

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

<b>Longcot and Fernham Church of England Primary School</b>			
Address	King's Lane, Longcot, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, SN7 7SY		
Date of inspection	12 November 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC Faringdon Academy of Schools
Diocese	Oxford	URN	140283

<b>Overall Judgement</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>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgement</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Longcot and Fernham is a school with 136 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 below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. A significant proportion of pupils come from families serving in the armed forces. The school is a member of the Faringdon Academy of Schools multi-academy trust.

### The school's Christian vision

Caring for all

As the good shepherd cared for and loved all his sheep (Luke 15: 3-7), our vision is to nurture and respect all within our safe, Christian community. We seek to create successful learners, resilient individuals and responsible citizens who are equipped as thoughtful advocates and are able to adapt and grow in an ever-changing world.

### Key findings

- The school's inclusive Christian vision, based on how the good shepherd cared for all his sheep, is lived out by all members of the school community. This results in exceptionally strong relationships and high standards of wellbeing.
- The vision inspires strategic decision making, but governors have not fully embedded their systems for monitoring the impact of the vision.
- The example of Jesus caring for all his sheep inspires pupils to develop a good understanding of injustice, at both a local and global level. They then take action as a result.
- Engaging collective worship, strengthened by excellent and supportive links with the local church, helps pupils to interpret the meaning of Bible stories and to learn about the life and teachings of Jesus. They use this knowledge to guide their actions and behaviour.
- Pupils are inspired by religious education (RE) and can discuss a range of faiths with confidence. This helps them to develop respect for difference and diversity and is another example of the vision of caring for all being lived out. However, pupils do not have a deeper understanding of some key theological concepts.

### Areas for development

- Ensure governors further embed their current systems of monitoring and evaluation, so that the school continues to grow and flourish as a church school.
- Build on pupils' knowledge of a range of faiths, so that they develop a deeper understanding of key theological concepts.
- Develop planning for spirituality across the curriculum, so that pupils' spiritual experiences deepen as they progress through the school.

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**

Longcot and Fernham Church of England Primary School has made exceptional progress since its last inspection in developing a strong Christian ethos. There is now a well-established Christian vision based on Jesus, the good shepherd, caring for every member of his flock. This is complemented by three key Christian values of love, honesty and respect. 'Care for all' is highly effective as a vision because all members of the school community have been involved in developing the vision. As a result, they can describe how it is enabling them to flourish. The headteacher helps her staff to care for the needs of all pupils in the school so that they become confident and resilient. Parents echo this, saying that each child excels because of the belief staff put in them. One pupil commented that 'if someone doesn't know what to do, the teachers won't give up on them'. As a result, aspiration is high amongst pupils and they have a positive attitude towards their work. Governors use the vision as the basis of their decision making. For example, they have worked hard to establish a new nursery so that the vision of care for all can be expanded to meet the needs of the local community. They demonstrate their concern for staff wellbeing in practical ways, for example by sometimes taking steps to reduce workload. However, systems for monitoring and evaluation are not fully embedded. This means that governors are not able to measure the full impact of the school's Christian vision.

Relationships are exceptionally strong. Pupils care for one another, bringing their friends' needs to the attention of an adult if they see someone in distress. Approaches to behaviour are based on the school's three core values. One child commented that Jesus' command to 'love your neighbour' was at the heart of the school's vision, adding, 'If we all did that, everyone would be happy.' As a result, behaviour is of the highest standard. Staff look after one another and support each other at difficult times. This means that there is a strong sense of wellbeing in the school and both staff and children love being there. Parents say that their children run into school in the morning without a backward glance. Consequently, the attendance rate at Longcot and Fernham is exceptionally high.

The strong focus on caring for every pupil's needs ensures that all children make good academic progress. This includes pupils from military families and the small number of more vulnerable pupils. The carefully planned curriculum, inspired by the school's vision, widens pupils' horizons and challenges them to become caring citizens. The school has effective links with Romania and Pakistan which help pupils to understand issues of injustice and inequality on a global scale. All this spurs pupils to take action, for example, joining the local community in providing a defibrillator for the village and raising money to support those affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower. Pupils have deep respect for those who may be different in some way. This is partly a result of the effective teaching about different faiths in RE, but also due to careful planning across the curriculum where they consider the effects of prejudice and intolerance in the world. Parents highlight the way in which staff welcome all children, some of whom have struggled to settle in their previous schools. Staff then help them to flourish through their vision of care for all. Staff take opportunities to develop spirituality in lessons as they arise, but do not consistently plan to develop pupils' spirituality. This means that pupils' experiences of spirituality do not deepen as they progress through the school.

Both pupils and adults enjoy collective worship and value it as a time of calm and reflection in the busy school day. Through worship, pupils gain a good understanding of stories from the Bible. They can interpret the messages in these stories and describe how they relate to their own lives. This is because worship is carefully planned to explore a range of Christian values. These values are used throughout the school day, providing a moral compass for adults and pupils. In worship they are interpreted in a Christian context by learning about the lives of Christians through history. Pupils have a particularly good knowledge of the Church's year and how this relates to the life of Jesus. They can, for example, talk about the events of Holy Week and Easter and discuss the origins of Holy Communion at the Last Supper. There is a good partnership with the local church, in particular through the vicar who works with the 'Lighting the Candle' team. This group of pupils plans, leads and evaluates worship, in particular writing prayers to reflect each term's Christian value. The church organises an annual 'prayer space' which rotates around the local churches. This helps pupils to explore concepts such as companionship and forgiveness, and to think about ways in which prayer might take on meaning in their lives.

Pupils are inspired by RE. This is because teachers plan interesting and creative lessons which are rich in discussion and debate. This style of working enables all pupils to contribute fully, even if they find getting things down on paper challenging. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of some of the key features of a range of faiths and can make connections between them. For example, Year 6 pupils talk about ideas of pilgrimage and fasting in Christianity and Islam. This helps pupils to appreciate the similarities and differences between people of different faiths and so to understand and respect those who may be different from them. In this way, RE is an important means through which the school lives out its Christian vision of caring for all. Although pupils have a wide knowledge of Christianity, they do not have a deeper understanding of some of its core theological concepts such as incarnation and salvation. The RE leader has developed an effective system for assessing pupils' understanding and this is used to ensure that teachers can plan work which is challenging and stimulating. She is sharing this system with other RE leaders in the Faringdon Academy of Schools, an example of the supportive partnership which exists between the schools in the Trust.

Through their commitment to caring for one another, all members of the school community at Longcot and Fernham are flourishing. In the words of parents, they are growing together in compassion, self-respect, resilience, confidence and a sense of collective responsibility.

Headteacher	Claire Mellor
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