

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Rothersthorpe Church of England Primary School

Address	Church Street, Rothersthorpe, Northamptonshire NN7 3HS		
Date of inspection	21 March 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Peterborough	URN	122014

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent

School context

Rothersthorpe Church of England Primary School is a primary school with 96 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 is below national averages. The headteacher has been in post 6 years.

The school's Christian vision

Everyone is valued as an individual and helped to develop and progress in his or her unique way within a Christian environment. We provide a unique environment that fully embraces our school, parish, village hall and church; a place where a range of people and groups gather in the pleasure of learning and growing together. Love your neighbour as yourself Mark 12:31.

Key findings

- The exemplary leadership of the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, ensures that all feel deeply valued and respected in this school family.
- The extremely strong and mutually beneficial links with the local church contribute significantly to the school's Christian character, impacting very positively on the spiritual life of all members of the community.
- Inclusive, nurturing relationships, based on the school's Christian vision, inspire and support all members of the school and the wider community.
- The development of religious education (RE) is a high priority for the school. Pupils are inspired by lessons and they are learning to deeply explore religious, spiritual and philosophical ideas.
- Collective worship is warmly invitational. Pupils are able to describe how it influences their lives and inspires them to become advocates for change.

Areas for development

- Expand and share the excellent practice in RE so that all pupils are able to reflect critically on religious and spiritual convictions.
- Ensure systems for monitoring collective worship include pupils, so that they take a more substantial role in its development.

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 is highly effective in articulating its Christian vision and values to the community it serves. This results in a school community where every individual feels loved, nurtured and able to succeed, working together in an atmosphere of mutual support and understanding. The school's vision clearly and deeply shapes policy and practice. The school leaders ensure that the relationship between the school, church and the wider village community, are a clear reflection of the vision. This enhances a wide range of experiences for the pupils and members of the church. The innovative practice in the way these relationships are developed ensures that this connection is valued by the whole community. For example, a friendship chain produced by pupils was presented to church as part of the Candlemas service. The school is a place of excellence. As one pupil commented, 'Even on the rainiest of days, light can still be found in this school just like Jesus shines his light'.

The Christian vision and associated values underpin relationships at all levels. Pupils talk confidently about how the buddy system helps them to become better and more caring people. Pupils recognise and celebrate difference. In an activity looking at fingerprints one pupil commented, 'It shows that God created everyone differently'. Everyone is treated as an individual and given the chance to be the best they can be. Inspection evidence supports parent's views that the school has a deeply inclusive nature. They share many examples of how the school supports all children to flourish whatever their skills, talents or needs. For example, one saying the staff go the extra mile to 'give their children a chance to shine'.

Staff induction is a key priority ensuring they have a clear understanding of how the vision is linked to being a role model in relationships in school. This holistic approach has a significant impact on relationships with parents and the provision for children. Parent surveys support inspection evidence that the school sees every family and pupil as individuals. They give examples of the transformational effect this can have. 'The school always gives the best support it can offer' was one such comment. Staff feel valued and supported in their personal and professional development. The school shares its exemplary practice, hosting visits by other schools and contributing to the diocesan head teachers' conference. Governors' monitoring is exceptionally purposeful, challenging and rigorous, leading to clear development priorities. This benefits the pupils and ensures the school's distinctiveness is effectively supported and developed.

The school's broad, balanced, connected curriculum is shaped by its vision. Curriculum time is effectively used to ensure individuals make progress. Pupils use their individual skills and talents to help to support each other to be the best they can be. This highly personalised approach ensures that all pupils flourish. High expectations underpin the success of the school and result in pupils achieving well. Relationships demonstrate the school's vision is lived out on a daily basis. Parents support inspection evidence that behaviour in school is excellent. They give many examples of how pupils demonstrate a high level of care for each other commenting, 'They support each other in a variety of ways socially and academically'. Spiritual development is given high priority and imaginative practice is used to promote spirituality across the curriculum. Staff are skilled at seizing the moment and moving beyond planned activities making the most of pupil's questions. Pupils welcome the opportunity to think deeply about issues and life enhancing experiences.

The school's Christian vision inspires the whole school community to engage in social action. Pupils are encouraged by their sense of justice and the school's vision of 'loving your neighbour' to support a number of charities. Some of these are closely linked to the local community and others more global. These actions support the school's vision of 'gathering in the pleasure of learning and growing together'. This relationship with the local community is a unique and deep strength of the school. One pupil talked about an act of worship on 'the world God made and how we should look after it'. This inspired her take action through litter picks and setting up a collection of plastic bottle tops for recycling. This sense of justice, dignity and respect for all has also led to pupils influencing school policy to ensure that all feel included.

There are many examples of how the curriculum enables pupils to reflect and explore spiritual and ethical dimensions in all subjects. The recent spiritual care week gave pupils the chance to reflect more deeply on some of these. For example, the way the use of the poem 'We are refugees' during world book day was linked to the week. Activities on homelessness were used to promote a deeper understanding and inspire support for a local homeless charity. Pupils give evidence on how this impacts on their own outlook saying, 'It was about thinking of other people in the world'.

Collective worship is the key to the life of the school. Themes for worship are skilfully woven around the school's Christian vision and values. These then link to the teachings of Jesus and other biblical material. Consequently, this results in an uplifting and special time shared by the whole community. A wide range of approaches such as drama, pupil responses and times for quiet contemplation ensure all are engaged in the experience. Pupils have frequent opportunities to plan aspects of collective worship both in school and in church. Recently the prayer books used by pupils have been replaced after pupil feedback requesting prayers more connected to the school's values. Staff and pupils talk with enthusiasm about worship and the support it gives them in school and their daily lives. A strong, innovative relationship with the local church has brought about excellent developments in collective worship. Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray during the school day. These include areas set aside for spiritual reflection. This gives pupils a wide range of thought-provoking and inspiring activities to aid prayer and reflection, developing deeply and spiritually.

Pupils are inspired by RE. They speak with great enthusiasm about how RE helps them to learn about a range of views and religions. It also gives them the chance to explore ideas and give their own view points. However this approach is not consistent across all classes. Pupils discuss difficult questions and know all are listened to and respected. They link this to the school's vision about 'loving your neighbour' and respecting others' ideas. Parents support this inspection finding, commenting on the passion shown when discussing RE work at home. Pupils are able to relate these discussions to everyday life. RE is led by the headteacher who has recently introduced 'Understanding Christianity' to enhance discussion of concepts and use of religious texts.

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