

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Oare Church of England Primary Academy			
Address	Cold Blow, Oare, Marlborough, Wiltshire. SN8 4JL		
Date of inspection	28 March 2019	Status of school	Primary Academy inspected as Voluntary Controlled
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	141912

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

School context

Oare is a primary school with 66 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils come from a 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 below national averages. The school became part of the Excalibur Academies Trust (MAT) in April 2015.

The school's Christian vision

This is expressed through this parable given by Jesus:

“A mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet, when planted it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

Mark 4:30 – 32

Key findings

- Leaders have brought a clear vision and focus to this church school raising its Christian distinctiveness. Their passion and dedication to this work is infectious and enthuses pupils, staff and parents.
- The vision and associated Christian values have helped to create a warm, caring community where all are valued and shown dignity and respect. Pupils consistently link their good behaviour to the vision and growing.
- Partnerships have been influential in developing leadership and the quality of teaching and learning. Robust systems of monitoring have consistently led to significant improvements. However, the curriculum has not been fully reviewed in the light of the vision.
- The vision and the use of 'big' questions have created a rich culture of aspiration. Pupils are encouraged to voice their curiosity through deep questions which they seek to answer drawing upon their understanding of Christian concepts and philosophical ideas.

Areas for development

- Create regular opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship so they 'grow' their skills and develop greater ownership.
- Review the curriculum in the light of the vision so there are progressive experiences to deepen pupils' understanding of spirituality, global communities, deprivation and how to challenge injustice.
- Identify biblical stories which underpin the vision and the associated values, enabling pupils to articulate these and recognise their Christian distinctiveness.

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

Leaders give clear direction to the school, creatively using the vision to raise its Christian distinctiveness. Displaying the vision pictorially as a growing tree helps pupils to understand its importance. Pupils explain how they are like the small mustard seed when they start, but grow to become 'strong trees' and life long learners. Pupils see birds in the display as staff and partnerships which nurture each individual. Roots of the tree are Christian values which help pupils reach their full potential. Leaders articulate the biblical understanding of the vision recognising their mission to show God's care for each pupil as they are wonderfully made. They use the language of pupils growing, achieving their God given potential and pointing towards Jesus' example. A staff team share this vision and live this out. Partnerships with the MAT have been influential in enabling them to move through difficult times. Leaders have taken decisive action to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The MAT provided focused evaluations and training informing the school's strategic direction. The support for pupils with special education needs is an impressive example of the MAT's work. The diocese has provided invaluable support through advisers' work and the quality of training. The church offers important contributions to governance and strong pastoral care. Leaders make astute evaluations which consistently lead to new initiatives making a significant difference. Governors support this using a yearly plan which focuses on actions arising from the development plan. A good example was additional training to deepen staff understanding of spirituality and to create opportunities for reflection. All areas to improve from the previous inspection have been fully addressed.

The language of the vision and Christian values are creatively woven into daily life. Pupils talk about the value of aspiration and how this has raised their belief in their own ability. Pupils use the language of the vision and give numerous examples of where this helps them to grow, inspiring them to have high expectations. The school encourages pupils to select work from three levels of challenge. This enables pupils to take greater ownership of learning. Standards in the Early Years and the end of Key Stage 1 are now at least in line with national expectations. Pupils' progress is rising steadily in Key Stage 2 and is generally broadly in line with national averages. The vision highlights that vulnerable pupils are important. Well-focused individualised support enables them to make similar progress to their peers. Leaders from the MAT have led training in spirituality resulting in an agreed understanding. Opportunities for spirituality are woven into worship and different subjects. Pupils find these helpful to reflect on learning and their beliefs. At present experiences are not progressive or sufficiently explicit to deepen pupils' thinking.

The vision emphasises the importance of each individual. Pupils talk in depth about the motto 'We Care' which represents the six values. Staff model rich relationships with everyone which creates a caring community. Behaviour is of a high standard with pupils consistently attributing this to the vision and values. Groups of pupils of different ages enjoy working together exploring major festivals, deepening their understanding of difference and diversity. There are some opportunities to learn about global communities through current events. However, these experiences are not progressive or sufficiently explicit to deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of forgiveness, how to move on and make a fresh start. Older pupils are confident to resolve issues with younger peers using the language of values. A high priority is given to pupils' and staff well-being. Pupils develop skills to help them to be calm and relax which many find helpful. Leaders are taking action to support staff which makes them feel valued. MAT leaders introduced an initiative developing pupils' leadership skills enabling them to become advocates for change. Worship inspires pupils who plan presentations or fund raising. There are good examples linked to supporting children who have experienced violence or are homeless in Ghana.

Astute evaluations by leaders led to decisive action to raise the quality of worship. Worship is invitational and enables pupils and staff of no faith or faith to contribute with integrity. Planning for worship is more detailed enabling pupils to progressively explore aspects of a value. There is a positive emphasis on pupils reflecting on these ideas considering how they might respond. Worship themes allow pupils to explore Jesus' teaching so they recognise its relevance for daily life. However, pupils are not able to make links between values and biblical stories which explain their Christian distinctiveness. There are more opportunities for pupils to contribute towards worship which they enjoy, notably in the Open the Book sessions. Opportunities for pupils to be still or pray are given in worship or using class spaces which many find helpful. Prayer is increasingly understood as a natural way of sharing ideas with God. Pupils are encouraged to think through their prayers rather than express these in other ways. They feel prayer helps them to be calm. Pupils explore the Eucharist in some depth and talk about its importance for Christians. They have an age appropriate understanding of the trinitarian nature of God. The school

council evaluates worship. They suggested recording the numerous pupil questions on a board, so these could be answered. Governors' monitoring thoughtfully leads to ongoing improvements.

The use of questions to challenge pupils' thinking in religious education (RE) and to stimulate debate create a rich culture encouraging pupils to pose deep questions of their own. This reflects the vision enabling pupils to grow, evaluating philosophical and religious responses to these questions. Pupils relish these debates where they feel safe to verbalise and justify their ideas. They make links to Christian concepts and Jesus' teaching using specific religious language which reveals a deep understanding. Pupils confidently explain how this has influenced their understanding, aware of the relevance of RE for their daily lives. Pupils are challenged to consider more demanding questions as they take greater responsibility for learning. They enjoy creative ways of expressing learning such as through art. A variety of faiths and beliefs are explored enabling pupils to make thoughtful comparisons with their own beliefs. Some feedback to pupils provides further challenge extending their thinking or directing how they can improve. The new subject leader has brought fresh enthusiasm and new approaches to RE enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment systems are securely in place determining what RE skills and knowledge pupils have acquired. The Church of England Statement of Entitlement and statutory obligations are met.

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