

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ashton C of E Primary School			
Address	Roade Hill, Ashton, Northampton NN7 2JH		
Date of inspection	06 December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Peterborough	URN	121957

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 Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Ashton Church of England Primary School is a primary school with 19 pupils on roll. All pupils are of White British heritage. None of the 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 headteacher has been in post for two years and in September 2019 became executive headteacher of Ashton and a nearby primary school, splitting the week between the two schools. The school has recently been graded good by Ofsted.

The school's Christian vision

Each valued, each talented, each unique – Valuing all God's children.

'With God all things are possible.' Matthew 19:26

We are a small school, which believes in nurturing and encouraging children of all abilities and backgrounds to develop as individuals. Our work is rooted firmly in Christian values. The school community thrives in our safe, happy and caring environment where all God's children have the opportunities they need to flourish.

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision, ethos and values support all members of the school community in living well together as a caring and inclusive family. Here all, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, flourish.
- Leadership is a strength. The headteacher leads by example and is ambitious to improve standards, further embed the Church school ethos and ensure the wellbeing of all staff and pupils.
- Outward-looking, productive partnerships with local schools allow staff to work collaboratively to plan, develop and deliver a rich curriculum that provides extended opportunities for all pupils.
- Religious education (RE) does not have a high enough profile in this Church school. Provision is not currently resulting in pupils demonstrating age appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis and understanding of religions and worldviews.
- Collective worship reflects the school's Christian vision and values and is a central part of daily life. However, opportunities for stillness and spiritual development across the curriculum are limited.

Areas for development

- Raise the profile of RE across the school. Ensure assessment is robust and informs teaching and learning that is differentiated at age appropriate levels and provides accurate challenge.
- Raise pupil outcomes to at least in line with national averages, demonstrating the effectiveness of the distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish.
- Develop a shared school understanding of spirituality. Identify progressively deeper opportunities across the school day and the curriculum for pupils to experience stillness, allowing time for reflection and spiritual growth.

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

This small, rural Church school is in the relatively early stages of embedding its renewed Christian vision, following a period spanning two years of significant staff and governance changes, including a change of leadership. Through her vision and inspirational, focused leadership the present executive headteacher has created an inclusive Christian ethos. Staff and governors wholeheartedly support this. Pupils' academic and holistic development are supported and nurtured. A parent commented on this being a 'positive improvement'.

Governors and leaders can articulate clearly how the Christian vision informs the strategic direction of the school. They evaluate its effectiveness as a Church school. As part of a wider sustainability plan, the headteacher has taken on the executive headship of Ashton and another local school, dividing her time effectively between the two. The school has developed outward-looking, mutually beneficial partnerships with the Forest Federation of Church schools, which help to distribute and strengthen middle leadership across the schools. Staff greatly appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively to plan, develop and deliver a cohesive, rich curriculum that provides extended opportunities for all pupils. The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum shaped by its Christian vision of 'each unique'. Pupils enjoy lessons and are supported through learning that is personalised and delivered within an intimate learning environment. However, the impact of the Christian vision on academic achievement is still developing. Staff and governors share the headteacher's aspirations of raising pupil outcomes to at least in line with national averages. Governors and school leaders are closely monitoring the impact of strategies implemented to improve pupil outcomes.

A strength of the school is the relationships between pupils and adults. The school's Christian vision, ethos and values support all members of the school community in living well together as a caring and inclusive family. This impacts positively on pupil behaviour, attendance, mental health and wellbeing. Relationships between all members of the school community are supportive and all feel confident to express their views and concerns. All staff feel valued, supported by school leaders and each other, and readily engage in ongoing professional development. Parents too are extremely appreciative of the school's supportive ethos. They value the receptiveness to the needs of individual pupils and the attentiveness that staff pay to all pupils, enabling them to flourish. They value the accessible and confidential support they receive when needed.

Pupils show great compassion, selflessly looking beyond themselves to improve the lives of others in their local community. Pupils are able to articulate that their actions mirror those of Jesus as told in the Bible, showing care and kind-heartedness to others. Individuals feel empowered to speak out, engaging in social action as courageous advocates for change. Tangible examples of this are planning a litter pick around the village to look after the local environment and writing to the local council to renew the zig-zags outside the school to keep everyone safe. School council members enthusiastically engage in charitable fundraising events to support the disadvantaged, the sick and the needy.

Collective worship is wholly Christian in nature, invitational and inclusive and focused on one of the school's values. It is a cherished time that provides an opportunity for the whole school community to come together to worship. A Key Stage 2 pupil articulated that values based worship 'makes you think you can do better than this; that there's room for improvement.' Beyond collective worship, the school recognises that pupils do not have an opportunity or space to experience stillness, providing time for further reflection and spiritual growth. However, pupils articulate the spiritual impact, awe and wonder a recent visit to Peterborough Cathedral had on them. The headteacher has built a relationship with the local clergy and parish church of St Michael and All Angels adjacent to the school, where the main festivals in the Christian calendar are celebrated. Collective worship is regularly monitored and evaluated by both pupils and the governors' ethics and ethos committee, however the impact of the evaluations is insufficiently effective in driving change and raising standards.

RE is planned around 'big questions' and is taught using the same plan as other schools locally and that used by Church schools in the area. Pupils' enjoy RE and their knowledge and understanding of Christianity is deepening through the introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. Pupils articulate an age appropriate understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinity. They explore this in both collective worship and during RE lessons. One pupil gave an analogy of the Holy Spirit as 'like wi-fi, you can't see it but it's there.' However, age appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation in Key Stage 2 pupils is

insufficiently developed. Teaching has started from a lower starting point to narrow and close gaps in prior learning. Systems for assessment that result in teachers and pupils being able to gauge progress and attainment in RE are in the developmental stages and are not robust. Pupils demonstrate a limited understanding of other religions and worldviews and their impact on society and culture. There are no displays of RE, religious artefacts or pupils' work in the learning environments to help support pupils' learning and celebrate pupils' knowledge and understanding.

The impact of leadership at all levels and especially that of the inspirational headteacher, is beginning to have a positive effect on driving up standards across the school. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring further development. They are working effectively with the support of external partners to put in place systems and practices to initiate further change. The school is ensuring standards, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are improving so that all flourish.

Executive Headteacher	Jude Busari
Inspector's name and number	Fiona Wilce 969