

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Renhold VC Primary School			
Address	Church End, Renhold, Bedford, MK41 0LU		
Date of inspection	6 February 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	St Albans	URN	109603

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

Renhold VC Primary School is a primary school with 233 pupils on roll. The school has low levels 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 below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. The school became a primary school in September 2017 from the previous lower school. The number on roll is increasing with the first class of Year 6 pupils this academic year. The headteacher has been in post for a year.

The school's Christian vision

Jesus' promise to 'bring life in all its fullness' inspires our Christian community. Daily, we will 'Live God's Love'. Through our Christian values, we will ensure that all within our school are treated with love and respect, enabling all to feel secure and valued, regardless of creed, colour and ethnicity.

Key findings

- The new headteacher and the school community have developed a vision focused on the life and teachings of Jesus, that is having a significant impact across the life of the school.
- There is a strong culture of welcome, where all are treated with dignity and respect as people created in the image of God. It is a place where children, some with significant additional needs, receive new starts.
- The creative curriculum is a strength of the school enabling pupils to live life to the full. Opportunities are sometimes missed for spiritual development across different subjects.
- The Christian vision of living God's love means that collective worship is warmly invitational and inclusive of all, whatever their beliefs. It inspires adults and children to live out its messages but there are insufficient opportunities or spaces in school for quiet reflection or prayer at other times.
- Pupils show positive attitudes towards religious education (RE) and are learning to debate and disagree well. Time spent on the subject lacks consistency across the classes.

Areas for development

- Ensure that pupils deepen their understanding of global issues, enabling them to develop a concern for justice and become articulate advocates for change.
- Identify and prioritise times for spirituality across the curriculum and school day in order to enhance pupils' spiritual development.
- Ensure quality curriculum time in RE so that all pupils engage in depth with a range of religions and worldviews.

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, leadership team and governors have systematically reviewed and restated the inclusive and distinctive Christian vision with reference to the diocesan vision of 'Living God's Love'. The school's vision and associated values, such as friendship, respect, service and thankfulness, are rooted in biblical teaching that Jesus came to bring 'life in all its fullness'. Emphasis is placed on Jesus as the good shepherd, teaching all to 'love your neighbour'. This vision, known by staff, governors and pupils, is being successfully lived out in the life of the school and is having a significant impact on relationships and provision for all pupils. For example, one parent reported that 'this school has changed my life and my child's life'. The school uses its vision, summed up in its strapline of 'nurturing minds, inspiring greatness, through God's love', to shape its development plans. For example, it is focusing on raising standards and improving pupil and staff wellbeing. This ensures the original foundation as a Church of England school is maintained and enhanced. The school is living out the vision in partnership work with local churches through a variety of activities in school, such as Godly play, as well as special services in church. School leaders have responded to current thinking in Church school education working with the support of diocesan staff in developing their vision. This shapes policies and impacts practice at a deeper level. For example, the headteacher makes phone calls to parents to praise the achievements of children, showing the importance to her of each unique individual. Inspection evidence backs parental views that 'her understanding underpins everything', revitalising the school's church status. Priority is given to collective worship and RE, although time spent on RE varies across year groups. High quality professional development means that future school leaders have been grown from within. Governors are effective and are developing their involvement in school self-evaluation. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed with positive outcomes for children.

The creative curriculum is a strength of the school with some topics such as 'Jewels of the East' incorporating Hinduism, giving a central place to RE. Varied enrichment and other opportunities such as forest school, activities with a Christian schools' worker and an innovative technology project with a local company reflect the school's vision for pupils to experience 'life in all its fullness'. The curriculum is driven by this vision to raise pupils' aspirations and inspire them to be the best they can be. Academic progress is often good but varies in different cohorts. The progress of the disadvantaged is often close to or matches other pupils. However, as this is the first year of Year 6 pupils, there is no formal evidence yet of outcomes across Key Stage 2. Whilst some spiritual needs of pupils are being addressed, opportunities are missed for spiritual development in different subjects or in special spaces in school.

This is an inclusive school with strong culture of welcome. Children, some with complex needs, have second chances, thriving as a result of everyone truly 'living God's love'. In living this vision, the school emphasises reconciliation and forgiveness ensuring exclusion is rarely used. Many staff and pupils have improved their wellbeing after moving to the school, giving them 'a sense of hope' and 'a feeling of being looked after'. Pupils' enjoyment and love of learning is reflected in good attendance. They flourish with a range of leadership positions such as playtime buddies, science ambassadors, charity representatives and sports leaders. Pupils have a strong sense of fairness and empowerment with the school council at the heart of decision making. Pupils are confident that they know who would help them with any issues, although they say that bullying is rare. The school has been proactive in its response to some recent developments in Church school education, ensuring appropriate training for staff and governors and incorporating changes to life in school. Children take the lead in challenging prejudicial behaviour and language, reminding new pupils of the school's expectations to uphold dignity and respect. The school is developing its established relationships and sex education policy to include Year 6 pupils for the first time.

The school's considerable range of charitable support includes those initiated by staff and by pupils. Other charitable support is linked through collective worship such as the bishop's harvest appeal, Children's Society Christingles and assemblies linked to global issues. Therefore, pupils have opportunities to ask questions and think globally. There are fewer opportunities for deep learning of global issues or for pupils to be real advocates for change.

Daily collective worship is carefully planned by staff making use of some high-quality published resources with time to reflect on Christian values. Staff leaders ensure that worship is inclusive of all, whether of faith or different worldview backgrounds. Those present are invited to participate and worship inspires them to take

action. Pupils have frequent opportunities to plan and lead worship both in school and for special services in All Saints Church. Pupil evaluations of worship lead to changes being made. For example, they have ensured worship is lively and participative, using a variety of songs, opening and closing responses, prayer and quiet reflection. Pupils talk confidently about their response to worship and show age appropriate understanding of the Christian beliefs about the nature of God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school has experienced a challenging and extended period without a priest at the parish church but maintained the partnership well through lay people. Strong links with other churches locally have enabled good practice to develop and continue. Examples of this include the Open the Book worship and prayer spaces activities. Staff are touched by worship showing that the vision extends to adults too. For example, one staff member said, 'It makes you reflect on yourself and your own values.'

In RE an enquiry-based approach enables pupils to flourish. Visits such as to a Hindu temple and a local faith tour inspire pupils and topics such as 'Can you be a scientist and a Christian?' lead to respectful debates. Despite the school's view that RE is a core subject, pupils' work in books and the learning environment do not reflect deep study across religions and worldviews and their impact on modern society and culture. The school has a manageable assessment system for RE and the RE leader has shared good practice across the school.

The headteacher has renewed the direction of this Church of England school. Following the example of Jesus, the good shepherd, she leads a school where children and adults flourish. They recognise the very positive difference this Church school has made to their lives.

Headteacher	Andrea Ward
Inspector's name and number	Liz Youngman 465