

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Address	School Lane, Swanley Village, Kent BR8 7PJ		
Date of inspection	3/4/2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese	Rochester	URN	118590

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

St Paul's is a primary school with 110 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level 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 is in line with national averages. After a period of instability in leadership, the current headteacher took up his post in January 2017.

The school's Christian vision

We are a creative, forward thinking Church of England Primary School that aims for 'Life in all its fullness' (the Gospel of John 10:10) to enable each child to flourish through the provision of the best education; academically, morally, socially and spiritually; and by living out our faith in God. The vision is understood by stakeholders across the school through the Bible story of Peter walking on water (Matthew: 14).

Key findings

- The headteacher has established a secure Christian vision in a short time, and this has led to rapid positive change. He has therefore transformed the school for the better, ensuring that the vision has a daily impact on school life. This is not always explicit in school documentation.
- Collective worship is enriched by the significantly strengthened partnership with the church. There are some opportunities for pupils to lead acts of worship, but they would like there to be more of these.
- Pupils apply the vision to their learning and, like Peter stepping out of the boat, they are willing to take risks and have become more resilient.
- Religious education (RE) is taken very seriously and enables all pupils to flourish. RE offers a safe space to reflect on their own views and to respect the views of others.
- The Christian vision underpins relationships at all levels. Pupils understand and practise forgiveness. Leaders consider staff wellbeing to be fundamental. Therefore, all are enabled to flourish.

Areas for development

- Ensure that policies and the prospectus are explicit about the ways in which the Christian vision drives practice.
- Create more opportunities for pupils to plan and to lead collective worship so that they have ownership of worship at school.
- Establish a consistent and clear definition of spiritual development so that all stakeholders share the same understanding of this.

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

Since his appointment, the headteacher has worked rapidly to establish a meaningful Christian vision. This is understood by pupils through the story of Peter stepping out of the boat in Matthew 14. Pupils apply this to their learning and so they are prepared to take risks. As a result, they have developed resilience and they learn well. Pupils and adults at the school are reminded of the vision constantly by the engaging displays around the school. These include visual reminders, such as a boat in the courtyard. Consequently, pupils and adults refer to the vision throughout the day and apply it effectively to all areas of school life. The headteacher provides inspirational Christian leadership and he puts the vision into practice in all aspects of his work. This has resulted in renewed and strengthened partnerships with the local church and with the diocese. These provide effective support for teachers and leaders and they have enhanced the ways in which adults apply and live the vision. Self-evaluation as a Church school is thorough and effective. Members of the governing body highlight the positive changes brought about by the school's current leadership and fully support the vision. Governors monitor activities to evaluate Church school effectiveness. There is evidence that the vision is considered when drawing up policies for the school, but this is not explicitly written into most policies, neither is it evident in the school prospectus. Leaders have ensured that the development points from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed.

The Christian vision has resulted in a broad and rich curriculum that caters for the needs of all pupils. They are enabled to be creative and to develop their own strengths. For example, 'over to you' learning, including in RE, offers pupils the opportunity to construct and organise their own learning. This results in high levels of engagement and independence, and enables all to flourish. The concept of 'stepping out of the boat' has enabled leaders to take risks and to make changes. For example, teaching assistants have been helped to develop particular skill sets to work more effectively with individual pupils who have special needs and disabilities. This is having a positive impact on these pupils' progress. Current school data shows that the progress of all pupils is accelerating. This is largely a result of the new approach to learning brought about by the Christian vision. However, this is a recent development and the impact is not yet evident from published results. There is a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, including mountain biking, visiting art galleries and places of worship, and residential visits abroad. These vary in response to pupil requests and they ensure that each individual can flourish. Many of these opportunities help pupils to look beyond their local community and to consider the lives of people who are different from themselves. Much of the school's work to support charities is driven by pupils. For example, the introduction of 'Foodbank Friday' to support a local foodbank was initiated and led by pupils. Teachers help to raise pupils' awareness of global events and welcome questions and discussion about these. Many pupils can explain eloquently that everyone in the world is created by God and that therefore they deserve to live life in all its fulness. Pupils are invited to reflect on their learning, on their relationships and on their attitudes. Pupils enjoy listening to the views of others and asking questions across the curriculum. This contributes to their good spiritual development. School leaders share an understanding of spiritual development, but this is not understood clearly by all stakeholders.

Pupils behave exceptionally politely and show consideration towards each other. This was exemplified by the acceptance and tolerance of a child with special needs during the act of worship. Everyone, both pupils and adults, is treated with dignity and respect at the school. Pupils talk confidently about practising forgiveness and offering fresh starts, and this is embedded in the school's behaviour system. Pupils are helped to handle conflict and to find their own resolution in preparation for their lives beyond the school. This is related to the need for independence and resilience and to the concept of 'stepping out of the boat'. Pupils show immense respect for each other's views and demonstrate a genuine understanding of difference. As a result of the impressively good behaviour, there have been no exclusions in recent years. Surveys show that the vast majority of parents are very happy with behaviour in the school.

As a result of the renewed partnership between the school and the church, collective worship offers the whole school community opportunities to reflect, to pray and to worship. There is considerable involvement from the parish, with a youth ministry team leading school worship every week. Major Christian festivals are celebrated in the church and many parents attend these. Worship enables pupils to learn about the teaching of Jesus and to apply this to their own lives. Consequently, pupils' understanding of key Christian beliefs, such as the Trinity, is impressive for their age. Pupils contribute their views about the acts of worship in school, and these are generally positive.

Some pupils, however, would appreciate more frequent opportunities to plan and to lead collective worship themselves so that they feel more involved in this.

RE exemplifies the school's Christian vision. Through highly effective leadership of this area, pupils feel safe to express their views in the knowledge that these will be respected. The new RE leader is being developed very well as a future leader of Church schools. Teachers are supported well in creating engaging and challenging learning opportunities. When describing RE, pupils and teachers refer explicitly to 'stepping out of the boat' and to enabling all to flourish. The vicar is an effective resource in providing theological expertise for adults and pupils. This means that RE at St Paul's is of high quality and that pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of major world religions, and particularly of Christianity.

Headteacher	Ben Hulme
Inspector's name and number	Anne Southgate 820