

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Long Wittenham Church of England Primary School			
Address	Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire OX1 44QJ		
Date of inspection	8 July 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	123153

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
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 Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Long Wittenham is a primary school with 90 pupils on role. 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 above national averages. The school had an OFSTED inspection in January of this year which resulted in an overall judgement of Requires Improvement. The vicar has recently left his post in the parish.

The school's Christian vision

Caring for others and courageously striving for excellence.
Luke 10:25-37 and Joshua 1:9

Key findings

- The partnership with the church has enabled the school to develop collective worship so that pupils explore their spirituality within and beyond school. This is due to the very positive relationships with the previous vicar and the way in which the leadership has embraced this.
- The Christian vision and associated values enables the whole school community to learn and grow together in a culture of dignity and respect.
- The school carefully provides opportunities for spiritual development. Pupils enjoy exploring issues across the curriculum and are skilled at articulating spiritual and ethical issues.
- The Christian vision and values engage the whole community and give pupils aspirations for themselves and for others. The Christian vision inspires all to engage in social action for their local community although pupils do not yet have the opportunities to develop roles as courageous advocates for change.
- Governors share a passion for the school's Christian vision and values and articulate this through their development plans and policies. Careful consideration is given to the induction of new staff and governors in relation to Church school education.

Areas for development

- Sustain the partnerships with the local church so that the current momentum in relation to collective worship is not lost
- Enable pupils to use their knowledge and skills in relation to advocacy and apply these to global issues.
- Embed Understanding Christianity within the religious education (RE) curriculum and ensure it plans for progression in pupils' learning.
- Ensure the RE curriculum is part of governors' monitoring of the school as a church school in the context of its Christian vision.

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

Leaders are passionate about enabling both pupils and adults to flourish. The excellent relationships between the church and the school have enabled the school to embed collective worship which is inclusive and invitational and makes a positive impact on pupils' lives outside the school. The Christian vision and values have engaged the whole community and pupils talk articulately about how the daily acts of worship help them to treat others with dignity and respect. The school has been through a period of significant change in relation to staffing. Leaders and governors have drawn upon the Book of Joshua and 'lead with courage'. They have made bold decisions in the process of recruiting staff, placing pupils' needs at the forefront of their thinking and ensuring that the induction process for all new staff and governors facilitates everyone's understanding of Church school education.

Christian values are firmly embedded in the school. These values support both pupils and adults alike to grow together with compassion, resilience and trust. Consequently, behaviour is excellent. Pupils feel safe and cared for and attendance is good. Priority has been placed upon good mental health and wellbeing for all. Adults talk about how, 'We all help each other. You wouldn't have to go looking for it.' Parents value how the school meets the needs of all pupils through carefully planned programmes of support and acknowledge how the Christian vision is integral to every aspect to school life. One parent commented that 'You can feel the Christian values in every part of the school.'

Across the school, pupils are making better progress and this demonstrates how the Christian vision and values have shaped the curriculum and supported pupils in their academic and spiritual development. Recent outcomes in Key Stage 1 demonstrate how the Christian vision has had an impact in tackling low achievement. Progress and attainment in phonics have significantly improved and outcomes for reading, writing and maths are now either in line or exceeding national averages. Outcomes for Key Stage 2 show much improved progress, including for pupils with special educational needs. The development of the RE curriculum and the Understanding Christianity resource have enabled pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. However, this is still at an early stage and it will require further time to fully embed this resource and plan for progression across the school. Staff know and understand their pupils and their families. They have drawn on the school's vision 'Caring for others and courageously striving for excellence'. The impact of this is that every pupil receives carefully planned and effective provision across the curriculum. Pupils draw upon the story of The Good Samaritan and articulate a deep understanding that everyone is their neighbour. Pupils and parents talk about how teachers challenge pupils in their learning. 'Compassion for each other is highly valued in this school', is how one parent articulated how the Christian vision and values support their child's learning and spiritual development. Another parent shared how the school provides challenge for their son. 'They know him and understand him. He has really thrived on that.'

Relationships between all members of the school community are very supportive and live out the Christian vision not only in school but also in their community. Older pupils look after the younger ones and this extends beyond the school gates, where pupils help each other on bike rides, playing together in the village and at community events. One parent talked about how the pupils supported each other at the recent local festival saying 'The drawing together of children at the local festival was something really quite special.'

The special relationship with the church, and the importance that the leadership has placed on this, has resulted in effective planning and delivery of collective worship. Priorities were identified so that the previous vicar was able to support the school, not only in the development and delivery of collective worship, but in developing an understanding of the liturgical calendar and Anglican traditions. Pupils have broadened their understanding of other denominations, learned some Hebrew, led response prayers and have grown in their awareness of Anglican symbols such as the Advent ring. The impact of this is that pupils can talk extensively about Christianity and Anglican traditions. There has been a clear focus on inclusion at prayer and the pupils have benefitted greatly from the learning related to the Lord's Prayer, led by the Reverend Michael. Pupils are given a range of opportunities for prayer and reflection. They are confident to explain their understanding of the Trinity and share with passion their deep knowledge of Pentecost. Pupils enthuse about the prayer spaces they have created and then developed outside the school in friendship groups and individually in their own homes. Parents shared how the opportunity to pray and reflect has engaged the youngest children as well as developed a broad understanding of Christianity. 'I'm blown over how they can do that at such a young age,' said one parent.

Governors regularly monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness as a church school. The chair of governors successfully led a consultation on the school's Christian vision, drawing upon theology to support pupils and adults in ensuring that this vision is lived out in every aspect of school life. The governors are passionate about ensuring that all pupils and their families have ownership of this vision. At the start of every full governing body meeting, space is provided for reflection on the vision and a Bible verse. Pupils are developing their understanding of Christianity as a world faith and the recent link with South Africa and the Netherlands has been made to provide pupils with the opportunity to embed this further. Engagement with Christian Aid week provided pupils with the opportunity to learn about how Christian organisations can support areas of the world in crisis. However, pupils have too few opportunities to take responsibility as advocates of change.

The school ensures that pupils have the opportunity to understand, reflect and respect difference and diversity. It has actively broken down barriers to learning that are the legacy of underachievement. The headteacher talks with absolute commitment about how the staff carefully plan and support interventions alongside opportunities for stretch and challenge so that all pupils can flourish in a culture of dignity and respect. The school is developing a range of opportunities for pupils to challenge injustice and equality. The curriculum already embraces opportunities such as Forest School and a Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Project, (STEM) that enables pupils to engage with industry. Pupils are excited by these activities that raise their aspirations. The school benefits greatly from the partnership with St Mary's church. School leaders are now engaging with a range of external providers so that they can continue to build upon the progress they have made, reflecting the school's inspiring and inclusive Christian vision and equipping pupils to live life to the full.

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