

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Aston Rowant CE Primary School

Address	School Lane, Aston Rowant, Watlington OX49 5SU		
Date of inspection	27 June 2019	Status of school	VC primary
Diocese / Methodist District	Oxford	URN	123124

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

School context

Aston Rowant is a primary school with 62 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below national averages. The school works in a collaborative partnership with 10 local schools.

The school's Christian vision

Developing children to become confident and ambitious life-long learners through a nurturing, inspiring and bespoke learning environment, 'for God so loves the world'. John 3:16.

Key findings

- Pupils and adults are well supported and encouraged to flourish in a nurturing environment which they say feels like being 'one family'. Pupils who find learning more difficult are beginning to make progress because they are valued, respected and given the support they need in order to succeed.
- Governors, together with pupils, parents and staff, have refreshed the vision and values because they regard these as the driving force in moving forward as an effective Church school. However, they do not monitor and evaluate its impact on the community with sufficient rigour to be sure that this is so.
- The spiritual development of pupils is a very high priority and many opportunities, within and beyond the curriculum, and in the school's environment, promote this.
- Pupils' progress in religious education (RE) is not assessed accurately so teachers cannot be sure that they are challenging all pupils to flourish.
- The recommendation of the last inspection, that pupils are more involved in evaluating worship, has not been addressed. This means that the school cannot be judged to be good.

Areas for development

- Governors and leaders to monitor the impact of the vision specifically and rigorously in order to be sure that it determines the school's policies and procedures.
- Governors and leaders to ensure that all pupils, including the most vulnerable, are making consistently good progress, from their individual starting points, in RE.
- Greater priority needs to be given to the leadership of RE so that teachers and leaders know that all pupils are fully challenged and making good progress.
- Pupils should be given regular opportunities to monitor and evaluate worship so that leaders know that it is always engaging and relevant.

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

Governors and the headteacher have refreshed the vision and the values with the intention that the vision underpins the work of the school and shapes its policies and procedures. The vision is shared with parents. Governors, staff and parents feel that it is the Christian vision which makes the school a safe, nurturing environment where all pupils flourish. The Christian distinctiveness of the school is seen by everyone in the community to be engrained. The school encourages its pupils to become confident, ambitious learners and many of the activities are inspiring. However, the monitoring of the impact of the vision lacks rigour and consistency. It does not identify areas where pupils could be making better progress or where leaders should be monitoring pupils' outcomes more regularly, for example, in RE. The vision is not widely celebrated in documentation on the school's website. However, it does appear to determine policies such as behaviour and attendance. The school works in partnership with the Diocese but leaders have not taken up opportunities to access training opportunities. They do not ensure that assessment in RE is accurate and thorough and that teachers are challenging all pupils consistently. Leaders have not given priority to RE or to the last inspection's recommendation to involve different groups in monitoring and evaluating worship. The headteacher and governors have a robust development plan which shows their intention to improve outcomes and leadership. This is reviewed regularly and leaders and governors know that things are moving forward, but the extent to which this is driven by the vision is less evident. As a result, the school requires improvement as a Church school. Partnerships with local schools have provided the school with opportunities to benefit from sharing good practice. There are strong links with the parish church and other local churches. Staff are being supported to uphold the school's Christian character but are less well supported to deliver RE.

The school's ethos is based on respect, responsibility, compassion and wisdom. Pupils can explain how these values determine the way that they behave and treat one another. They show a good understanding of what it means to live by them. They tell of the Bible stories which exemplify the values. For example, they describe the compassion shown by the Good Samaritan. They explain the way in which they respect one another, for example, on sports day they feel 'it is the taking part, not the winning, which matters'. The curriculum is planned well to provide engaging activities in an extremely inspiring and stimulating environment. Outdoor learning experiences are especially rich and give pupils a sense of awe and wonder. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are planned well and are given priority. Pupils talk about what is going on in the news and teachers adapt lessons so that pupils can respond in ways that are meaningful for them. Activities are adapted well so that they meet the needs of pupils who find learning more difficult but more able pupils are not always challenged in RE. Pupils are encouraged to be aspirational, to persevere and to overcome difficulties. The school has adopted a strategy which helps them to understand that making mistakes is part of learning. Pupils make the right choices and behave extremely well. They attribute the way they treat one another, forgive and respect one another to their understanding of the Christian values.

Pupils raise money for various charities to demonstrate their determination to make a difference and their sense of compassion. Pupils have global links, for example, by supporting a pupil in Gambia, and they are able to understand that Christianity is a world faith. They speak of their value of hope for the world, and their respect for God's creation. The school has started to develop links with schools in contrasting locations so that pupils begin to understand their multi-cultural society. Pupils and parents are completely included and valued within the community irrespective of their beliefs because of the importance of respect in the school community. Parents and visitors are often welcomed in to share their traditions with pupils so that they realise they live amongst people with different beliefs. Pupils visit the parish church in order to learn about Christian worship as well as to celebrate major festivals and links between the church and school are strengthening. For example, pupils' families are starting to attend church services.

Relationships within the school are extremely positive and create a calm and welcoming atmosphere which is especially important for the more vulnerable pupils. All pupils feel that adults support them well and care for them as individuals. Leaders are aware of pupils' specific needs and skilled in responding to them. Governors are concerned for the wellbeing of staff and the vicar is a supportive presence for the entire community. The curriculum encourages pupils to be respectful of one another and to treat one another with dignity. This helps them as they

move on to secondary school and adapt to a different environment. Parents note the confidence the school instils in their children and the determination to succeed and attribute this to the school's Christian mission.

Worship invites all pupils to engage as they choose, and they grow in spirituality through reflection, music and stillness. Pupils learn about Christian traditions and festivals, Bible stories and Christian prayers. They write their own prayers and these are often read in class or school worship, or at the start of the school day. Worship is based on one of the values over several weeks so that pupils fully understand that value and what it means to show it to others. Resources are selected carefully so that they engage pupils well. Different members of staff and members of clergy lead worship so that pupils experience different styles and traditions. Pupils understand the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils have a role in planning some worship, for example one class acted the story of the Good Samaritan. They have designed their own altar cloth and written prayers during a recent 'Prayer Space' on large banners for display in the church. However, pupils do not have opportunities to evaluate worship regularly or in a systematic way. Consequently, leaders have limited information to ensure that worship is always engaging and relevant for pupils and the extent to which it supports their spiritual development.

RE develops pupils' understanding of the Christian faith, its festivals and traditions. Pupils also learn about other faiths and this helps them to understand more about the world around them. In RE lessons and at other times pupils are able to discuss the bigger questions and to respect one another's different opinions. They learn about a range of faiths and feel this helps them to understand different cultures and traditions. Teachers plan engaging activities in RE lessons along with visits to local places of worship. Here pupils identify similarities and differences between the special places for different faith communities. The vicar often contributes to RE lessons, for example, answering pupils' questions about God. RE reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. However, there is insufficient professional development for teachers and RE is not assessed rigorously. This means that teachers do not know whether all pupils are making good progress. They cannot be sure all pupils are fully challenged.

The school is determined to develop pupils as confident, ambitious and lifelong learners and can demonstrate that this is being achieved. Pupils are nurtured and inspired. However, it is not always evident that it is the Christian vision is driving the school's work or that leaders are checking that this is so.

Headteacher	Eve Roberts
Inspector's name and number	Gill Walley 644