

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Silsoe Church of England VC Lower School

Address	Chestnut Avenue Silsoe MK45 4GP		
Date of inspection	10 June 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Church of England Lower
Diocese	St Albans	URN	109605

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

Silsoe is a lower school with 232 pupils on roll. The majority of the 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 above national average. The school is in the final phase of expansion to become two form entry, having recently moved to a new purpose built building. A private pre-school is on site along with an eight pupil unit for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, one of two serving central Bedfordshire. The headteacher has been in post since September 2004.

The school's Christian vision Life in all its fullness John 10:10

Our vision is to be an excellent God-centred, values-based, community-focused school where everyone is welcome, encouraged and included. Our children will develop as creative, determined learners and responsible, fulfilled citizens who are inspired to achieve their God-given potential and live life in all its fullness. We will foster understanding, tolerance and forgiveness within our caring Christian community.

Key findings

- Silsoe is a highly inclusive and welcoming school. All pupils and adults feel valued. The Christian vision focuses on a tailored provision for all so that pupils can be the best they can be. As a result outcomes are high across the school and often well above the national. The provision for pupils with additional needs transforms lives.
- Relationships are strong at all levels due to shared Christian values. These values are deeply embedded and known clearly by pupils, staff and families. They directly influence behaviour for the good and are a constant point of reference for all members of the community. Pupils see the school as a happy and very safe place to be.
- Collective worship is extremely central and inclusive. Pupil involvement has developed significantly and worship has a powerful impact on the daily life of the school. Prayer is natural and valued. Abundant opportunities exist to reflect and have been incorporated beautifully in the design of the building.

Areas for development

- To ensure the strong connection between the biblical roots and the school's Christian vision are well known by all members of the community.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to explore their spiritual and theological thinking across the curriculum.
- To widen pupils' global awareness in order for them to make deeper links with modern Britain.

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 recently revised Christian vision for the school has clear biblical roots making strong links to the school's deeply embedded Christian values. This was formed as a result of leaders and members of the school working together and great care was taken to meet the needs of all. The biblical roots are becoming known through the community. This vision, based on John 10:10 'Life in all its fullness', is for all pupils, and adults, to aspire to be the best they can be. In order to do this all pupils are known extremely well and feel valued for who they are. Exceptional planning and tracking for all pupils results in high outcomes across the school. Attainment is frequently well above the national average and all pupils make good or better progress. This includes pupils with very significant additional needs in the school managed unit. They make remarkable strides as a result of an innovative, tailor made programme and excellent pastoral care. This has transformed the lives of many pupils in this group as they become able to reach new personal targets and beyond, often from low start points. The integration of these pupils is exceptionally successful for all parties. All pupils are valued as God's children and expectations are equally high for all. As a result success runs throughout the school. Adults feel valued and importance placed on their well-being enables them to flourish for example, through counselling and a manageable marking policy. The school's Christian values are extremely well established and well known to all the community. As a result they are passed on seamlessly to new generations of families as the school expands. They have a positive impact on every aspect of school life. Governors say 'They are our blue print.' Pupils say 'They make me become a better person.' 'We make good choices using our values.' Parents remark how children use the values 'to know how to treat others' and how issues are dealt with through the values. The headteacher's daily modelling of the Christian values is very evident. Through her work as a national leader of education, the school successfully supports other schools and they host events for the diocese.

Pupils and adults live out the school's vision through wanting the best for others as seen in the strong tradition of charity work. Local giving supports food banks, and overseas projects reach a range of countries. For example, the redundant stock from the old school was sent to Sierra Leone and a long standing link exists with a Tanzanian school. Silsoe school has International School status and pupils have increasing global awareness. They have a strong sense of justice and social responsibility as seen in the Year 3 whole school presentation on plastic pollution. Behaviour around the school is exemplary and exclusions are very rare. Excellent relationships exist across the school and these are firmly based on the school's Christian vision and values. The school's Christian vision enables pupils to be the best version of themselves as unique individuals. They have a keen awareness of others and an extremely supportive community exists due to the excellent range of responsibilities given to pupils and pupil initiatives. For example, Year 4 pupils creating an Easter song for the whole school. A pupil explained, 'People are happier in school because we are helping them.' Pupil leadership is a clear strength of the school. The school's Christian vision is manifest in the way all groups are warmly included as part of the school community. For example, the school runs termly tea parties for families living out of district which are well attended and appreciated.

Collective worship is a central and highly valued part of each day at Silsoe school. All adults and pupils feel welcome and no families elect not to take part. An example of this wide welcome is the shared signing of the greeting. A leader explained, 'It is where our vision begins.' The school's Christian vision and values are shared very clearly in worship and pupils are keenly aware of how these directly apply to their daily lives. 'We take the values from worship and use them.' The teachings of Jesus are regularly explored and pupils are able to see their relevance today. Pupils can explain how the story of Adam and Eve tells us not to disobey. Prayer is a key part of worship and within the way of the school. Pupils are aware it is possible to pray anywhere. The beautiful design of the building, a result of sustained planning with the diocese, provides multiple opportunities for reflection and prayer, formally and informally. Pupil involvement in worship has greatly developed. All pupils may contribute and the vast majority do so including all abilities. This might be through presentations, choosing songs, reading or the older pupils leading the younger ones' worship. Pupils help plan and evaluate worship with great enthusiasm. 'We work as a team and other children listen to us.' The local incumbent is a key part of worship in school through his sensitive use of liturgy and prayer. Church services are extremely popular with pupils, parents and staff. As a result, the school enables access to church for a wide group within the local community. Statutory obligations are met.

Religious education (RE) is planned effectively so that pupils are able to give at least age appropriate accounts

about Christianity. Pupils also have an understanding of a range of religions other than Christianity and are beginning to see how these relate to society and modern Britain. The school has recently implemented a detailed new scheme of work to ensure deeper coverage of world religions. Pupils feel able to discuss their views and are willing to listen to each other respectfully. They know it is possible to agree to disagree. They show age appropriate skills of enquiry and their theological and spiritual thinking skills are evident in RE. For example pupils in Year 4 are able to respond to the story of The Last Supper with maturity. These skills are being developed across the curriculum. Assessment of RE helps gauge pupils' progress and informs teacher planning. The school's vision is reflected in the provision for all abilities in RE. Statutory obligations are met and RE is largely in line with the *Church of England Statement of Entitlement*.

Governors know the school very well and, through their frequent monitoring visits, are able to ensure the school's Christian vision becomes a reality. Governors are very aware of the school's Christian values and how they shape the organisation of the school. They are centrally involved in the development of the school's vision in order that all pupils and adults might be the best version of themselves.

Headteacher	Susan Purdue
Inspector's name and number	Mary Westley 927