

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

New Christ Church Church of England Primary School			
Address	Milman Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 0AY		
Date of inspection	21 January 2020	Status of school	Primary academy inspected as VA Berkshire School Trust
Diocese	Oxford	URN	145660

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 Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

New Christ Church is a primary school with 187 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes to staffing, including the appointment of two co-headteachers. In May 2018, the school became part of the Berkshire Schools Trust.

The school's Christian vision

'Because God made humans in his image reflecting God's very nature'
(Genesis 9:6)

Our vision is rooted in the Christian narrative of Noah. We are a place of hope, new beginnings; where people are given a fresh start, find love, aspiration, and are met with forgiveness and commitment in unwavering power. We are called to 'Love Each Other, Love Our World, Love Ourselves'.

Key findings

- The inspiring leadership of the co-headteachers and the relationship it has within the multi-academy trust (MAT) ensure the whole school community understand how to love each other, love the world and love themselves.
- Being a place of hope and new beginning underpins key policies, most notably the behaviour policy. This has led to improvement for all pupils but especially the most vulnerable.
- Collective worship is inclusive and invitational. It has a sense of importance and purpose and is integral to the school's vision.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and development areas for the school. Their systems for monitoring the impact of the vision are not yet embedded.
- Religious education (RE) teaching is engaging, creative and pupils enjoy their lessons. The assessment practices in RE are not yet accurate or robust.

Areas for development

- For governors to establish more formal monitoring of the effectiveness of the vision in order to further inform school development.
- Explore wider global links so that pupils have an understanding of Christianity around the world.
- Build on the assessment practices in RE, ensuring that they are accurate, so that pupils know how to make progress.

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

New Christ Church is a school where all members of the school community love each other, love the world and love themselves. In a very short space of time the inspirational leadership of the co-headteachers has had a significant impact on the life of the school. As a result, all members of the school community understand, share and demonstrate the vision of the school. Pupils relate the values of the school to the story of Noah. They attribute the values of compassion to Noah caring for animals, perseverance to Noah not giving up and the value of hope to Noah searching for dry land. They apply these values to their daily lives and understand how they need these to be able to succeed in their learning. Leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that their new curriculum reflects the vision of the school. Loving each other, loving our world and loving ourselves is woven into all aspects of the pupil's learning. Leaders are committed to ensuring that every pupil achieves their best possible outcomes. They recognise that they need to build resilience for all to thrive and have provided targeted support to enable this to happen. This means that most pupils make progress, which is close to the national averages. All pupils, including the most vulnerable, feel included and engaged in their learning. Pupils' spiritual development is well planned for and is enriched throughout a pupil's time at the school. Parents and pupils speak enthusiastically about watching the daily news and how this leads to topical debates. Parents recognise the impact that this has on their child's spiritual development.

Being a place of new beginnings and of fresh starts is demonstrated through the school's approach to behaviour. All members of the school community recognise that pupils have varying needs. This means that the most vulnerable are able to flourish. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that pupils are treated with dignity, respect and develop their self-worth and self-belief. This has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions. Pupils talk about reflecting on their behaviours and seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. Parents too recognise the impact the new co-headteachers have had on creating an environment where everyone is loved. They talk about the community being a school family where everyone is known, understood and cared for. This means that relationships amongst the school community are strong.

The school's role within the MAT has strengthened the leadership of the school, enabling pupils and adults to thrive. Leaders speak about how the investment into staff and governance training has meant that adults are highly skilled in their roles. The school has strong links with the Diocese and with the local church. All partners recognise the critical nature of the two-way support in helping the school's continuing development. Although governors are regular visitors to the school and are involved in monitoring, their monitoring is not yet fully focused on the vision of the school. There is little evidence that demonstrates their understanding of the impact of the vision or how effective the school is as a Church school.


Pupils attribute the vision of loving each other to the success of their school. They demonstrate compassion and kindness by looking after each other. They are adamant that there is no bullying in their school but know what to do should they have a problem. They understand that for them to be the best person that they can, they have to love themselves and relate this to persevering and never giving up. They are keen to challenge social injustice and unfairness and have written to the Queen about environmental issues. They debate the work of Greta Thunberg and have written letters of encouragement to show that, they too, love their world. Pupils understand their social responsibility. One Year 6 pupil said, 'My role in this world is to be part of a generation which will stop cruelty and unfairness to others.'

Collective worship is appropriately planned, invitational and inclusive. All members of the community are able to engage in worship and prayer is a natural part of school life. During Ramadan, a special prayer room was created. Muslim pupils were able to share and teach others about their faith. Leaders ensure that pupils are exposed to different experiences so that they can reflect, pray and be still. However, pupils do not have a range of experiences which allow them to fully understand Christianity as a worldwide and diverse faith. Pupils apply what they have learnt in worship to their daily lives. One pupil said, 'When I hear the words "Nothing is impossible with God", I have hope that I can do what I want to do.' Pupils speak animatedly about the different church seasons and are knowledgeable about different worship styles and traditions. They have an age appropriate understanding of the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils have an in-depth understanding of the Bible that demonstrates how collective worship enables them to encounter the teaching of

Jesus. Monitoring of collective worship is effective. Pupils plan, lead and evaluate worship. Following feedback from younger pupils, leaders have ensured that they too are more involved in the leading of collective worship. Pupils and staff value the involvement of the local church community in collective worship.

Leaders have ensured that the RE curriculum is underpinned by the school's vision and is appropriate to the pupils' needs. Pupils talk about enjoying their lessons and being engaged and challenged by the big questions. They learn through debates and demonstrate the vision of loving each other by respecting others' opinions even if they are different from their own. The vision of loving ourselves is also demonstrated through RE teaching. Younger pupils, when learning about Zacchaeus, were able to talk about his characteristics and what type of person they would be like if they followed Zacchaeus' example. A Year 1 pupil said, 'Zacchaeus stole food, I wouldn't do that, I would want to give food to people who need it.' Pupils attribute loving their world to the creation story. They feel a duty and responsibility to look after the world that God created for them. Pupils have a sound understanding of all major world faiths. They recognise that they need to know about all faiths so that they respect their friends. They value the school's inclusive approach to all religions and take pride in sharing their own customs, traditions and beliefs.

New Christ Church is a school where all members of the school community are loved as part of a family. All pupils are treated as individuals who are made in the image of God. The school focuses on new beginnings, providing hope and aspirations for its pupils, enabling them to thrive and flourish.

 **The effectiveness of RE is Good**
 RE is held in high esteem throughout the school. The RE leader is passionate about the subject and has a very clear monitoring and action plan in place. However, current assessment is not always accurate which means that pupils are not sure what they need to do to flourish even further. Pupils enjoy RE and attribute this to the challenging and engaging lessons. As a result, all groups of pupils make academic progress in this subject. Staff have appropriate training and are supported to deliver effective teaching.

Headteachers	Alison Crooks and Joss Kitching
Inspector's name and number	Angela Wheatcroft 872