

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chewton Mendip Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address	High Street, Chewton Mendip, Radstock, Somerset. BA3 4LL		
Date of inspection	04 February 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Bath and Wells	URN	123827

Overall Judgement	Grade	Requires Improvement
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	Requires Improvement
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Requires Improvement

School context

Chewton Mendip VA primary school is a small rural primary with 142 pupils on roll, who come from the village and surrounding area. The school has a very low level of cultural and religious diversity. The proportion of pupils 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 has been in post since January 2010, the substantive senior teacher (and SENCO) is currently on maternity leave and the majority of staff are new since the previous inspection.

The school's Christian vision

Growing Together. 'The seed fell into good ground and grew up increasing and yielding thirty, sixty and a hundred times as much.' Mark 4:8. We strive to be that 'good ground' where our pupils can grow in knowledge, skills and wisdom, with hope, aspiration, dignity and respect. Our ambition is that they can thrive and contribute to their communities and live well together. We embrace the Church of England's vision for education that all pupils will have 'life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10)

Key findings

- The school has recently adopted a vision statement with a biblical basis that is clearly Christian. This vision is becoming more widely known and referenced by members of the school community. However, there is not yet sufficient evidence of the distinctively Christian vision informing the daily life of the school.
- School leaders and governors have limited, informal processes to gain a sense of the effectiveness of the school as a Church school and do not have systems in place to monitor the impact of the Christian vision.
- While collective worship is mostly regarded as a positive aspect of the school day, the quality of worship varies. It does not make the most of opportunities to support the spiritual development of adults and pupils.
- Religious Education (RE) is regarded as an important subject within the life of the school. However, at present there is no formal monitoring or evaluation of teaching and learning in the subject and consequently standards require improvement.

Areas for development

- Governors to develop and embed rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's Christian vision on the community to ensure a deeper shared understanding of the school's effectiveness and distinctiveness as a church school.
- Develop the school's understanding of, and approach to, spiritual flourishing, by embracing planned and spontaneous opportunities, through collective worship, prayer, reflection and the wider curriculum.

- Secure consistently high quality teaching and learning in RE which reflects the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement, taking into account the mixed age class context of the school.

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

A clear Christian vision, with roots in biblical teaching has been adopted by the school. This vision acknowledges local context and builds on from previous vision statements linking them with the parable of the sower. The Christian vision is beginning to be understood and articulated by leaders, pupils and the wider community. However it is not yet being used by school leaders and governors to drive leadership decisions or shape policy and practice within the school. The areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have not been fully addressed as governors and leaders do not maximise every opportunity to develop and promote the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Subsequently there is little opportunity for staff to develop an understanding of Church school education or be equipped to teach in the context of a Church school. Collective worship and religious education (RE) are both delivered as part of the school's weekly timetable. There is no evidence of any impactful monitoring or evaluation by school leaders and as such the quality and impact of both collective worship and RE is variable.

The school offers a broad curriculum which is well supported by volunteers and an extensive range of school clubs providing out of school hours opportunities. Pupils are known individually and are generally supported to develop according to their needs. Seven animals are used to help pupils reflect on their own learning skills. Pupils and parents value the positive relationships between the pupils regardless of age and ability. The 'sunflower afternoons' are just one example of how pupils of all ages are encouraged to work together. Though there is little diversity across the community the school does seek to create a culture of respect and understanding with regards to difference and diversity. Parents comment that the school enables pupils to gain in confidence and grow at their own pace. There is some understanding of how the curriculum is reflected in the school's vision rather than the school's vision informing bold decisions and determining the curriculum. Staff value positive links with the local learning partnership. The school seeks to be fully inclusive. Staff comment that access to specialist external support, for example educational psychologist time allocated by the Local Authority to formally identify and support pupils with specific learning needs, is insufficient and as such they feel that this restricts the school's ability to ensure that some pupils' needs are fully addressed. Available data indicates that attainment and progress are close to national averages. The school promotes social, moral and cultural development though has yet to secure a clear understanding of spiritual development. A lack of opportunity to engage with, question and challenge the concept of spirituality limits the otherwise holistic nature of the education. As a result pupils, and adults, are not yet being better equipped to experience 'life in all its fullness'.

Pupils engage well with learning and say how much they appreciate the wide variety of additional clubs available to them. The school uses 'be' statements to help reflect the outworking of the Christian vision, however, although some pupils speak tentatively about these statements, they do not yet fully understand them or their relationship to the vision. Consequently, the Christian vision and values are not yet supporting pupils to make positive choices. There are partnership links to a community in India. Some staff, pupils and parents were able to comment upon this as a means by which the school recognises and seeks to address its limited racial and cultural diversity. Due to the cyclical nature of the International School Award, there was little evidence of this partnership displayed in the school environment at the time of this inspection. Curriculum, RE and collective worship plans, along with no formal place for 'pupil voice', suggests that pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunities to explore and ask a range of age appropriate 'big questions'. There are some opportunities for pupils to plan and engage with charities to demonstrate compassion, yet there was little evidence of how pupils are equipped to be aware of, or to challenge, injustice. As such pupils have limited opportunities to consider more complex questions, thus restricting opportunities for pupils and adults to flourish in a broader, spiritual sense.

Supportive partnerships between the school and community are evident. Links with the local church are deepening and the school also accesses diocesan opportunities for the pupils, such as 'Pilgrim Days' and a visit by Zambian guests of the diocese. These partnerships are constructive to some aspects of school life although their connection to the school's Christian vision is not explicit. Parents and staff enjoy a clear and open dialogue and as a result relationships and behaviour are generally good. Pupils appear confident to articulate ideas and parents

feel that pupils were mostly listened to by teachers. Some pupils feel they have little voice within the school, expressing sadness that there was no longer a school council. They sometimes feel that they are not always listened to by the adults, particularly during unstructured times of the school day. The school has identified wellbeing as an area for development although links with the Christian vision have not been explicitly made and resources to support Church schools are not being utilised sufficiently. Staff expressed how they feel well cared for and supported by leaders in school. Some provision has been made to support pupil mental health and wellbeing through the use of 'download diaries' or 'mindful colouring'. Pupils generally felt safe to express their views and processes are in place to address and monitor any behaviour issues. Key policy documents are in place though are not yet aligned to the school's Christian vision.

RE is regularly timetabled each week and in most age groups meets the time allocation recommended in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The pupil experience in RE and the quality of provision is variable and pupils are not flourishing in the subject. There is some understanding of Christianity as a living, diverse faith along with a more limited understanding of some other world faiths. Pupils are able to recount some Bible stories but do not have sufficient opportunity to engage in a deeper critical analysis or interpretation of text. RE is featured in the school development plan and work is underway to improve the quality of RE. There has been little available staff training to support RE teaching and assessment. RE does not yet reflect the 'good ground' aspired to in the school vision.

Collective worship is variable in its planning, delivery and impact. It is invitational and inclusive in that all pupils mostly attend and none are withdrawn. However there are inconsistencies due to other demands for space and time, particularly mid week. There is no formal monitoring or development for those who lead it. The previous SIAMS area for development about engaging pupils more fully in planning and leading worship, has not been addressed. There are some opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of ways during some acts of worship, though this remains adult directed. Pupils enjoy preparing for festivals at the church and say they would like opportunities to be more involved with school based worship. The Priest in Charge and the headteacher value the place of collective worship in the school day and have had an impact in ensuring that on Mondays and Tuesdays collective worship is more modern and relevant. The pupils find worship engaging at times but do not describe it as inspirational. The Priest in Charge has been very proactive in the life of the school and his positive impact is widely appreciated by adults and pupils across the school community. There are good links with the parish church which is used for festivals, a Year 6 leavers' service and increasing curriculum opportunities too. Parents and the wider community have opportunities throughout the year to join the school for collective worship or services, though these appear to have only limited impact on the spiritual flourishing of the wider community. Prayer is included in some acts of worship and older pupils can recall the Lord's prayer, however there is little opportunity, formal or informal, for the pupils to engage with prayer and reflection to aid their own spiritual development.



The effectiveness of RE is Requires Improvement

The quality of teaching in RE requires improvement because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop age appropriate skills within RE and demonstrate these consistently. Teachers do not have sufficient subject knowledge and therefore work is not always pitched appropriately for the pupils. A new scheme of work complimenting the agreed syllabus to provide a more enquiry led approach to learning is being introduced but is yet to be embedded. RE is a recognised area for development. Leaders have yet to introduce formal monitoring and evaluation systems to measure the quality and consistency of teaching and learning. As a result pupil outcomes are variable and do not yet reflect age appropriate challenge.

Headteacher/Executive principal/Head of school	Miss Clare Rice
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