

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

St Nicolas CE Junior School				
<b>Address</b>	Link Road. Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 7LU			
<b>Date of inspection</b>	19/June/2019	<b>Status of school</b>	VA junior	
<b>Diocese</b>	Oxford	<b>URN</b>	110013	

<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>

### School context

St Nicolas CE is a junior school with 256 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. 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 in line with national averages. The school received a good judgement from Ofsted since the last SIAMS inspection. There have been no significant changes to the leadership structure of the school.

### The school's Christian vision

Love your neighbour as you love yourself (Matthew 22:39)

St Nicolas CE (Aided) Junior School supports, challenges and encourages each person to achieve their full potential, in a safe, caring and Christian environment where everyone is valued and respected.

### Key findings

- The school is well led by a team who have the school's distinctive Christian vision at the heart of what they do. The vision is lived out by all and impacts on provision and outcomes particularly for the most vulnerable children.
- The curriculum is inspired by the vision and enables children to develop as self-confident and resilient learners. Opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum, however, are less well-planned.
- Partnerships and positive relationships are a key strength in the school. The strong links with the local parish church are mutually beneficial.
- The leading of collective worship by children is currently being developed. This builds on the variety of other opportunities for worship that are well established in the school. The development of monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is not yet fully in place to inform next steps.
- Through the teaching of religious education (RE) children are confident to discuss issues inspired by big questions. It is an expression of the vision as it deepens children's respect of all faiths and their 'neighbours'. The use of key resources are not yet fully embedded.

### Areas for development

- Ensure there is a clear, shared definition of spirituality which staff use to plan opportunities for spiritual development for all children across the curriculum.
- Develop the evaluation and monitoring of collective worship by adults and children to ensure that collective worship is inspiring and supports children to take a more active lead in whole school worship.
- Embed the use of key resources across all classes to deepen children's knowledge and understanding in RE and evaluate the impact on standards.

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

St Nicolas' has a clear and established vision which is understood and lived out by everyone in the school. This is due to the strong leadership and caring approach of the head teacher and leadership team who demonstrate 'love for neighbour' in actions and decisions. The most vulnerable children in the school describe everyone as being 'warm-hearted' and refer to the vision as a support that helps with good behaviour and choices. The school places great value on the importance of 'loving yourself' and this is demonstrated particularly in the effective and planned provision in the nurture group. This provides a safe place for children to talk and develop their confidence and resilience whilst retaining their personal dignity. The nurture provision leads to improved outcomes and attendance. Extra effort is made by the head teacher to make home visits and meet with parents which has improved children's attendance and engagement. Surveys completed by parents, children and staff identify that the majority feel safe and all are welcomed into the school. There is a planned approach by governors to ensure that the vision informs policies more explicitly as they are reviewed.

The curriculum supports and engages children to discuss 'big' questions. It enables all children to flourish as a result of the caring approach of the staff team. The inclusive approach of the school to support the achievement of all pupils is underpinned by the recognition that everyone is a 'neighbour'. All are welcomed and nurtured. The curriculum is designed to enable pupils to challenge themselves and tackle more difficult questions. This is reinforced by the focus on developing 'learning muscles'. Additionally, physical muscles and stamina are developed following the introduction of the 'daily mile'. Children are aware of global and social issues. The development of class reflection time, where all views are valued, supports children in expressing their personal beliefs. There are opportunities for children to use the recently established reflection area which children describe as being a 'good place to go'. There is not currently a shared definition of spirituality that is fully understood by staff. This means that staff do not plan spiritual opportunities for children throughout the curriculum and children's spirituality does not always deepen as they progress through the school. Effective ongoing monitoring of the curriculum by dedicated senior leaders informs next steps in school improvement well.

Partnerships and relationships are a particular strength of the school. The partnership with the parish church benefits both the school and church: together they form a strong, supportive Christian presence in the community. The lunchtime JAFFA club is led by the church's enthusiastic youth worker who also supports weekly 'clergy' worship with other church team members. This gives children the chance to reflect on the Bible, develop social skills and discuss big issues. Parents recognise the value of the links with the community for their children and families. A cohesive approach to assessment and the provision of successful transition opportunities for families and children are a result of the partnership with the local infant school. Most parents also report that they feel that their children are well-prepared for secondary school. A good level of staffing and effective use of professionals, including advisers and associate governors, supports the most vulnerable children to have hopes and future aspirations. Although there have been links in the past, there is not currently a focus on developing global partnerships.

As a result of the school's vision, the attitudes of the staff support children to behave well. The effective and creative use of space provides opportunities; children are confident to raise concerns and are listened to. They understand the school's policies and confirm that even though teachers may be disappointed by the behaviour, you will be forgiven. Children recognise that it is not always easy, but the vision reminds them that it is important to care about others. Children have a respect for one another's differences and appreciate that the diversity of their school community is a benefit. One child explained that 'people don't make fun of you because of your religion' and opportunities to talk about personal beliefs are welcomed. This positive and caring ethos supports the mental health of the school community, including adults, and is a strong focus.

Collective worship is an important part of the day when the school community takes time to reflect, pray and celebrate together. This takes a variety of forms and the children benefit from a planned thematic approach accessible to all, led by a range of adults. Children participate in worship and they are confident to engage and answer questions. Through regular services to mark the Church's year, children understand the place of the

Eucharist. The annual shared Pentecost service with the infant school and Pentecost Picnic is a notable highlight in the school calendar. Prayer is an important part of each collective worship and there are other planned prayer opportunities. The volunteer pupil class worship leaders are enthusiastic about taking on this new responsibility. They have received training and support from the youth minister and have started to plan and lead class worship. Each class has a dedicated reflection area where children are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas about faith and big questions. The school recognises that the evaluation of collective worship is underdeveloped and does not always inform future planning strongly enough.

Religious Education (RE) meets the statement of entitlement. The approach of using questions engages and challenges pupils and they are confident and feel safe to have discussions. Links are made to the school vision. Children enjoy RE and are proud of their work which focuses on Christianity and faiths other than Christianity. Children recognise this will help them to have more respect as adults. Visiting places of worship and having visitors in school helps the children to further develop their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and traditions. The introduction of Understanding Christianity has inspired the subject leaders who have delivered training for all staff. However, its use to support the teaching of Christianity is not yet fully embedded. Teachers in all classes are developing their knowledge and skills as teachers of RE. Monitoring is linked to the school priorities and regular assessments are completed by staff. The enthusiastic and passionate subject leaders undertake effective monitoring of standards which supports improvement and staff training in RE.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

RE teaching and learning are graded as good through the school’s monitoring process and this was verified at the inspection. As a result, the majority of pupils make expected progress in RE, and pupil attainment is generally in line with their progress across the curriculum. Vulnerable pupils generally make good progress and in a number of instances better than their peers.

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