and families well. They ensure that the right support is in place to enable each pupil to flourish. Likewise, staff are valued, well supported and led by effective, caring leaders. Parents say how quickly children feel a sense of belonging to this 'beautifully inclusive' community. They praise how open and communicative school staff are. This ensures that living well together as an inclusive school community extends beyond the school gates and into homes.

The curriculum positively promotes equality and diversity through the deliberate choices staff make about content. Coupled with the inspirational people that pupils select and research, this results in a greater awareness and care for others. The school's vision strives to unlock pupils' abilities and encourages them to grow into better people. As a result, pupils are keen to engage with local and national issues. They have written to the village newsletter about their outdoor learning area and supported a reduced speed driving zone. These strong partnerships with the community, parish, local schools and the diocese support the school's vision. Pupils also raise money for charities

during the year. They are having an impact locally, but are not initiating change on global issues about which they are passionate. This limits the power of their voice to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

School leaders have ensured that RE provision is effective and has a high profile. Support by diocesan advisors has resulted in a bespoke RE curriculum. This ensures balanced coverage of world religious and non-religious worldviews. Set at a challenging pitch, learning is sequenced to build in complexity. It is rooted in pupils' relatable experiences and builds to explore open-ended concepts and deep questions. Creative activities are used to ignite pupils' thoughts and imagination. The use of floor books, which record learning, ensures that pupils are highly engaged. Pupils enjoy RE because teaching is stimulating. They are knowledgeable about world religions and can make links between faiths. Pupils understand the importance of knowing about a range of faiths in a multicultural world. However, pupils are less confident in discussing their learning regarding non-religious worldviews. Assessment, using diocesan material, is well planned and ensures the accurate identification of pupils' learning and progress. This ensures that teachers know what they want all pupils to learn. It identifies successes, gaps and next steps accurately.

The inspection findings indicate that Checkendon Church of England VA Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	24 May 2024	URN	123200
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	61
Diocese	Oxford		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Sarah Hillier		
Chair	James Rawson		
Inspector	Rob Halls	No.	2106