

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Chad's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School			
Address	The Gateway, Red Street, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire. ST5 7AB		
Date of inspection	20 June 2019	Status of school	VC primary
Diocese	Lichfield	URN	124465

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

St Chad's is a primary school with 290 pupils on roll which includes the nursery. 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 in line with national averages.

The school's Christian vision

Our vision is to create a community, where children are happy and healthy and live by our strong Christian values. It is a place where individuality and difference is celebrated. Everyone is encouraged to 'Build together with Jesus for a better future'. It is based on 'Jesus' parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders', (Matthew 7:24-27)

Key findings

- The school's agreed Christian values are clear and embedded. Pupils' behaviour and the relationships between members of the school family, reflect their Christian values, and guide individuals to make choices with Jesus as a role model. However, the vision statement, based on 'Jesus' parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders', although discussed and agreed, is rather lengthy and is not consistently understood and articulated.
- School leaders are passionate about developing each child as a unique gift from God. They focus on each child's spiritual growth through the curriculum, which is creative, aspirational, encourages leadership and is building caring, confident young citizens, full of hope for their future lives.
- The school ranger is a key member of staff who uses vocational, skill-based approaches to learning, that help pupils, of all abilities, to flourish and reach their God given potential.
- Worship is central to the life of the school and leaders, including key pupils, are committed to supporting and strengthening the spiritual life of the school, through a focus on the agreed core Christian values.
- Religious education(RE) is strongly led and systems have been introduced to build quality and consistency. However, these are not yet fully embedded to enable pupils to grow in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a global faith.

Areas for development

- Ensure the planned review of the current vision statement makes it clear, concise and understood, encompassing the agreed Christian values and the motto to 'Build Together with Jesus for a Better Future' (Matthew 7:24-27).
- Extend the current leadership roles of pupils in worship, enabling greater numbers to support the spiritual life of the school in a range of worship settings.
- Embed the newly introduced systems for assessing and planning RE to build whole school consistency.

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 headteacher, and her team, are passionate about developing children, as unique gifts of God. They provide strong spiritual direction for the school. They have built a creative and aspirational curriculum, enabling pupils to become caring and confident. It is underpinned by clear, Christian values that are firmly embedded in the life of the school. These values emphasise that everyone shows kindness, commitment, independence, respect, empathy and honesty. In addition, that they belong to a community that cares and nurtures everyone on 'their journey to follow Jesus'. The school's motto, 'Build together for a better future', was recently reviewed to focus on 'Jesus as a Guide.' This commitment to support pupils' spiritual growth alongside skills for life, builds hope for their future. The new motto, 'Build together **with Jesus** for a better future' is understood and effective in strengthening the vision of a community, cemented by common aims and beliefs. The vision, based on Matthew 7:24-27, is currently under review, to create a child-friendly version, that can be consistently articulated and understood, by all. It is shaping relationships, ensuring they are built on mutual care and respect. Consequently, behaviour is excellent, pupils feel safe and enjoy learning, and attendance is high. Pupils' maturity is harnessed by school leaders, through varied roles, to build aspiring young leaders. The house captains are an example of this, who strongly endorse, 'We stand out when asked to solve problems, and are chosen to lead and to help others. Our school values encourage us to be respectful and to show empathy, like Jesus.'

The school knows the pupils and their families. Parents describe them as, 'a listening, inclusive school. If we have a problem we can come and feel supported, because the school lives out its Christian values.' Staff also feel understood and cared for, 'through the pastoral support from local ministers and the school team'. Leaders are aware of the need for work-life balance and have offered yoga and other creative ways of supporting them. Training builds skills and confidence in knowing what it means to be part of a church school. In addition, school policies, systems and structures reflect the Christian vision, building strong foundations, to enable all to flourish.

Partnerships are strong, linking school, church and the community. For example, pen pals have been established between each class and the local residential care home. Residents' photographs are widely displayed, and pupils enjoy the relationships fostered. In addition, through their extensive charity work, pupils are challenged to understand and support social and cultural need. The eco and school councils shared, 'We regularly litter pick and try to make a difference in ways that are helping to save our planet.' They support the local foodbank and successfully launched an appeal for the homeless, at Christmas. These examples illustrate how the high expectations, highlighted by the school's vision and values, are contributing to the lives of others.

Although the school family is predominantly White British, pupils are taught to celebrate and respect diversity. Pupils, from other cultures and backgrounds, often share their beliefs, through lessons and circle time. The curriculum is broad and balanced, enriched by many clubs and activities. Topics such as the 'Magic Carpet' and 'Eurostar' enable pupils to extend their learning to countries world-wide. In addition, visits and visitors give them first hand experiences, to build their understanding of global religions and cultures. The school ranger is a key member of staff, who uses vocational, skill-based approaches to learning. She guides pupils of all abilities, to reach their full potential. Pupils designed and made crosses for the classroom reflection areas. They are also refurbishing an outside space, to create a spiritual area for school. This 'character development curriculum' effectively builds commitment and independence, using Christian values to underpin learning and spirituality.

Pupils enter the school displaying skills below national expectations. Targeted support, ensures pupils, of all abilities, progress rapidly. Rigorous monitoring tracks individuals' learning, through pupil progress meetings. As a result, by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is in line or above national levels. Governors' leadership committees meet termly. They also meet with pupils to explore their views, building their ideas into school improvement. They visit classes, observe teaching and learning, and are committed to their roles and responsibilities. The Christian distinctiveness committee meets to discuss how to effectively drive the school's Christian character. They are currently reviewing the school's vision statement.

Foundation governors and church leaders regularly lead worship. Links between St Chad's and Holy Trinity Churches and school are strong and spiritually supportive. Collective worship is both central and integral to the life of the school. It is often inspiring, uniting staff and pupils' voices, in praise, creating many 'wow' moments. Prayer and reflection time is offered. House captains 'set up the altar' and pupils and staff, of all faiths, engage with the worship experiences. Worship is well planned and focuses on the core Christian values, and themes to reinforce Christian teaching and Anglican tradition. Sharing the Peace, lighting of the Trinity candle, with pupils signing their acknowledgement of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, occur regularly. Pupils are keen to lead worship and have key roles, which support the spiritual experience. Leaders are considering ways of enabling greater numbers of pupils to plan, lead and evaluate whole school worship. Parents are invited to attend Friday's celebration worship, where

pupils are praised for displaying the school values. On Mondays, a prayer stone is presented to each class, to focus their daily reflections. Individual and class prayers are often written down, to share. School leaders are exploring ways of retaining pupils' prayers and reflections, to record their spiritual journeys. Worship is monitored both formally and informally, to assure its quality and its support of the spiritual lives of all.

RE is strongly led. The 'Understanding Christianity' resource has been recently introduced. Following training, the school held a big frieze day to share planning and approaches with staff. The school follows Staffordshire guidance and through training, links with the diocesan and RE networks, ensures it meets statutory requirements. Pupils explore big questions to challenge deeper thinking and understanding of Christianity and other world religions. For example, 'Who was responsible for Jesus' death – God, Pilate, the Jews or Himself?' Pupils' achievements are recorded, using a newly introduced assessment system. There has been insufficient time to embed this, to make a difference in learning outcomes and staff confidence. However, school leaders are working diligently to ensure the school continues to build its school community, reflecting its caring Christian vision and values.

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