

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Burghfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School			
Address	Theale Road, Burghfield, Nr Reading. Berkshire. RG30 3TX		
Date of inspection	21 March 2019	Status of school	VC primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	109956

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

Burghfield St Mary is a primary school with 214 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few of the 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 the national averages. A significant number of pupils belong to families serving in the armed forces, leading to a high level of mobility.

The school's Christian vision

At Burghfield St Mary we create a caring Christian learning environment that inspires each individual in the school community to fulfil their unique potential and become a responsible, concerned and active member of God's world.

Key findings

- The Christian values of the school are well understood and articulated by pupils, staff and governors, the Christian vision of the school less so.
- The academic and spiritual needs of all pupils are very well met, especially those of vulnerable children.
- Relationships between all key stakeholders in the school are very good, with a consequent beneficial effect on behaviour.
- A culture of dignity and respect for the person and beliefs of others permeates all areas of school life.
- Religious education (RE) is a popular subject with the children, here and in collective worship the values of the school are placed in the context of tolerance and respect for others.

Areas for development

- RE to deliver a greater understanding of the beliefs and practices of a range of religions and worldviews and also develop pupil awareness of Christianity as a global faith.
- The spiritual development of younger children to be enhanced by greater participation in the planning and delivery of collective worship.
- Governors to develop their role in the expression and monitoring of the school's vision, worship and RE, to secure sustained improvement as a church school.

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 original Christian foundation and current vision of the school is generally well understood and strongly promoted throughout the community. For example, the staff clearly articulate how the Bible verse from Philippians 4, 'I can do all things through Christ because he gives me strength' is developed in the school's associated values of RESPECT. 'Every single thing depends on the vision.' However, the governors were less confident in articulating this. These values are closely tied to other Bible verses encouraging self-knowledge, tolerance and inclusivity, and staff speak readily of how they are strongly promoted across the curriculum. Parents too comment that, 'The children talk about them at home.' Interactions between all key stakeholders are modelled on these values and Christ's teaching, creating an atmosphere where all are recognised as unique children of God. As a result, relationships across the school are excellent, with a corresponding beneficial effect on behaviour.

Prayer is intrinsic to school life. Teaching is good, and data shows that progress of all children across the ability spectrum is generally above national averages. Thus, the academic and spiritual needs of every pupil are well met. In particular the school is excellent at meeting the emotional needs of pupils. This can be seen in the way children from other schools who have experienced learning and social difficulties make a 'fresh start'. Children from military families whose parents are posted at two local RAF bases may experience separation and anxiety issues. They are warmly welcomed into the school and quickly assimilated into the community. Several staff have been given specialist training in meeting these particular needs for emotional support. As a result of this welcoming and inclusive approach, all vulnerable children make good academic progress.

The whole school community lives out the school's distinctive Christian vision in that all learners feel accepted as cherished individuals. All children are encouraged to make the most of their own talents and the opportunities and to develop these in an individual way. As a result, pupils recognise that the school's Christian vision and values motivate them to persevere with their learning. 'Lessons are fun and help us to achieve our best.' In addition, the children value the broad range of cultural and sporting opportunities offered by the school. 'The after-school clubs are well organised giving lots of choice,' and 'We like music and ballet!' Pupils are encouraged to excel, with their aspirations and achievements being celebrated in a variety of community contexts. The school's Christian values help them make good choices in how they live and behave. This is seen in the way certificates of achievement issued by the headteacher are greatly prized by the children. The school council plans fund raising events for national events such as Children in Need, Macmillan, and NSPCC, developing an awareness of social need outside the school. As developing responsible citizens they comment that, 'We work better when we treat others as we would like to be treated.' Although pupils are able to speak about wider world issues, the school does not have links with organisations overseas. This means pupils' ability to think more globally is limited.

The creative curriculum enables children to listen to different points of view. As a result, they learn to disagree well and respect the opinions of others. Parents comment that the staff and headteacher are readily available in the playground and by appointment to discuss any concerns they have. 'We feel listened to.' They also speak of how well the teachers know the children. The school's behaviour policy is rooted in the Christian principles of forgiveness and reconciliation. The outcome of such effective communication between all key stakeholders is that all are able to flourish and live well together.

The school has given a great deal of attention to promoting good mental health in the children. Despite the relatively low level of diversity, the value of respect is evident throughout the school and all are treated with dignity. For example, through initiatives to develop good citizenship, older children are encouraged to buddy with younger pupils, a source of evident delight to both. Effective procedures are in place to protect pupils from bullying. Prejudicial language and behaviour is challenged at an early stage across the school. As a result, children feel confident in sharing their concerns and feelings with teachers. For example, each classroom has a 'wrong box' where worries can be lodged. 'The teachers are always ready to help and will sort it out.'

Well planned daily worship is central to the life of the school. Led by the head teacher, the planning, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is very good. Through the use of activities linked to Bible stories and personal reflection, the Christian vision and values of the school are strongly reinforced. For example, parents state how their children say, 'While we are at home, we must follow the school values.' This has a subsequent beneficial effect

on family relationships. In acts of worship a culture of respect for different opinions is reinforced. Consequently, children and families of all faiths and none are comfortable to attend. While their attendance at collective worship is good, the governors are not involved in the planning monitoring and evaluation to any significant extent. Children in Year 6 plan and lead worship once a week. It is seen as a privilege and delight. However, younger children expressed a keen desire to share this task. There are good links to the local Anglican parish church, with the Rector making weekly visits to lead worship in school. Twice a term and at major festivals the children visit the church to lead seasonal services, resulting in a clear appreciation by the children of the rhythm of the Church year. These are very well attended by parents and friends. Children enjoy the services, for example commenting that 'We confess the wrong things in our lives' and 'On Ash Wednesday we all received the sign of the cross on our foreheads.' As a result of all this the partnership between school and parish is very good.

RE is given a priority at the school and is effective in supporting its Christian vision. RE is well planned and resourced and fully part of the creative curriculum. However, the governors' involvement in the monitoring and evaluation is conducted informally. Scrutiny of class work demonstrates that the children develop enquiry and reflection skills. This can also be seen in the way pupils respond to challenging questions and record their answers in class Big Books. As a result, RE makes a good contribution to the social and moral development of all pupils. Through the use of Discovery RE, the school meets the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for children and promotes a good balance of teaching about Christianity and other faiths. Pupil knowledge of the person and work of Jesus Christ is good. For example, Year 5 children recently enjoyed a worship workshop at Bucklebury church. They commented excitedly that 'We all worked together to lay a worship table based on stories from the Bible,' and 'Our first table was from the sermon I am the True Vine. The next one was Jesus the light of the world.' However, their knowledge of other religions is limited. This can be seen in the way the pupils were not confident in speaking about any understanding they had gained about the insights and practices of other faiths. Their awareness of the worldwide nature of Christianity is also limited.

Headteacher	Antony Gallagher
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