

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cropredy Church of England Primary School			
Address	Station Road, Banbury, OX17 1PU		
Date of inspection	13 March 2020	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	123090

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

School context

Cropredy is a primary school with 165 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is slightly below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities is broadly in line with national averages. Since January 2019, the school has had six interim headteachers. A new substantive headteacher takes up the post next term.

The school's Christian vision 'The Lord is my shepherd'

As a shepherd nurtures and provides for the flock, so we provide guidance, care and protection for every child, inspiring them to flourish, develop resilience and walk with confidence on their learning journey. (Psalm 23)

Key findings

- The Christian ethos powerfully unites this school community. The vision is true to Cropredy's Christian foundation and this has sustained staff and governors through a series of traumatic events.
- Staff are dedicated to each other and to the pupils they serve. Academic outcomes are improving, especially for those pupils with additional needs. However, the vision's role in this is not explicitly acknowledged.
- Partnerships with the parish Church and Diocese are extremely positive. Shepherding from these partners has led the school into a more secure place.
- The leadership of religious education (RE) and collective worship is exceptional. Both aspects are extremely well-supported by a skilled and dedicated practitioner, so they are a clear expression of the vision. Worship, however, is more limited in style and independent input from pupils.
- The curriculum inspires learning. Creative use of the extensive grounds enhances learning and spiritual growth.

Areas for development

- Establish systems to capture the impact of the vision so that it more explicitly drives improvements in academic outcomes and the ongoing development of the school as a Church school.
- Explore a wider range of styles and formats for worship to include greater involvement of pupils in independently planning and leading aspects.

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

Cropredy School is remarkably resilient. The work of God is seen in the steadfastness of all members of the community to weather crises, including a series of interim leaders and new governors. Despite these challenges, staff, governors and the Diocese have worked effectively together to minimise the impact on pupils. The current diocesan adviser is described as a 'rock' and his patience and engaging style has captivated and motivated leaders. The impact of the leader for RE and collective worship, who coordinated the preparation for this inspection, cannot be overstated. She is a truly 'good shepherd.' Her dedication to the school, while being a part-time member of staff, is a shining example of service. The vision, based on Psalm 23, reflects the rural context, where sheep and lambs may be seen around the village. It captures the commitment to enable all ages to flourish. With humility, leaders know they are the shepherd and may also be the flock, in need of further guidance. The whole school community is looking forward to welcoming their new head 'shepherd.'

Family members are deeply appreciative of the constant care they and their children are shown. Staff are approachable, sympathetic and pro-active in providing additional support, like play therapy and arrangements for induction. Several parents comment on the excellent links with the parish Church. The vicar is a much-loved part of this community. Governors keep parents informed of developments and parents value the helpful communication from the chair of governors. Leaders consistently live out the vision of flourishing. As one said, 'We empower others and the vision is the thread which pulls us all together.' This is exemplified by their genuine concern for staff wellbeing and good mental health. Warm and trusting relationships characterise the school. Staff support each other and state that the challenges faced have made them a stronger team. The interim headteacher has steadied the ship and brought security to the community. In leading the way, staff secure good behaviour from pupils. The youngest pupils thrive under the guidance of older friends at playtimes when the different ages mix happily. All strive to live 'the Cropredy way.'

With positive support from parents and the village community, the school has continued to provide high quality learning experiences. Pupils enjoy a wealth of learning opportunities. Forest school and other outdoor learning give adults and pupils memorable experiences and spiritual nourishment. Music, sports and the arts enrich the curriculum. Exciting events, like the Viking topic, inspire all ages to deepen their historical and cultural knowledge. Good attendance is a testament to how much pupils enjoy school. It also confirms the effective provision for pupils' wellbeing. Results in academic assessments continue to improve, thanks to the determination of staff and pupils to give of their best. Identification and support for those pupils with additional needs is now more effective. However, the link between the vision and these improving outcomes is less well understood. At present, the vision is better expressed as supporting positive behaviour and relationships.

RE makes a very good contribution to flourishing. The subject focuses on the main concepts of a range of faiths. This gives pupils a sense of their place in our multi-cultural world. Pupils have a growing understanding of Christianity. Staff have been well-supported to begin to use 'Understanding Christianity' resources. Pupils make good progress in the subject and enjoy the practical activities, especially when food is involved! Reception pupils were overheard while making an Easter garden outdoors, 'Over there are the crowds in Jerusalem, because Jesus is coming!' 'But we need a table for the special meal,' said one pupil. So, the group scurried off to find something suitable to represent the Last Supper. This turned out to be a recycled brick! In this wonderful environment, space is found for God and God's love is found everywhere.

Collective worship is woven into the fabric of the school. Time to come together, reflect, sing, smile and rejoice is a special part of the day. Live music adds to the special feel of worship. Pupils' involvement in worship has improved since the previous denominational inspection. The pupil worship workers set up the hall and assist with music and readings. Pupils have, however, relatively few opportunities to independently plan and lead worship in class or the hall. The worship workers are keen to develop their role. One of them said, 'We help people to come closer to God.' Prayer is natural and an inclusive part of the spiritual life of the school. A pupil explained what spirituality meant to them: 'God is in you and your spirit is in God.' Pupils are excited by the invitation to write prayers as a Lent challenge. Pupils' prayers and reflections are collated into a book and used regularly in acts of worship. An innovative system uses pebbles to gather feedback on how worship affects them. Pupils and staff select a colour to match their feelings as they leave the hall. This feedback contributes to future

plans. Worship is planned by the staff lead and supported by the vicar. It explores the Bible, life and teaching of Jesus, while being relevant to current events. Worship involving visitors enhance the experience and inspire pupils to be agents of change. After a moving act of worship on the theme of service, pupils chose to support two specialist air ambulances for children. Services in the parish Church mark the seasons of the Christian calendar and mean that pupils and adults are connected to the wider Anglican church. Pupils are less aware of the global nature of Christianity. The vicar brings creative elements to worship, through events like a prayer labyrinth. Pupils walked around this pathway, made outdoors, as an aid to reflection. Patterns of worship are, however, generally limited in style. When this varies, for example, worship held outdoors, it is even more effective as an expression of the vision. Pupils are familiar with some Anglican traditions of worship and, through RE, learn about the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Cropredy is faithful to its Christian foundations. Its vision encapsulates its local community and is central to the life of the school, giving a clear direction and uniting adults and pupils. This is a good Church school with much to commend. As one pupil eloquently summed up, 'Our good shepherd guides us through good times and bad.' This school, as the vision states, is ready to walk into its future with confidence.

Interim headteacher	Margaret Gwynne
Inspector's name and number	Allyson Taylor 768