

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Michael's Easthampstead Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School				
Address	Crowthorne Road, Easthampstead, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 7EH			
Date of inspection	17 September 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary	
Diocese	Oxford	URN	110010	
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	Good	
	The impact of religious education	Grade	Good	

School context

St. Michael's Easthampstead is a primary school with 242 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 the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Since the last inspection, there has been a large turnover of staff, including the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2018.

The school's Christian vision

Our Christian vision is linked to 'The Good Samaritan', with a strong emphasis on caring for each other. Through strong Christian faith, partnership with home and community and our core values of Wisdom, Faith, Honesty, Trust and Courage, we are committed to helping every child achieve their full potential.

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind. And love your neighbour as yourself'. Luke 10:27

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision and values are consistently and visibly enforced throughout the school day. This leads to a highly developed sense of care and nurture within the community.
- Governors have a high profile within the school, attending acts of worship, visiting classes and monitoring the RE provision. This practical involvement ensures that they have a clear understanding of the impact of the Christian values that drive St. Michael's to support their Christian vision.
- Collective worship has a significant impact on the spiritual development of all at the school. Pupils are growing in their knowledge of Christian belief and tradition as well as in their confidence to lead worship.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) are good and pupils explore deep questions successfully because of this good teaching. However, a more rigorous system of assessment is required to ensure that there is more clarity regarding progress.
- Pastoral care at the school is extremely supportive of pupils and adults, especially in terms of their mental health and wellbeing. Staff unstintingly support each other, as well as their pupils and families.

Areas for development

- Enhance pupils' awareness of how they can be global agents for change and make a meaningful difference in the world today, beyond their local context.
- Embed the new RE assessment system in order for pupils and teachers to gauge progress and attainment in the subject.
- Explore contacts with places of worship and facilitate more visitors to the school. This is so pupils may develop knowledge and understanding of a diverse range of religions and their impact on society and culture.

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

All pupils, including those who are vulnerable, benefit from attending this safe and happy school in which they develop a love of learning in a spirit of kindness, forgiveness and trust. Following a time of relative instability, the new headteacher, strongly supported by staff and governors, has successfully developed a strong Christian vision. This now permeates every aspect of school life. Governors, staff and pupils all articulate clearly how the biblical teaching in Luke 10 roots the school's vision. They offer numerous examples of how love and care enfold everyone at the school. Parents confirm this and believe that the Christian character 'draws the school community closer', resulting in everyone working well together. The dignity and value of each person are upheld in this small school where everyone is known by name. Parents affirm the headteacher is always there, listening to their children and valuing them for who they are. The supportive and involved governing body have implemented a robust and continuous self-evaluation system. As a result, the school's Christian vision threads together the governors' strategic decisions, shaping policies and ongoing Church school developments. There is a culture of trust and belief in all staff and this empowers them to become confident middle leaders.

The school's creative curriculum is infused by the vision and values, so that the academic and spiritual needs of all pupils are met. Academic standards are above the national expectation in all key stages and leaders analyse the school's performance effectively. Pupils trust their teachers and classroom assistants, who they say give them 'courage to improve and keep going'. Staff quickly identify and support vulnerable pupils, enabling them to flourish and fulfil their potential within a reassuring environment. Behaviour and attitudes are good as a result of the school's caring and nurturing vision. For instance, the Walk and Talk Club allows vulnerable pupils to gain confidence and friendship skills. Pupils are taken to the park to share their thoughts and undertake activities that promote self-esteem. They are praised for showing courage and honesty, demonstrating the caring ethos of aspiring to be the best you can be.

The school community engages in a range of charitable activities that include supporting the local food bank and several national campaigns. These activities, as well as participating in local social action projects, reflect the school's vision. Links with the Bracknell Care Home and taking part in a campaign for a safe new school crossing evidence this. The school does not have any links abroad, so pupils' ability to think globally about life are currently limited. Pupils make positive choices based on the school values of faith, courage and trust. This is exemplified in the way the school participates in schemes such as The Prince William Award. This inspires pupils to be their best by building their character, resilience and confidence. The Reason Room and the outdoor reflection area are used effectively as safe places for pupils to be calm and reflect on their feelings.

There are strong partnerships and relationships at the school, based on the vision of caring for one another. This leads to a positive learning environment. A year 4 boy stated, 'The values make our school a better place'. Leaders ensure that policies for wellbeing reflect the school's Christian vision and all benefit from practical and compassionate care and support. The school invests heavily in professionals such as a play therapist, teaching coach and counsellors in order to meet the needs of everyone. Frequent random acts of kindness ensure that every staff member acknowledges that 'we are always here for each other'. The wider community contributes well to school life and the frequent visits of the rector bring the school and the community closer together. The school organises a Family Learning Opportunities scheme, a Mindfulness Club and undertakes Growth Mindset with pupils. As a result, there is effective support for good mental health that creates a sense of belonging for all, regardless of their differences or backgrounds.

Worship is invitational and offers variety, both in content and through different leaders. The good use of music, stories and reflection enable pupils to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways. Because pupils have frequent opportunities to take part in the Eucharist, they are aware of its central importance to the Christian faith. Collective worship often includes biblical teaching. Through this, pupils are able to make clear links to the school's vision and values of trust, faith, honesty, courage and wisdom. Moreover, it shapes their lives and informs the choices that they make. A Year 6 pupil remarked, 'Worship makes me think about how I can be a Good Samaritan too'. Prayer is an important part of school life, with each classroom housing a prayer box on its reflection table.

Parents run a weekly prayer group and organise the collection of the prayers written by the pupils to be read at the meeting. Pupils and adults are therefore able to articulate the value of prayer in their own lives.

There is effective leadership in RE and the school has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The syllabus for RE has recently been successfully updated and implemented. This reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement well. Good practice is shared with both staff at the school, as well as with other local Church schools. This means that teachers are confident to teach RE and deliver high quality lessons. Reflection is integral to learning in RE, through which the five values are threaded seamlessly as a clear expression of the Christian vision. Pupils have a sound understanding of Christianity as a world faith. However, they do not benefit from contacts with different places of worship and there are few visitors representing diverse faiths and world views. Therefore, pupils' knowledge of major world religions is limited mainly to classroom learning.

The Christian vision and motto of 'Learning to Love, Love to Learn' is apparent at every turn in this happy, nurturing school. This is transforming the lives of pupils and adults, enabling all to flourish.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is consistently good and pupils are challenged to consider the 'big questions'. An example being, 'How might beliefs and community shape a person's identity?' Work in books shows progress over time and pupils explore deep questions in their learning. A new 'next step' approach to assessment has just been put in place, but this is not embedded fully across the school. Consequently, some pupils do not understand how to improve. RE is regularly monitored by the subject leader and governors in the school. This shows that standards in RE are in line with other subjects.

Headteacher

Sarah Robinson

Inspector's name and number

Jenny Earp 288