

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Little Gaddesden Church of England Primary School			
Address	Church Road, Little Gaddesden, Berkhamsted HP4 INX		
Date of inspection	14/3/2019	Status of school	VA Primary
Diocese	St. Albans	URN	117443

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
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 Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context
Little Gaddesden is a primary school with 100 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. There are no pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged on roll. Mobility is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is in line with national averages. The headteacher and majority of staff have been in post since the previous SIAMS inspection.
The school's Christian vision
The school was founded on Christian principles in 1858 and enables children to perform to their full potential. Children are valued as much for their endeavours as their achievements. The school is all about people and sets high academic standards in all subjects. The "golden rules", based on Christian values give an enduring moral compass.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher, vicar and governors have embraced the opportunity to revise the established vision to further develop the Christian distinctiveness of the school. • The school Christian character, supported by the Christian values in the Golden Rules, is evident in the day to day life of the school, supporting good relationships and providing a setting in which all are flourishing. • Collective worship, whilst being distinctively Christian, is inclusive of all, enabling those of different faiths and beliefs and those with no religious affiliation to participate meaningfully. • Religious Education [RE] provides a varied curriculum which enables pupils to develop critical thinking, deepening their knowledge and understanding of the Bible.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the impact of the existing vision by ensuring that it fully takes into account the school's Christian distinctiveness and monitor this over time. • Strengthen leadership of Christian character and its impact on those who learn and work in the school by establishing a shared understanding of spiritual development as a church school. • Extend pupils' understanding of how faith and belief affects believers by developing theological and philosophical enquiry into Christianity and the range of faiths studied in RE.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

'We all know each other really well. We're treated as equals and we respect each other', one pupil proudly reports, 'we're like one big family'. This family ethos is a reflection of the established vision: 'curious thinkers, independent learners, confident individuals, excellent achievement', which has steered developments over a number of years. As a result, standards are high throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and new arrivals from other schools are supported and nurtured to achieve well from their starting points. This is due to the passion and tenacity shared by all staff for every child to be the best that they can be as 'God has made you to be the person you are'. The vision is translated into daily life in school through the 'Golden Rules'. With Christian values from the biblical teaching on the fruits of the Holy Spirit, statements such as 'do be kind' guide excellent behaviour and relationships throughout the school. Supported by training from the diocese, staff and governors are currently reviewing the vision to take account of the school's Church school foundation basing their discussions on John 10:10 'I have come so that you will have life, and have it to the full'.

Acting on the outcomes of the previous SIAMS inspection, governors have taken steps to evaluate collective worship and RE. Developments include the sacred space for collective worship created by the vicar which staff and pupils appreciate, saying that 'it helps us to settle into worship'. There are now pupil collective worship ambassadors who enjoy setting up and leading worship, selecting and saying prayers and reading from the Bible.

Aware of its rural village location where pupils have little experience of meeting others from different faiths and cultures, leaders have developed a curriculum which enables pupils to see beyond themselves and their school, including a rich programme of visits to different of places of worship. Pupils speak with excitement about how meeting members of different faiths such as Buddhist and Hindu helps them to understand that people worship in many different ways. Pupils feel confident to speak freely about their own faith and belief as 'we are all equal, we respect each other'. They understand the importance of respect for those who have different faiths and beliefs and how this prepares them for their secondary education and their future as citizens.

Looking beyond themselves, pupils have an awareness of the needs of others, fund raising for a number of charities and sponsoring children in Peru and India. Inspiring each other to advocate on behalf of others, for example Great Ormond Street, they enjoy organising fund raising events such as cake sales. There is a developing awareness of social action as pupils speak of their shock about the homeless and those who don't have basic necessities in life. They are grateful to be able to organise giving food and other items to the local food bank.

The vision inspires enjoying learning, developing resilience and building self-esteem. Pupils speak of understanding that they are the person that God has made them to be which helps them aspire for their 'own personal best'. A recent project on gender stereotyping enables pupils to explain how this supports them to 'just be ourselves'. School leaders and governors have recently reviewed the Sex and Relationship policy to support pupils personal development as they move through the school, and to further support their understanding of their own and other's unique identity. The vision to foster curious thinkers is observed in pupils asking questions which extend understanding, such as the pupil in the Reception RE lesson asking, 'What does respect mean?' Inquisitiveness continues throughout the school, for example, where the year 5 and 6 pupils debate with partners who was responsible for the death of Jesus. Needing to justify their opinions deepens their understanding and they describe with maturity how they compromise and agree to differ. These are examples of how spiritual development is well supported through the curriculum, however, there is not a shared understanding by governors and school leaders of how they describe this as a church school.

Emotional well-being is nurtured by the 'Golden Rules' and pupils of all ages explain how they help them to have good relationships and sort out difficulties when they arise. Explaining forgiveness, one pupil says, 'it's like giving someone a second chance'. Strikingly, pupils of speak of the importance of forgiving themselves to re-build self-confidence. This ethos supports attendance which is consistently above average. The school further supports the small proportion of those with unauthorised absence and have seen improvements.

Through daily worship based on Anglican tradition, prayers written by the children and liturgical prayers, along with biblical teaching, pupils develop understanding of Christian belief and worship. They describe how this helps them to take action, like the pupil who, inspired by the teachings of Jesus, helped her friend who had fallen saying 'It was like the good Samaritan'. Pupils respectfully describe how they have different faiths and beliefs or no expressed belief but are all able to respect prayer and reflection. Staff and pupils say they pray or 'enjoy the space and think our own thoughts'. Pupils know they can pray anywhere with one describing how opening a conker and 'seeing the new seed reminds me that God is everywhere'.

Pupils enjoy visitors leading worship including the Baptist minister as ‘he acts and brings the stories to life’ which helps them understand. The vicar leads worship each week and along with church members supports termly visits to the parish church. Here, pupils throughout the school participate in readings, prayers songs and plays. Pupils have some understanding that Christians worship in different ways through visits to the Baptist church and St Albans Cathedral. Through learning in RE pupils gain understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God, describing events in the life of Jesus from Good Friday to Pentecost. They have limited appreciation of the world-wide Christian church and its diversity of expression.

The vision inspires exploration and enquiry in RE leading to good knowledge of stories and the experiences of characters which they apply to their own lives and behaviour. Theological and philosophical enquiry into Christianity and the range of faiths studied is limited. This affects pupils’ understanding of how faith and belief affects the lives of believers. Pupils speak with pride about the range of art they have done which helps their understanding, such as the paintings of hands representing how people reach out to God in different ways.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good because all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, and those new to the school are supported to achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. This is as a result of teachers who are confident in teaching RE supported by a range of in-school and Diocesan training. Regular monitoring by the RE leader, currently the head teacher, is a systematic part of school monitoring and has led to improvements including the adoption of the locally agreed syllabus.

Headteacher	Charis Geoghegan
Inspector’s name and number	Mel Adams NS 58