

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sonning Church of England Primary School	
Address	Liguge Way, Sonning, Reading, RG4 6XF

School vision
<p>Building Strong Foundations for the Years Ahead (Matthew 7:24-25)</p> <p>At Sonning Church of England Primary School, we aim to equip our children with the skills they need to make positive choices in everything they do. Like the wise man who built his house upon the rock (Matthew 7:24-25), our vision is "building strong foundations for the years ahead".</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This close-knit school community lives out its Christian vision extremely well. There is a tangible culture of ongoing learning and development to build strong foundations. • There is a very strong relationship between the curriculum and the school's vision. The curriculum is carefully designed to inspire pupils and provide them with a rich knowledge, including a range of religions. • Leaders, together with staff, plan and deliver collective worship very thoughtfully. Worship is central to school life. Adults and pupils value the opportunity to gather, praise and reflect deeply as a community. This is a community that thrives spiritually. • Pupils and adults feel very secure, valued and loved. Leaders are inspired by the teachings of Jesus to ensure that all are treated extremely well. • The highly effective leadership in religious education (RE) has ensured that pupils across all year groups learn exceptionally well.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop more opportunities for independent, quiet reflection and prayer outside of the classroom environment.
Inspection findings
<p>This cohesive community understands and exhibits the vision and values that are firmly established in the school. Staff, governors, pupils and parents know what it means to build strong foundations for pupils, academically and personally. The school has made sure that the vision and values are simple and clear. As one parent commented, 'Sonning is a shining example... because it truly lives and breathes every value it promises.' There are extremely supportive relationships that are a key feature of the school. The relationship between the school and the trust is strong. This is because they share a similar vision for pupils and adults. Everyone is encouraged to treat others with dignity and respect. The vision encourages pupils to support others within and beyond the school. Pupils praise one another when they act out the school's values and when they do something special or kind. This stems from the leadership of the school. Leaders take time to</p>

notice and acknowledge different people's contributions and efforts. The leadership team's work consistently promotes the Christian vision. Parents say that their children learn to do what is right and call out what is wrong. This stays with pupils after they leave the school. Consequently, the biblically underpinned vision supports the pupils and adults at the school extremely well. The values aligned to the vision contribute significantly towards building the resilience and confidence of staff and pupils. This enables them to flourish now and build for the future.

Leaders have made sure that curriculum planning results in the spiritual flourishing of the pupils. This is very well embedded for each year group. The curriculum has been crafted skilfully to reflect the school's Christian vision very closely. The vision is focused upon during lessons and learning in different subjects. The school has a highly effective and authentic determination to be inclusive and provide support for all. Governors and senior leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of the curriculum. As a result, they know the effectiveness of the curriculum and understand the experiences for pupils across different subject disciplines.

Collective worship is invitational, inspiring and inclusive and as pupils say, 'fun and interactive.' Worship is a cornerstone of the school's expression of its vision and development of pupils' spirituality. The programme is carefully planned and evaluated by pupils and leaders. Pupils respond very enthusiastically and thoughtfully to moments of reflection. This enables them to know how the school's Christian vision supports them. However, the opportunities for independent, quiet prayer for pupils and adults outside of the classroom environment are not as strategically developed as other parts of the school's work. Pupils say that the vision and values help them to 'face their fears' and feel that it is 'harder to be knocked down.' Pupils benefit from a clear structure of 'gather, engage, respond and send' to collective worship. This means that pupils fully grasp the importance of the different elements within worship and how they can participate. Worship is exceptionally well linked to the school's values and how they provide, as one pupil described, 'a strong base from which to grow.'

Leaders are extremely committed to the wellbeing and fair treatment for all members of the school community. Pupils and staff feel very well cared for by others. The pupils behave extremely thoughtfully towards one another. Older pupils support younger pupils through the 'buddy' system. This supports younger pupils to feel secure and helps older pupils to learn how to look after others. An enormously powerful theme running through the school is how pupils and adults actively recognise the achievements of different people. This positive feedback stems through and across pupils, staff, senior leaders, governors and the trust.

Senior leaders and subject leaders have ensured that the concept of justice is embedded into the curriculum in different subjects. It also features highly in collective worship and wider opportunities for pupils. Pupils have an accurate understanding of justice and what this looks like in their school and their lives. Pupils and adults are inspired to be people who make a difference and act responsibly. This is cultivated through the charities they support and their actions to help others in their school community and further afield. For example, pupils work closely to develop community links and relationships with a nearby home for the elderly.

Staff are clear that they want and have a responsibility to 'give back.' Staff say that from the moment that they start working at the school senior leaders value their contributions. Staff new to their roles and those who are more experienced feel very well supported. They feel empowered to make decisions about pupils'

learning and any adaptations needed to meet the needs of pupils. Leaders know and use their skills very well and effectively. Staff say that they are ‘so proud’ to work at the school.

The leadership of RE is exceptionally strong. The leader ensures that the curriculum meets the requirements of the Church of England for a Church school. The leader is extremely knowledgeable about the learning in RE and how it is connected and sequenced. This means that pupils achieve highly. Leaders have made certain that RE is given high priority at the school. As a result, RE is carefully timetabled, training for staff is of high calibre and the subject is resourced extensively. Pupils enjoy RE lessons because staff make learning interesting using engaging illustrations and materials. This makes learning clear. For example, in Year 1 pupils know the importance of the festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The teaching of RE is of a high calibre. Teachers ensure that tasks are designed very effectively to match the learning in the curriculum design. This means that pupils learning is extremely rapid. The trust’s networks support the ongoing and innovative development of the teaching of RE. Pupils learn a range of vocabulary that is essential for their understanding of different religions. For example, in Year 2 pupils understand the importance of ‘pilgrimage’ for Muslims. This includes some of the challenges that Muslims may face in undertaking the journey to Mecca. There are immensely helpful and meaningful links between RE and other subjects. This strengthens pupils’ knowledge about different religions and the key knowledge in other subjects simultaneously.

Information			
Inspection date	12 July 2024	URN	147379
VA/VC/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	210
Diocese	Oxford		
MAT/Federation	The Keys Academy Trust		
Executive headteacher	Philip Sherwood		
Chair	David Horrocks		
Inspector	Richard Blackmore	No.	2306