

Leverstock Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School			
Address	Green Lane, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 4SA		
Date of inspection	27 June 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese	St Albans	URN	117416

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 Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School Context

Leverstock Green is primary school and nursery with 234 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are White British heritage. 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 is below national averages. The headteacher and majority of staff and governors along with the rector, have been in post since the previous SIAMS inspection. The school received a judgement of good in the Ofsted inspection carried out in July 2018.

The school's Christian vision

Striving for excellence; caring for the individual: By growing within our Christian ethos, all members of our community will be prepared, ready for and excited about their life in all its fullness. Our core Christian values of love, respect and forgiveness will be at the heart of everything we do. For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26

Key findings

- The recently revised Christian vision is beginning to inform strategic decisions by governors and school leaders.
- The rector is a significant and strategic inspiration to the Christian ethos of the whole school community and is an inspirational leader of collective worship.
- The school's Christian values, expressed in the vision statement, permeate all aspects of the life of the school community and create an ethos in which all those who work and learn there are able to do so in a safe, harmonious and caring environment.
- The understanding with which the pupils readily live out the Christian values in their interactions around the school and in lessons result in behaviour and commitment to learning which are excellent.

Areas for development

- Strengthen leadership of Christian character by ensuring that governors and school leaders share a clear understanding of the coherence between the vision statement and its theological basis.
- For governors to further improve the effectiveness of the school as a church school by systematically monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- Deepen pupils understanding of the theological and philosophical aspects of religion by further developing argument and debate about Christianity and the range of religions studied.

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

Love, respect and forgiveness, the Christian values central to the school's vision, infuse all aspects of the day to day life of the school. As a result, pupils enjoy strong relationships through using their values and teaching them to younger pupils. 'We just know what to do from being little, it's what we do in school', explains one pupil. Relationships and levels of care from and between staff are exemplary and illustrative of the school's commitment to staff wellbeing. In the family ethos which this creates, each pupil is seen as unique and special in the sight of God, enabling all to flourish. As a result, inclusivity is part of the day to day life of the school, illustrated by a parent who describes her child being spontaneously supported by other children to complete her race on sports day. This begins on admission where pupils are admitted from the local area in accordance with the local authority policy which is inclusive of all faiths, beliefs, abilities and disabilities.

The recently revised vision, devised by school leaders, captures the long-established practice, ethos and values of the school. Staff express with conviction the way in which this is expressed through well-rehearsed systems and routines including forgiveness and a fresh start within a genuinely loving and caring community. Recently appointed staff speak of the impressive way in which they observe this. The sports coach speaks of the remarkable way in which pupils self-manage their emotions using their values in competitive sport.

School leaders have worked with foundation governors to develop the vision and the rector has advised on the theological basis. Foundation governors are aware of the importance of the vision and values in steering strategic decisions, however, there is not a clear and shared understanding of how the theological basis underpins the vision statement. School leaders and governors maintain good relationships with the diocese and have attended a range of training sessions.

Standards in the school are in line with national averages and pupils make expected progress from their starting points, including those with special educational needs, the vulnerable and the most able. Attendance is above average. The headteacher attributes this to the commitment to support 'the whole child' emotionally, so that they are free to learn.

Pupils have a growing awareness of the world beyond themselves. A range of pupil leadership groups including the pupil Eco Warriors have begun initiatives including re-cycling paper and plastics. Groups of pupils regularly visit elderly members of the community in a reciprocal friendship project. The pupil Change Team choose charities to support including the local food bank and Dacorum Emergency Night Shelter. Moved by the plight of children through the charity Compassion, they organised a sponsored cycle and scooter to raise funds to support the education of a child in Peru. The team spoke with enthusiasm about how, having seen such need, they would like to sponsor more children.

Pupils develop a sense of the importance of prayer as they move through the school. 'I-spaces' in classrooms and around the school are available for pupils to take time out to think about the choices they have made or to reflect or pray. One pupil spoke appreciatively of this saying, 'I'm not Christian but I do like to pray when I'm sad.' Pupils speak appreciatively of the spiritual garden where they can be still or write a prayer. Classes throughout the school have contributed to prayers for the world with many pupils praying for their families, for example in India, or for news items that people would be kept safe from floods.

Daily worship, at the end of the day, begins with a Christian greeting and has themes based on Bible stories linked to the school values. Through the weekly inspirational worship led by the rector pupils express a good understanding of the church year and Christian festivals which are celebrated in church. Innovative approaches such as 'body prayer' where pupils face outwards when praying for the community, the use of silence or Taize music engage staff and pupils, enabling them to use the space for prayer or for their own thoughts. One pupil describes, 'When thinking about why God made us, it makes me think about who I am, what other people have done for me, how I can be a better person.' Pupils have an exceptional understanding that they may each have a different faith or no faith. They explain that they are able to respond to prayers or can be quiet and think their own thoughts.

Pupil Religious Education [RE] Ambassadors enjoy helping to set up for daily worship and plan and take part in school services held at church for Harvest, Christmas and Easter and the leavers' service. Pupils gain an understanding of the Eucharist which they explain by talking about the Last Supper. A small number of pupils show their responses through recording their reflections after assembly. One wrote that Jesus told the parable of the lost sheep 'because God loves everyone and won't leave anyone behind'. Pupil evaluations of worship have led to further developments, including wanting more visitors, which they have from a number of local churches. Governors are not involved in evaluating collective worship.

Pupil RE ambassadors describe the fun of making 'Holy Trinity slime', under the direction of the RE leader. They explain how this substance, with 3 properties, helps younger pupils to understand the concept of the Holy

Trinity. This was the area for development from the previous SIAMS inspection. Together, they demonstrate their own understanding, by explaining Jesus' journey from his death on the cross through the resurrection and ascension to the coming of the Holy Spirit. Linking this to the closing words of their assembly, 'Go in the light of Christ', one pupil explains that the Holy Spirit is God with us all the time.

Through the use of the Locally agreed syllabus for RE along with Understanding Christianity resource, pupils have a developing understanding of Christianity and a number of different faiths. They particularly appreciate learning from their peers about their own experiences and ways of practising their religion, for example, from a pupil who spoke about their mosque. Pupils are curious, raising 'big' questions. One pupil posed the question, 'If God came to earth today, what would he be doing?' However, theological and philosophical enquiry into the range of faiths studied is limited. Learning is assessed in accordance with the requirements of the agreed syllabus against age-related expectations. The majority of teachers have received training with the diocese. The RE link governor has visited the school and met with pupils and the RE leader, and participated in school celebrations including RE week. He described the impact of the vision on one pupil who said, 'The school has helped me accept the person I am, it's given me confidence.'

Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Burgess
Inspector's name and number	Mel Adams NS 58