

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Whaddon CE First School			
Address	Stock Lane, Whaddon, Buckinghamshire MK17 0LS		
Date of inspection	9 July 2019	Status of school	VC first school
Diocese	Oxford	URN	110415

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent

School context

Whaddon is a first school with 42 pupils. 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 in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The chair of governors is new to post. The school was judged by Ofsted to be outstanding in May 2019.

The school's Christian vision

'With your hands you made us, with our hands we serve you.' Psalms 119:73
The school's ethos is based on the values of compassion, wisdom and endurance and the school's mission is to ensure that there is 'a holistic learning environment where all thrive'.

Key findings

- Parents, staff, pupils and governors describe emphatically how values deeply rooted in biblical teaching for all pupils and adults to flourish drives policies and decision making.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they explain the biblical roots of the values on which their behaviour is based. They know how to live out these values and their impact on others.
- The relentless drive of the headteacher has and strengthened the school's Christian distinctiveness. Governors show an overriding commitment to uphold the centrality of this and to develop it further so that it continues to ensure that everyone flourishes spiritually and academically.
- Worship has a profound impact on pupils' spirituality and their sense of belonging to their parish.
- Religious education (RE) is highly effective in developing children's understanding of the Christian faith through an exceptionally innovative questioning approach so that all pupils make good or better progress.

Areas for development

- Further develop the pupils' experience of a multi-cultural society through the new partnership with a school in a contrasting locality so that pupils begin to understand their place in modern Britain.
- Make a clearer distinction between the vision and the values, referring more explicitly to the Bible roots of the vision so that the impact of the distinctively Christian vision may be more readily evaluated.

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

The headteacher has prioritised strengthening the school's Christian character. She and governors have consulted the community to develop a vision which drives policies and procedures. Every decision is based on achieving the best outcome for whoever is concerned. The community chose the values, compassion, wisdom and endurance. There are strong mutually beneficial partnerships with various schools and with the Diocese. As one parent remarked, 'children have the best start to school life because of leaders' consistently high aspirations'. Strong links with the parish church exist despite the absence of a vicar. Parishioners lead worship in school regularly and run 'Hands up for Jesus' club. The school welcomes parents and members of the wider community for weekly 'open worship'.

Governors now have extremely robust systems for monitoring the impact of the Christian distinctiveness, RE and worship. A team of staff, governors and parents works tirelessly to improve the school as a Church school although all governors regard this distinctiveness as the school's core purpose. Parents and pupils are consulted about the school's Christian identity and their feedback shapes the strategic plan. For example, parents asked for, and now receive, more detailed information about the curriculum. This helps them to reinforce their children's learning at home. The recommendations of the last inspection report have been met, reflecting leaders' unswerving commitment to ongoing improvement.

The curriculum is highly engaging because it follows pupils' interests. Outdoor areas are used extensively because younger learners thrive and have a greater sense of wellbeing there. All pupils, irrespective of background, make good or better progress with many reaching levels higher than expected for their age. Pupils who find learning more challenging thrive because the headteacher is tenacious in seeking expert advice for them. All adults nurture pupils to achieve their potential. Activities provide rich opportunities for pupils' reflection and spiritual development.

Pupils show tremendous compassion for others. For example, by raising money to support schools in Africa and asking to cook for and serve at the soup kitchen. They talk of 'using their hands to serve God and one another', as the vision states. They protect God's creation, for example, by preventing pollution. The curriculum, and RE in particular, gives pupils opportunities to ask 'deep questions' and to respect one another's views. Pupils' understanding of their multi-cultural society is less well developed but a new link has been forged with a school in a contrasting locality in order to address this.

Leaders and governors are mindful of the mental wellbeing of pupils and adults, providing appropriate support and ensuring that expectations around workload are reasonable. Policies have been amended as a result. Pupils explain how they show Christian values in their friendships. For example, demonstrating to one another the compassion shown by the Good Samaritan. Adults want to improve pupils' life chances. Relationships are harmonious and respectful. All feel treated with dignity, irrespective of their beliefs and traditions.

Worship is the focal part of the school day. Adults and pupils feel greatly uplifted through reflection, stillness and prayer. Worship develops pupils' spirituality and knowledge of Bible stories, events in the life of Christ, the church calendar and Christian prayers. It helps them how to live out Christian values which are linked extremely well to British values. Pupils lead and evaluate worship regularly so that they feel completely empowered in shaping it. Robust monitoring also ensures that leaders know that worship is engaging and relevant. Pupils readily offer spontaneous prayers. Their experience is greatly enriched by the range of worship led by different people, including a Baptist minister. They have an understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit appropriate for their age. They are starting to understand Christianity as a global faith with similar features, but also differences. A particular strength of worship is the welcome extended and taken up by parents and parishioners to attend worship in school. This helps pupils to feel that they are an important group within the local community. It also strengthens the links between the parish and the school. Pupils also value times to reflect, particularly in the garden, tying ribbons on the willow structure when they have 'talked to God'. They pray together in their classrooms, for example, at lunchtime and at the end of the school day.

RE is inspirational and at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils choose questions which everyone can discuss, irrespective of their writing or reading skills. They learn about the Christian faith and a range of world faiths, often from visitors and visits to places of worship. Pupils feel this will help them understand the people amongst whom they will live, study and work as adults. RE reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement which sets out the expectations for Church schools. Teachers assess pupils' understanding extremely well and plan challenging tasks. They are very well supported by the RE leader.

All pupils and adults flourish, academically and spiritually, at Whaddon School because of the determination of the headteacher and governors to maintain and strengthen the impact of school's Christian vision on the community. The Christian distinctiveness is evident in every aspect of the school's work and the Christian values of compassion, wisdom and endurance are completely embedded in the school's ethos.

Headteacher	Selina Davies
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