

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Gerrards Cross Church of England School			
<b>Address</b>	Moreland Drive, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire SL9 8BD		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	7 March 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Primary academy inspected as VA.
<b>Diocese / Methodist District</b>	Oxford	<b>URN</b>	137774

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
<b>Additional Judgements</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

<b>School context</b>
The Gerrards Cross CE School is a primary academy with 420 pupils on roll. Most pupils are of White British heritage but a large proportion of the roll are of Asian/Asian-British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages.
<b>The school's Christian vision</b>
Every Child flourishing in life both now and in the future
<b>Key findings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective governance and extensive links with St James' Church helps the school identify strongly as a Church of England school.</li> <li>• The school is highly inclusive and is particularly successful in supporting pupils with a special educational need and /or disability (SEND).</li> <li>• Although the school's Christian approach is embedded, its theological underpinning is not yet communicated with sufficient clarity to fully shape the distinctive vision for this school going forwards.</li> <li>• By utilising the challenge and support of the diocese, academic progress is consistently rising although it has not been as high as it should be for some pupils or in comparison to similar schools.</li> <li>• RE and collective worship make a strong contribution to the all-round development of the pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>Areas for development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a variety of creative ways, explore with and explain to pupils, parents, staff and church the school's theological underpinning and how it intentionally affects the vision and all of school life.</li> <li>• Demonstrate the school's Christian vision in enabling all pupils to develop their full potential by ensuring academic progress by all pupils is consistently high.</li> <li>• In a variety of creative ways ensure pupils have an extensive knowledge of world-wide multicultural Anglicanism and utilise a range of Anglican forms and prayers in collective worship.</li> </ul>

**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**

There is considerable goodwill towards this church school because it carefully nurtures quality relationships with St James' Church, parents, the local community and the diocese. These links secure the school's understanding of itself as a church community at the heart of Gerrards Cross, making a difference to local people. Building on a long established Christian ethos, the committed headteacher and competent governors work hard towards ensuring this school offers the Christian gift of 'life in all its fullness'. This results in the effective promotion of Christian values, helping pupils and adults alike to have a moral compass by which to make life decisions and to pursue aspirations.

Governors effectively monitor and challenge the school, bringing about improvements. The school has made good progress in identifying its vision and it can map its quality provision to that vision in retrospect. However, a clear and robust understanding of the theological basis of that vision for the future is still work in progress as it has only very recently been reviewed.

A key gift of this school is that it is serving those with a need as a priority. Reflecting the Christian vision of each pupil flourishing, there is an intentional focus on supporting pupils with a special need or disability. Consequently, the school attracts a higher than national average number of pupils with an additional need. The school invests heavily in time, expertise and resources resulting in SEND pupils generally making good progress.

The curriculum equips, enriches and inspires pupils. It helps them appreciate the wider world, An example of this is the pupils' study of Amazonian peoples where they learn to respect diverse cultures and ways of living. The school makes effective use of diocesan support and challenge to continually aim for the best. It is implementing strategies to raise the levels of pupil progress so that all may flourish, including at levels comparable to similar schools. The improvement strategies are ensuring year on year improvements.

Training in spiritual development is being applied to good effect. Efforts are shaping the curriculum to enhance pupils' spiritual development supported by 'behaviours for learning' work and the new personal, social, health education (PSHE) learning scheme. This is resulting in confident, resilient, critically aware and compassionate pupils. Through opportunities to lead, for example, on the school council, pupils are given chances to test out their moral compass. Extensive extracurricular clubs contribute well to the growth of talents. The school has a careful approach to spiritual development, However, its practice is not yet sufficiently underpinned with the theological basis of the new vision statement.

Through quality RE, the school is proactive in honouring diversity of religion, ethnicity and gender within school. Pupils relish the opportunity to explore various religions and traditions. This is because the school is open and honest and provides opportunity for pupils to express their individuality and thought. Consequently, pupils see how variety contributes to life in all its fullness.

Effective planning results in RE lessons where pupils explore spiritual, religious and philosophical thought. In a safe space, pupils are taught to navigate respectful disagreement. An example is the recent class discussion on whether a murderer can always be forgiven. Lessons make good use of sacred texts to support critical thinking, for example, in identifying motive in the Easter accounts. RE contributes well to supporting pupils' spiritual growth, for example, in enabling a sense of awe and wonder during St James' science and religion week. As RE provision reflects the Church of England's statement of entitlement, pupils' RE skills are developing well.

Relationships at all levels of the school are strong. These arise from the caring leadership of the headteacher and modelled by a close-knit, inclusive staff team. The staff are well supported

professionally and personally, including in their emotional and mental wellbeing. Similarly, the pupils feel well cared for. A number of pupils and adults are clear that in times of grief, for example, the school has been a place of support for them where they are held in prayer and love. The employment of a drama therapist and therapy dog to support pupils exemplifies a wider concern for pupils' mental wellbeing.

Arising from the outworking of Christian values, pupils behave well and are considerate of each other. Where things do go wrong in relationships, pupils are well supported in making moral decisions and considering forgiveness and reconciliation where appropriate. The school's anti-bullying and safeguarding practices are effective and reflect the Church of England's statement of best practice, 'Valuing All God's Children.'

As well as a focus on the flourishing of the self, the school is encouraging pupils to look beyond themselves. The school's approach is helping pupils from this affluent context to develop a sense of gratitude and also responsibility in considering other people and the environment. Examples include the long standing Ugandan school link alongside St James' Church and recent efforts to support the needs of local hedgehogs. These endeavours raise pupils' aspirations that they can make a positive difference both locally and further afield.

Prayer was a development point from the last inspection. It has improved considerably because the school sees it as an important part of personal and collective flourishing. Opportunities to pray in the willow dome and prayer garden enable prayer to be a valued part of the rhythm of the day for pupils. The prayer spaces project, designed around the school's Christian values, influence pupils, clergy and adults alike on their spiritual journeys. Pupils and adults value stillness and reflection offered in collective worship. This resting in the Spirit supports their wellbeing.

Collective worship is well planned and led by the headteacher utilising the vast expertise from St James' Church. It is an inclusive opportunity to encounter the divine and shape aspirations. However, pupils' appreciation of the use of Anglican forms and the global, multicultural Anglican Church is under-developed, limiting pupils' awareness of some of the spiritual gifts of Anglicanism. Worship in song and music is an immensely joyful and positive vehicle of praise in collective worship. It engages everyone in a valued spiritual experience. Collective worship is an important time for the school where everyone is reminded that life in all its fullness is both an individual and a collective endeavour.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

**ONLY** Teaching is consistently good and often better. This results in most pupils making good progress, Consequently, pupils are reaching the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for RE. The use of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource is resulting in pupils with a deepening understanding of Christianity. Their knowledge enables them to compare and contrast beliefs and faiths with thoughtfulness and sensitivity. Furthermore, pupils are able to make connections between religious ideas. An example of this is one pupil linking concepts of renewal in adult baptism with the account of Noah and the flood. Appropriate assessment practices shape learning opportunities to the needs of the pupils. However, some recording tasks in books are not as well-crafted so that these pupils are not always able to fully demonstrate their capability. Marking strategies are effective in deepening pupils' learning as they reflect on past lessons. RE is well led so that teaching and learning are carefully monitored, bringing about improvements in lessons.

Headteacher	Nicola Flower
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips (598)