

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School			
Address	Riseholme, Orton Goldhay, Cambridgeshire, PE2 5SP		
Date of inspection	5 December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary aided
Diocese	Ely	URN	110856

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	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

St. John's is a primary school with 410 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school is in a soft federation with a nearby community primary school.

The school's Christian vision

"For with God nothing shall be impossible," Luke 1:37

The very fabric of our school is interwoven with our ethos, vision, biblical narrative and Christian values: Together we achieve, learn and grow in a caring Christian environment. With values of Belonging, Caring, Humility, Morality, Forgiveness, Love, Service, Courage, Hope, Wholeness.

Key findings

- The strong leadership of the executive headteacher supported by effective senior leaders and dedicated staff leads to a Christian community in which all can flourish. The school is developing its practice in supporting other schools in enhancing impact of their vision, values and ethos.
- The curriculum is creative and underpinned by the core values. Religious education (RE) plays a major part in this, creating with the values, clear and profitable links across subjects and deepening pupil understanding
- Collective worship is inclusive and engaging. There is a high degree of pupil participation including planning, leading and evaluating worship. This contributes extremely well to their personal spirituality. Pupils have a developed personal relationship with prayer.
- The focus on the whole child and each child as unique ensures attainment and progress are exceptional. The vision, interpreted as 'nothing is impossible', is driving the school community to be the best they can be. However, embedded understanding of the overarching role of the vision, in addition to the values, in enabling all to flourish is not evident across all aspects of school life.
- Strong, highly positive relationships with the Church support both school and the wider community. The Church makes a recognisable contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Areas for development

- Sustain and enhance spiritual wellbeing and support other schools in developing their Christian distinctiveness by sharing and developing, both internally and externally, existing excellent practice.
- Give greater prominence to the biblical root of the vision. Ensure its impact on school development in practice, policies and governance, so that understanding of the connections with the core values is enhanced and impact is more clearly evident in school.

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

Strong and ambitious leadership ensures that the Christian vision drives daily life and strategic development. It is interpreted as 'nothing is impossible.' It reflects the context of the school community and together with the values develops a firm sense of self-belief in adults and pupils. Pupils know the vision means 'always do their best and believe.' The ten core values including forgiveness, hope and belonging are the building blocks for the vision. The spirit of the vision is implicit in policies but how it drives practice is not clear. The values are considered fundamental in developing pupils' sense of self in mind, body and spirit. Impact is clear in achievement; they start at a very low level and many leave with attainment above national expectations. Vulnerable pupils generally make good progress. Service is embedded across the school community. The innovative morning greeting enables children and parents to feel part of the family. The exemplary practice in developing the whole child through Christian values has enabled the school to work with local and international schools. This demonstrates the school's success, providing opportunities beyond the everyday.

Governors have a strong presence and understanding of their role. They have a firm understanding of the impact of the values but are less clear about the impact of the overarching vision. Governors regularly seek pupil and staff views. Feedback from monitoring drives improvement, for example integrating the values from whole school worship into class activities. Wellbeing and inclusion are at the heart of decisions as evidenced by the wide-ranging support for pupils, families and staff. Pastoral care is a strength. Exceptional nurturing provision through the values enables all pupils to be successful. Mental health support is embedded through a variety of activities and therapies; art, music, family time and 'Strive' - a programme for supporting emotional problems. Quality induction and professional development support all staff, whatever stage of their career, including developing future Church school leaders. Staff feel part of the highly inclusive school family, they speak of belonging, being loved and are highly positive about the professional and personal support they receive. They connect the values of belonging and togetherness with the conviction that each individual is unique as a child of God.

Parents recognise that the values are lived out because their children speak of them as part of everyday life in school. 'My child feels loved and excited to learn.' They appreciate the approachable, supportive staff. Innovative practice is demonstrated by weekly clinics to help parents, supporting the whole family. Some join in the weekly prayer group. Parents feel part of the Church family due to the exceptionally strong bond between Church and school. Pupils value their school as a Christian school. They speak of everyone belonging and are proud that they welcome everyone unconditionally. Class books of values highlight pupils' interpretation of the core values. They have a very well-developed understanding of the meaning of Jesus' teaching. 'Parables show the benefits of listening to God and following his messages.' Pupils have opportunities to engage with Bible stories in the Bible base area. Pupil voice is exceptionally strong with regular opportunities to feed back their views. One outcome of this is the inclusion of different prayers, including response prayers, in worship.

The vision drives the curriculum. It is creative and engaging with topics taught through challenging questions such as 'What makes us who we are?' It supports pupils knowing where they are going and why they are learning. Forest Schools is a strength and pupils speak about how it helps them show the values. A pupil could explain how the different colours in their pompom, made in Forest Schools, show the values that are most important to them. Values are integrated into the personal and social curriculum as well as powerfully supporting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This convincingly enhances respect for difference and diversity. High quality enrichment activities are accessible to all. Confident, articulate and respectful pupils link the vision and values to their daily lives. Behaviour is exemplary, with dignity and respect for all at the core. Pupils have an impressive range of opportunities to take responsibility, as school councillors, prayer warriors, worship group, wellbeing leads, and lunchtime leaders. Links with the wider community are exemplified by pupils cooking food they grow on site for the neighbourhood team and emergency services. Pupils have a lead role in identifying social action projects locally, nationally and internationally. The link with a school in Bangladesh supports their understanding of Christianity as a global faith, They support the Leprosy Mission, independently fund raising through a business week. Other projects include supporting the Foodbank and raising awareness of litter in the community.

Collective worship is inclusive and engaging with an exemplary degree of pupil participation. The candle is lit to 'bring us all together'. Worship is linked to the values and to RE. Pupils articulate messages from worship and explain how these influence them, relating them strongly to the vision and values. 'We are all children of God on the inside.' They value worship, explaining that they would be lonely without worship and God would not be with them. Highly effective pupil led worship contributes to the innovative practice. Half termly worship in Church is led by pupils. The exceptional partnership with the Church is shown by the input into worship and positive relationships with pupils and adults. Pupils have an exemplary understanding of prayer, praying spontaneously. Prayer warriors support this, with adults and pupils frequently praying together. Pupils' excellent use of class and outdoor prayer spaces enhances personal spirituality.

RE is delivered through immersion days, allowing for deeper exploration of concepts. 'Explore, engage, reflect' are the tools for learning. RE has exceptionally strong links with other curriculum areas. Exemplary planning ensures effective challenge in lessons, delivered through deeper questions. Older pupils are exploring the Trinity, relating it to the story of Pentecost. Their excellent understanding is exemplified in one pupil's explanation. 'God is the three in one, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God made the world, he sent Jesus to protect us and when Jesus left us, he sent the Holy Spirit to be there for us.' Other pupils demonstrate deep thinking and respect for different opinions, discussing how different art images show the Trinity. Younger pupils are exploring the birth of Jesus. They recognise that Jesus was not the King people were expecting and can explain why. There is strong evidence in books of varied teaching methods, including through art and drama. Appropriate links are made across several religions. The RE lead shares their excellent practice with other local schools.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

Teaching in RE is consistently better than good. Lessons are creative and challenging, encouraging deep thinking. Consequently, standards are high and pupils make exemplary progress. Vulnerable pupils engage well and subsequently make excellent progress. RE provides a particularly supportive environment for them to learn and achieve. Assessment is accurate, regular and rigorous, using a school developed framework. Effective monitoring by leaders together with internal moderation in year group teams ensures the quality of teaching and learning remains high.

Headteacher

Colette Firth

Inspector's name and number

Pat George 845