

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Marsworth C of E Infant School			
Address	Vicarage Road, Marsworth, Tring HP23 4LT		
Date of inspection	14 February 2019	Status of school	VA Infant
Diocese / Methodist District	Oxford	URN	110454

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

School context

Marsworth Church of England School is an infant school with 27 pupils on roll, including 3 in nursery. The school has very low levels of religious and cultural diversity and 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 (SEND) is above national averages. Since the school's previous Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) a new headteacher has taken up post. Following the school's Ofsted short inspection in July 2017 it has retained its grade of 'good'.

The school's Christian vision

Through our values of Respect, Courage, Compassion and Curiosity, Marsworth CE Infant School provides a unique, nurturing environment to inspire a love of learning in our children.
***'Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their lives.'* Proverbs 22:6**

Key findings

- Leaders have worked well to formulate a school vision which is supported by a set of new associated values. The vision has a positive influence on the day to day running of this caring school.
- The school has created an inclusive and nurturing environment that upholds its vision by creating a 'love of learning' in all children.
- Development points for collective worship and religious education (RE), identified in previous inspections and reviews have not been fully addressed. Governors have not provided clear strategic direction for RE or collective worship. This means the overall grade awarded is requires improvement.

Areas for development

- Governors to establish rigorous and effective tracking and evaluation systems, at a strategic level, for RE and collective worship.
- Systematically evaluate and monitor the new vision so that its impact clearly shapes whole school policies and school development plans.
- Continue to offer children opportunities for spiritual development through taking an active part in and leading collective worship.

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

Marsworth infant school is a happy school where children feel valued and special. All stakeholders rightly believe their school is caring and supportive. The nurturing environment leads to high standards of behaviour and strongly positive relationships. The school has identified a new vision and leaders have carried out good preliminary work to underpin this with biblical roots. Additionally, the school has updated its Christian values to complement the new vision. Although the implementation of the vision is at an early stage it is beginning to be effective. The school's aims and values are a clear expression of the new vision.

The headteacher is highly valued by colleagues and parents because of her commitment to do the best for all the children in the school. She has worked hard to embrace and move forward the distinctive Christian character of the school. Governors are keen to support the headteacher. However, they have not acted on previous inspections' development points regarding their statutory responsibility to evaluate the school's Christian character. Whilst governors visit the school with some regularity, they do not systematically monitor or evaluate collective worship or religious education. This compromises their ability to preserve and develop the religious character of the school.

The school has a creative, broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum recognises that each child is unique and the school caters for each individual. When planning topics, the staff take on board the views of the children. For example, children explained that they wanted their imaginative play area to be a 'spa' and staff created this for them. This flexibility and creativity are also evident in the reception class. As one child explained 'there is so much to do here...every day is different.'

National data for end of key stage one should be treated with caution due to the low number of children at the school. The school's internal data shows that children make good progress from their individual starting points. At the end of key stage one, all pupils made expected progress. Year one achieve well in the phonic screening process with results higher than the national average. Children achieve well because staff invest time ensuring that children's individual needs are met. All staff are proactive in identifying areas that need academic or pastoral interventions. Children articulate how adults help them and they believe themselves to be treated fairly. They say 'this is a kind school'.

Staff provide an environment where children's confidence can grow thus creating a 'love of learning' consistent with the school's vision. The school has an inclusive ethos which supports vulnerable children particularly well, enabling them to flourish. Consequently, the school fulfils its vision by providing all children with skills for present and future living and learning (Proverbs 22:6).

Parents hold the school and the work of the staff in high regard. They talk with appreciation of the support given to all children. Those who have children with particular needs say they 'couldn't fault' the support they receive. This includes emotional support for families and individual parents. The school clearly recognises the importance of wellbeing and mental health for all members of its community. Staff said that they receive extra support through difficult times. They expressed how the headteacher was always available and that her door was 'always open'. They are aware of their own and other team members' mental health and wellbeing and they care for each other. Modelling such behaviours supports the understanding of the school's vision that children should be 'learning how to live'. Thus, the school effectively underpins children's moral and social development increasing their sense of being part of a caring community.

The importance of the school is evident in village and church life. Some school families attend 'Messy Church' services and many attend events led by the school such as the Easter-egg trail. Additionally, the school worships at the church on regular occasions to celebrate the Christian year. Levels of attendance by the school community show that these services are considered important.

Children are starting to develop an appreciation of Anglican traditions and practice. Daily collective worship commences with a Christian greeting and the lighting of candles. The children can explain that the candles represent God as the 'light of the world'. Through this practice, an understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is emerging. Children are beginning to recognise the school as a church school. In conversation, some children made superficial links between the school's values and Bible stories they have been taught. Referring

to the school value of courage, some children said that Daniel showed courage in the lions' den. They related this to their own lives saying 'I can be brave doing new work.'

However, the biblical roots of the school's vision and its associated values are not yet explicitly explored during collective worship. As a result, children are not easily able to express, in age-related ways, the impact collective worship has on their spiritual development. Furthermore, the development point for collective worship, identified in previous reports, has not been addressed. Children's spiritual development through deeper involvement in worship is, therefore, limited.

The children have a growing knowledge of the wider world. They spoke with enthusiasm about a recent visit from a local rabbi. Through such experiences, children are beginning to understand the world beyond themselves and their community.

The headteacher has worked with the school diocesan adviser to implement the 'Understanding Christianity' scheme of work. This is beginning to develop children's knowledge of the Christian faith. It has given them preliminary opportunities to think more deeply about religion and to think creatively. This is evident in children's work books and was explained by the headteacher, who is also the RE leader. Consequently, 'Understanding Christianity' is beginning to foster an attitude of respect for all. However, leaders have not addressed the RE areas for development indicated in previous reports. Governors have not evaluated or monitored the progress and attainment of RE. Consequently, strategic planning of the school as a church school has been compromised, therefore the overall grade cannot be 'good'.



The effectiveness of RE Requires Improvement

Children enjoy RE. Through the implementation of 'Understanding Christianity' they are steadily developing a range of thinking skills such as 'enquiry' and 'reflection'. This approach reflects the school's new vision in its desire to teach children to acquire skills for life. The headteacher has devised a simple method to record progress in key stage one. Through using this method, it is evident that all key stage one pupils are making expected progress. Progress of reception aged children is recorded using the early years assessment processes. These children all make expected or more than expected progress.

The governors have not monitored the standard of RE or the quality of RE teaching. They do not ensure RE reflects the Church of England 'Statement of Entitlement'. Therefore, at this stage RE 'requires improvement'.

Headteacher	Angela Polatci
Inspector's name and number	Delia Sheppard 942