

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great and Little Shelford Church of England Primary School			
Address	38 Church Street Great Shelford Cambridge CB22 5EL		
Date of inspection	28 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	Diocese of Ely	URN	110831
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 effectiveness of religious education (RE)		Grade Excellent
School context			
Great and Little Shelford is a primary school with 209 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 national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. In the Autumn of 2018 three new leaders joined the school, including the headteacher and RE subject leader.			
The school's Christian vision			
We live and work in harmony with love for one another, so we can achieve our potential within a community of life-long learners.			
Key findings			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant improvements in the school's effectiveness as a Church of England school have been secured since the appointment of the headteacher. He has equipped and empowered leaders, including pupils, to utilise the school's vision in ensuring that everyone within the community flourishes. High expectations have been established for all pupils across the rich curriculum, including in religious education (RE). As an expression of its inclusive Christian ethos, expertise has been developed in enabling pupils who experience barriers to their learning to succeed. RE supports the outworking of the school's vision well. Pupils confidently share their thoughts and ideas whilst having pre-conceptions challenged within a culture of trust and openness. However, the school is not yet excellent because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst the vision shapes the strategic and operational direction of the school, multiple elements within its visual representation detract from the clarity of its expression. Systems for monitoring and evaluation by all members of the school community, and governors in particular, are emerging, but until recently these have not been rigorous enough to be effective. Collective worship is an important part of school life and pupils are increasingly taking on significant responsibilities. However, not all worship consistently reinforces selected themes. Initiatives to develop supportive partnerships with other schools and to secure recognition as a centre for excellence are promising, but are at an early stage of development. 			
Areas for development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed systems for governors and other stakeholders to track progress against planned improvements. Continue to develop collective worship so that all sessions complement the planned themes and contribute directly to the outworking of the school's vision in pupils' lives within and beyond the school. Increase opportunities for sharing areas of innovative and creative practice to the benefit of schools beyond Great and Little Shelford. 			

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

Great and Little Shelford's new vision was formed through a period of extensive consultation with all members of the school community. As a result, it is firmly established as central to the life of the school and to its aspirations for every pupil and adult to flourish. The wording of the vision statement itself is not overtly Christian. This is redressed by the inclusion of carefully selected Bible passages which ensure stakeholders appreciate the vision statement's theological foundation. The impact of the school's vision is seen particularly strongly in the strength of relationships, as every person shares the responsibility of contributing to a community working in harmony. However, the addition of the school's values and previous school motto detract from the strength and focus of the vision statement. The commitment adults demonstrate for each pupil and for their colleagues is mirrored in the strength of respect and friendship between pupils. Parents report how pupils of all ages highly value being nominated for the weekly award for showing kindness. They particularly value the ways in which older pupils demonstrate Christian love through their care for younger friends.

Self-evaluation is extremely detailed. The evidence included is testimony to the range of the improvements secured over the past academic year. It results in the identification of priorities for furthering the school's vision in the life of every pupil. The majority of these priorities appear within the school development plan. Governors are effective in providing both support and challenge. Opportunities for governors to carry out monitoring visits are now written into development plans. However, previously these were neither regular enough nor sufficiently focussed on the school's effectiveness as a Church of England school. Although many improvements have been instigated by the headteacher, he has deliberately fostered leadership at all levels of the school. An example of this is the member of the non-teaching staff who is the school's mental health champion. Teachers share the responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of each other's teaching. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to undertake responsibilities and develop leadership skills, particularly in respect of collective worship. The diocesan advisor referred to the impact of the headteacher as 'letting the sunlight back into the school'.

Academic standards are high, including those in RE. Consistently high-quality teaching ensures all, including the most vulnerable, make at least good, and often accelerated progress from their various starting points. This leads to attainment that is above national averages. A broad and balanced curriculum, enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular opportunities, ensures that pupils have every opportunity to discover and develop their interests and talents.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of spirituality. They appreciate that there are many reasons why a person may choose to spend time in prayer and reflection. The parish vicar described the time set aside for this within worship as 'reverent and natural'. Opportunities for reflection take place in Forest School sessions within the school grounds. Although there is some evidence of pupil engagement with areas set aside for reflection and prayer, further development is taking place to make these more accessible for all pupils. A recently formed ministry team, comprising pupils, the vicar and school leaders, has been formed to take responsibility for the development of these areas.

Living and working in harmony, as in the vision statement, is evident in the school's mutually beneficial partnerships. The school values its connection to its community highly, including with the three local churches, whose support includes volunteering to be governors, leading worship regularly and running the popular Christian 'Shine' club for older pupils. Staff are encouraged to be life-long learners and take full advantage of training offered by the diocese. Several staff have been encouraged to embark on varying research projects which are increasingly enhancing provision for pupils. The headteacher has contributed significantly as part of a cluster of schools engaged in a diocesan initiated well-being project. The school is seeking to share areas of particular strength and innovative practice with other schools, but this is at an early stage of development.

The school supports a wide range of local, national and international charities, sometimes initiated by pupils. Leaders respond well to pupil initiated social action, for example the school council deciding to support a charity for which a pupil was undertaking the three peaks challenge. The school has a number of international links and pupils gain a global perspective of Christianity through a partnership with a Church school in Kenya. Through RE, pupils gain knowledge about major world religions as well as the Christian values of tolerance and respect. Leaders have recently formed a pen-pal partnership with a school in a contrasting setting in order to broaden pupils' appreciation of the diverse nature of British society.

Weekly themes for collective worship underpin the school's vision and values well. However, not all sessions fall into the scope of, or effectively support, the planned themes. A clear, coherent structure for worship is well established. Pupils' have a good understanding of the liturgical year, which is growing as additional occasions such as Pentecost are being celebrated in innovative and engaging ways. Older pupils regularly take a significant role in planning and leading worship and steps are being taken to extend this to younger pupils leading worship in classes. The school actively seeks advice from representatives of the churches. Together they are seeking to enhance worship further by exploring different forms of worship, introducing celebration of the Eucharist and broadening the song repertoire. Parents value the occasions when they are invited to join their children for the celebration of major Christian festivals in the local church. Articles in newsletters inform them of other special occasions, particularly when pupils have planned and led worship.

Pupils are universally enthusiastic about RE. Within lessons they share their ideas with openness and respect for one another's views. The RE curriculum is very well balanced and meets statutory requirements. Teaching is enriched through a wide range of different approaches and activities, carefully targeted to maintain pupils' enjoyment, interest and engagement. Assessment is firmly established and is used well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in order to inform teachers' planning. The RE subject leader has excellent subject knowledge which she has recently drawn on to support a neighbouring school. Following a successful visit by pupils to a local Buddhist centre, the school is in the process of extending the range of RE related visits and visitors.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent.

Monitoring records and pupil workbooks evidence that all teaching and learning is at least good. Through support and in-school training the RE leader has enabled teachers to become not only confident but creative.

Marking in pupils' workbooks endorses success and there are increasing examples of teacher comments which encourage a deeper response from pupils. RE teaching frequently challenges pupils' preconceptions and encourages critical thinking and reflection. All pupils flourish academically in RE, including those with additional needs. Pupils make good and often accelerated progress and attainment is at least in line with the high outcomes achieved by pupils in other subjects.

Headteacher	Christopher Grey
Inspector's name and number	Graham Lancaster (713)