

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Appleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary			
Address	Church Road, Appleton, Oxfordshire OX13 5JL		
Date of inspection	6 March 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	123219

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

Appleton is a village primary school with 182 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of 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 (SEND) is below national averages. However, this is changing across the school. The school has grown significantly over the past 10 years.

The school's Christian vision

Our vision is to be a happy and welcoming school community where we learn to **build wisely for life** by following Jesus' example of love and care, aiming to be the best we can for ourselves and the good of others. It is based on the parable of **The Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 7: 24-27)**.

Key findings

- The effective leadership of the headteacher, her strong spiritual guidance, empowers others to sustain and emphasise the characteristics of the school as a distinctive, church school.
- Relationships, underpinned by the shared Christian vision and values, foster a culture of forgiveness, responsibility, respect and kindness that enable all to flourish and live well together.
- The honest, reflective approaches promoted by senior leaders encourage pupils and staff to aspire to be the best they can be in an atmosphere where it is alright to make mistakes and learn from them.
- The broad and balanced curriculum that is shaped by the school's Christian vision, which recognises and celebrates that each member of the school community is a unique child of God.
- The high status of RE and CW and the key roles they play in supporting the spiritual development of the pupils and staff in their efforts, 'to aspire to be the best that they can be'.

Areas for development

- Engage all governors in further developing the spiritual life and Christian distinctiveness of the school, ensuring the views of the pupils are at the heart of all that is done.
- Build on and extend the work and the enthusiasm of the worship council to enable it to plan, deliver and evaluate whole school worship regularly, to continue to encourage it as a decision maker supporting the spiritual life of the school.
- Extend the systems and structures developed through the effective work of the religious education (RE) leader to ensure judgements made about learning in RE are endorsed and moderated widely, through established networks.

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 school vision, following a review was revised and reintroduced this academic year. It is clear, child friendly and underpinned by the teachings of Jesus. Leaders effectively use the story of the wise and foolish builders from St Matthew's Gospel, to develop individual responsibility and choice. Despite its recent introduction, the diligent determination and commitment of leaders and staff ensure that pupils are developing an understanding of the vision. The vast majority of pupils questioned are beginning to articulate how the vision helps them make good life choices. They say, 'It is helping us to build a strong foundation for our lives.' In addition, the core Christian values are influential in fostering an atmosphere of respect and forgiveness, shaping strong, caring relationships. Pupils are adamant there is no bullying in their school, 'If we ever fall out we try and forgive each other and move on.' As a result, there is a real sense of community, 'where we learn from our mistakes together'. Through the strong spiritual guidance of the headteacher, supported by her leadership team, pupils are nurtured as unique children of God. She has introduced a range of systems and structures that raise pupils' expectations and focus on the development of the 'whole child'. These inclusive policies work together, to emphasise the importance of the vision and values. The 'Growth Mindset Boards' display 'animal attitudes' that have been chosen by the pupils. Pupils displaying the characteristics of 'Bounce Back Bunny, Steadfast Squirrel' and others are rewarded during 'Sharing Worship'. Consequently, through these positive behavioural approaches they are growing in confidence, developing traits that build strong character and resilience. As a result, they are supporting the development of pupils' aspiration to be, 'the best that they can be'.

Leaders know their pupils well and work closely with parents to create a culture where diversity and difference are celebrated. Parents of the school are ambitious for their children. Leaders share their determination for the whole school community to succeed. The headteacher, following Jesus' example of love and care has introduced an open-door policy for staff, parents and pupils. This has enhanced communication, openness and transparency, to provide speedy response if difficulties arise. The numbers of pupils judged to be vulnerable and disadvantaged are well below national averages. However, there are more children identified as having additional needs across the school. Staff are very skilled at identifying and responding to their needs early on. To strengthen the support for these vulnerable individuals, the headteacher has appointed an emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA). Her role is to focus on their emotional wellbeing. She has also restructured her senior leadership team giving the assistant headteacher the responsibility for monitoring pupils presenting with special needs. This support for the needs of all groups is monitored through termly pupil progress meetings. Although attainment is in line or above national averages, some pupils' progress measures fall below where the school would like them to be. Leaders are aware of this and invest in training, targeted resources and support to address the issues. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils flourish and learn well, developing skills that prepare them for their future. They actively respond to the vision call to 'build wisely for life'.

Behaviour is consistently good and reflects the Christian foundations of mutual respect. Pupils foster strong relationships with other children and adults, guided by the clear Christian vision and values. Consequently, they feel safe and secure and want to attend school. As a result, attendance figures are above national average and the parents of any regular absentees are targeted to bring their attendance in line.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, projects and clubs. These help to broaden pupils' experiences and develop pupils' understanding of the world beyond their school. Pupils actively engage in charitable events, to support the needs of others they understand are less fortunate than themselves. For example, the pupils have engaged in raising funds for toilet twinning, Cancer research and Medic Assist International work in Embo.

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. In addition, it is instrumental in offering experiences that reinforce the agreed vision and values daily. Through worship, pupils and staff reflect on Christian teaching and Anglican tradition to broaden their understanding. There is a focus on a specific value termly to guide and shape relationships. 'Filling their kindness buckets throughout Lent' is an example where pupils are applying these values in their own lives. Reflection areas in each classroom and outside are varied and extend the worship experiences. Worship acknowledges God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Bible stories are a key resource to explore the teachings of Jesus. All staff lead worship weekly and music, prayer and reflection widen the worship experiences. Links with the Church of St Laurence enable the school community, through special services, to worship in both settings. Parents are invited to attend. The incumbent and church members lead worship weekly to support the spiritual lives of the school community. The headteacher recently invited pupils to form a worship council to support her in leading worship. They meet weekly to informally evaluate and share ideas about worship. In addition, pupils have been challenged to plan, lead and support class and key stage worship. They are very enthusiastic about

their developing role as worship leaders. The headteacher is considering ways they can extend their roles to lead whole school worship.

RE is strongly led and effectively delivered by all teachers and planning is guided by the school's Christian vision and values. Close links with the diocese and RE networks ensure quality in RE provision and resourcing. Pupils explore 'Big Questions' such as, 'Who was responsible for Jesus death?' through their RE Adventure Diaries (READ). They cooperate well and share their thinking about religions across the world in their lessons. They have also explored Christianity as a global faith through projects such as 'Christmas Around the World'. Annually, small numbers of pupils are chosen to formally share their views about worship, religious education (RE) and learning. Governors consistently focus on standards and as a result, display thorough knowledge of pupil learning outcomes. However, they are less confident in articulating their role in upholding the school as a church school with a distinctive spiritual bias. Consequently, this is diminishing their impact in driving the school's spiritual development and the Christian distinctiveness of the school.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is consistently good. Planning follows the Oxford Agreed Syllabus, 'Understanding Christianity', diocesan guidance and Discovering RE. Teachers plan, using these resources and a range of strategies, to develop learning experiences that are challenging and creative. As a result, most pupils enjoy RE and are developing an understanding of Christianity and other world religions. Training is a regular feature of the school to enable teachers to build skills, confidence and expertise to enhance learning. The RE leader monitors the quality of RE through lesson observations, book scrutiny and discussions with pupils. The school has introduced termly assessments to ensure learning outcomes are in line with other subjects. The RE leader is exploring ways of endorsing the judgements about RE, made by the school. She regularly networks with other schools and RE clusters, where moderation is discussed.

Headteacher	Amy Carnell
Inspector's name and number	Marianne Phillips 586