

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Aldermaston CE Primary School				
Address	Wasing Lane, Aldermaston, Reading RG7 4LX			
Date of inspection	9 May 2019	Status of school	VC primary	
Diocese	Oxford	URN	109947	

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

Aldermaston is a small primary school with 166 pupils on roll. Most pupils are of White British heritage although a small number 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 average. The headteacher and incumbent both took up their posts in September 2018. Ofsted judged the school to be Good in March 2019.

The school's Christian vision

'I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness'. John 10:10

All pupils are uniquely precious with the right to enjoy life in its fullness, achieving their full potential. The strong Christian ethos is regarded as the school's 'heartbeat' and its biblical roots are clearly articulated by the entire community.

Key findings

- The new headteacher has rapidly identified priorities and put actions in place to ensure that all pupils flourish by making consistently good progress in each area of the curriculum.
- Leaders are working closely with governors, parents and pupils to refresh the explicitly Christian vision so that it continues to be relevant and meet the needs of the current community.
- Worship and religious education (RE) develop staff and pupils' spirituality and their deeper understanding of the Christian faith as well as that of other faiths represented in the community.
- Pupils understand the biblical roots of the Christian values and can explain what it means to live by those values.
- The school is very inclusive, embracing those of different faiths and those of no faith, and pupils and adults show profound respect for one another.

Areas for development

- Consider ways to rekindle global links so that pupils continue to learn about Christianity as a world faith.
- Develop pupils' deeper understanding of a range of faiths within the community and other Christian denominations through opportunities to visit places of worship.
- Encourage younger pupils to understand the link between their behaviour and the school's Christian values in order to embed the new behaviour policy.

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

The new headteacher has worked closely with governors, parents and staff to develop the school's Christian character further. Staff testify to the fact that this work has 'energised' them and developed them personally and professionally. Improvements in teaching, learning and behaviour are driven by the school's Christian vision for all pupils, irrespective of their background or ability, to flourish and enjoy 'life in its fullness'. Policies to deal with any concerns about pupils' attendance or behaviour convey the ethos of valuing every child in God's image and providing support rather than sanctions or criticism. Pupils' emotional and mental wellbeing is a high priority for all adults in the school. Adults feel valued both for their work and as individuals. The recommendations of the last inspection report have been met, reflecting the school's determination to continue to raise standards. The curriculum is broad and gives pupils extensive opportunities to flourish in all areas. This includes those areas which most interest them, for example, sport, art and music. Governors are greatly involved in the school and now monitor learning and the Christian distinctiveness of the school routinely so that they have an accurate picture of the progress towards agreed priorities. Their determination to ensure that all pupils enjoy life in its fullness underpins this monitoring role. Parents welcome the rigour with which leaders are moving the school forward. The aims for every child and adult to show compassion, respect and to strive for the best are described as the school's 'heartbeat'. These are displayed on a tree, enhancing the concept of pupils flourishing and growing in faith in a visual way which they find meaningful. The values which convey the Christian ethos are talked about frequently in worship and lessons over several weeks. Consequently, pupils understand them and know how to live them out. They understand the biblical roots of these values and have taken actions, such as asking for a bench for the playground, while they were learning about friendship. However, younger pupils are less confident in attributing their behaviour to these Christian values.

There are strong partnerships with many other schools to support improvements, for example, in developing staff's confidence in making more accurate assessments of pupils' progress to ensure that they flourish. The school also works closely with the diocese to achieve this, for example, in training staff and in reviewing the curriculum so that it is always engaging and relevant for pupils. RE and collective worship are very high priorities and develop pupils' understanding of the Christian faith as well as their spirituality. They are planned thoroughly and develop pupils' ability to reflect and consider different viewpoints. Governors and leaders monitor and evaluate these and all other aspects of the school robustly and regularly. They have the information needed to ensure that the provision is meeting the needs of all pupils and their families and responding to national priorities. Staff are supported extremely well in order that they also have life in all its fullness. They value the professional development which makes them more confident in their delivery and impact and able to contribute more to the life of the school.

RE teaching reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Worship gives opportunities for pupils to learn about local and world events and to consider social justice, moral and ethical dilemmas and how they might make a difference in their world. They take the lead in local events in the village at times such as Harvest and Remembrance. The Harvest contributions were given to a local charity supporting people who are homeless, demonstrating pupils' compassion and wish to help those less fortunate. Pupils also support Fair Trade. The school council suggests ways to improve the school and how to ensure that all pupils' rights are respected and fulfilled. The school has many rich and mutually beneficial links with the parish and local community. Pupils and staff value their relationship with the new incumbent, who is a frequent and supportive visitor. The school benefits greatly from the support parishioners give pupils, for example, with their reading.

Frequent discussion of values, such as perseverance, as well as opportunities to discuss issues and ask 'big' questions help pupils to develop their resilience and make the right choices. Global links which were strong hitherto are no longer active and this limits pupils' understanding of the wider community and the role of the worldwide church. Pupils demonstrate their desire to make a difference through many fundraising activities and they are developing their sense of being able to challenge injustice. The school is completely inclusive and treats everyone alike, irrespective of their background or religious affiliation. Consequently, all pupils and their families feel welcome, respected and able to enjoy life in its fullness. Pupils learn about and respect one another's views and identify the common ground between the beliefs of those of different faiths. They speak emphatically of the need to be accepting and tolerant and explain how this will help them in their adult lives. Pupils trust adults and say they feel extremely well cared for. They are aspirational and adults encourage them well, often using the 'phrase 'I care about your learning' when dealing with any of task behaviour. The Parable of the Sower is often talked about and pupils can

identify which type of seed they are and what opportunities they have to flourish. Adults deal swiftly and tenaciously if any problem arises. Pupils enjoy learning about different world faiths and religious festivals, as well as Christian festivals, in RE and worship. However, they do not have opportunities to visit local places of worship which would help them to gain a wider experience.

Pupils and adults feel greatly uplifted by worship which is a central part of the school day. Worship is invitational. Pupils feel that by looking at a lit candle they become more spiritual and better able to reflect on the theme and the Christian value in focus. They enjoy singing uplifting Christian songs and the many opportunities to plan and lead worship both in their classes and for the whole school. These include engaging with a range of Christian prayers including ones they have written themselves. Pupils deepen their understanding of the significance of the Christian calendar and festivals as well as Bible stories and the life of Christ. The older pupils understand the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and talk about the relevance of faith in today's world. They understand the significance of the Eucharist. The incumbent leads worship weekly and throughout the year pupils attend services in church. They develop their understanding of Anglican tradition well although they have less understanding of other Christian denominations. RE also supports pupils well in their understanding of Christianity. They are now making better progress because the curriculum gives them more chances to discuss and question. It also provides more engaging and relevant activities. The RE leader and governors monitor lessons to identify areas which could be improved. Staff now feel more confident in delivery RE and all other subjects, and in knowing the pupils' progress and next steps in learning, thus ensuring that the vision for every pupil to flourish is being achieved.

Leaders and governors have strengthened the Christian vision and moved the school forward. Their determination to enable every pupil and adult to live life in all its fullness has ensured that pupils are making consistently good progress. They have also enriched the provision for pupils' personal and spiritual development so that every pupil and adult in the community flourishes and enjoys life in its fullness.

Headteacher	Melanie Higgs
Inspector's name and number	Gill Walley 644