

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sedgeberrow Church of England First School

Address	Main Street, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7UF		
Date of inspection	25 June 2019	Status of school	VC First
Diocese	Worcester	URN	116848

Overall Judgement	Grade	Excellent
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent

School context

Sedgeberrow Church of England First School is a village school with 180 pupils on roll. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is well below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. The headteacher is Executive Headteacher of another local primary school for two days a week.

The school's Christian vision

Every child achieves happiness, emotional and physical wellbeing, developing an understanding of their own spirituality. All God's children flourish with kindness as individuals and achieve their best. All children will grow a love of learning, a love for others, our world and a love for themselves, to live 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision suffuses its work, enabling everyone to flourish.
- As a result of strong leadership and innovative practice, the emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff is given exceptional priority.
- The vibrant and creative curriculum, including the teaching of religious education (RE), enables pupils to live out the school's vision and values.
- Great value is placed on prayer and worship, enabling pupils to grow their understanding of their own spirituality.
- This is a school giving quietly and generously to its community, making a difference and appreciated by all.

Areas for development

- Give greater opportunity for pupils to develop their understanding about faiths other than Christianity in order to prepare them for modern day living.
- Further develop pupils' spirituality in the creative and play-based curriculum.
- Enable children to develop a sense of connection with international communities to increase their ability to think globally about life.

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 school's Christian vision and its related values of commitment, hope, honesty, love, acceptance and forgiveness spring from the school's deeply-held Christian mission. The resonant ethos of loving kindness is quite palpable in the school: in the words of one pupil, 'Our school stands for kindness'. Such is the outflowing of Christian love that wellbeing, care and compassion are central to this school's mission. Strategic decisions to support pupils' mental health through innovative provision result in exceptionally high-quality support for pupils and their families.

The school's leadership is continuously inspired by its Christian vocation so that staff too feel a profound 'volume of support' as both individuals and professionals. Everyone attributes this to the way in which the headteacher shows how it is possible to lead through love.

Pupils and staff have a strong sense of commitment to one another and this is lived out in this school's distinctively inclusive and aspirational culture. Staff regard themselves as role models, displaying a love for others that is inspired by the person of Jesus. The practice of compassion is a focus of the school's work so that pupils are enabled to disagree well and to practise forgiveness and reconciliation as part of their learning. Pupils are supported through challenging times so that they can experience success. Accordingly, behaviour is exemplary. The understanding and use of the language of values enables pupils to relate well to one another and express themselves thoughtfully. These values are a big part of the children's lives and wellbeing as they are so deeply embedded. As one member of staff reflected, 'The children really do love both themselves and each other.'

A further impressive and distinctive element of this school's work is its commitment to inclusivity. As the headteacher commented, 'We would run a thousand miles to support our children and their families.' Approximately half the pupils come from beyond the catchment area: parents are drawn to the school because they know it will provide quality care and education for their children. Staff are responsive and accommodating towards every child, encouraging pupils to grow and achieve from their starting points. Vulnerable children are sensitively supported and enabled to flourish. Families of all faiths feel both accepted and celebrated in the school. In the words of one parent, 'Everyone is able to shine in their own way and this enables them to be happy.'

Pupils are very clear that in this school they are all accepted and are all equal. They are actively encouraged to recognise the good in everybody through activities such as 'The Jar of Awesome' where they can write their own testimonies to one another. They clearly see their connectivity: 'We're good on our own but we're even better together.' Pupils are ardent about creating a better world, aware that entrenched problems such as homelessness need tackling with conviction. Through their own initiatives in charitable giving they identify that it is their duty to follow Jesus's example and live according to their values.

In this church school, the vibrant curriculum provision emanates from the theological base of enabling everyone to 'live life in all its fullness'. In recent years it has been reviewed to ensure it delights both girls and boys. Judicious monitoring and evaluation by governors have ensured that the Christian vision has infused all areas of the curriculum, including the school's provision for special educational needs. As a result, outcomes for pupils at the end of Reception and Key Stage One are very good for all groups, and the high attaining pupils are appropriately challenged. There is a shared passion across the school for teaching and learning in RE. Governor engagement has ensured that RE has the prominence of other core subject curriculum areas. Staff work together under the excellent leadership of the RE coordinator to evolve its provision. Pupils experience a range of well-planned activities that they find absorbing and meaningful. After hearing the story of Noah's Ark, for example, Reception pupils were invited to think about the promises they could make to the world. Many offered kindness and caring for their environment as a promise. Through careful support, therefore, pupils are learning to challenge themselves - and one another - to think profoundly about life's big questions. Their knowledge and understanding of Christianity are very strong; their appreciation of other major faiths is less well developed however.

This is a school that has been resolute in its continuous development as a church school. Links with the diocese and training have fueled the passion to deepen its Christian character. Governors have assiduously addressed the development point from the previous inspection to ensure the vision permeates all of school life. Opportunities to develop staff as church school leaders have been shaped by its Christian mission. This imperative has been the motivation for its support of another local school where the headteacher now leads for two days each week.

The affiliation is regarded as a demonstration of the school's Christian principles. It has been widely acknowledged to have been of mutual benefit to both schools and to have enriched pupil experiences, such as through the sharing of practice in Philosophy for Children.

Collective Worship is recognised by everyone as the time when the school, together, 'shines brightest'. Worship is typically varied and engaging, following both the liturgical calendar and biblical teaching. A striking aspect of the school's approach is the opportunities pupils have to plan, lead and evaluate an act of worship for the school each week. These arise through a partnership with the local community and its Jesus and Me club. This development point from the previous inspection has been whole-heartedly addressed. While pupils enjoy all their worship, these are especially appreciated as they offer vivid and entertaining models of the way in which values can be lived out. The school has devoted considerable time and commitment to the development of prayer. Staff have developed a considered approach to spirituality, aligning it to 'the moment of connection with something greater than ourselves'. Through joyful singing, story-telling and introducing pupils to the teachings of Jesus and the Bible, pupils are given such opportunities. There are now three distinct opportunities for personal reflection during the school day and space is created in the timetable for pupils to ponder and respond to their own curiosity.

Sedgeberrow staff work in concert, creating a school where everyone can experience a divine harmony.

Headteacher	Philip Croke
Inspector's name and number	Bridget Knight 876