

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Overbury Church of England First School			
Address	Overbury, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 7NT		
Date of inspection	04 December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Worcester	URN	116837

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 Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent

School context

Overbury Church of England School is a first school with 66 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 in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. Pupils are taught in three mixed aged classes and leave the school at the end of Year 5. The headteacher has been in post for over two years.

The school's Christian vision

Discover, nurture and share God's gifts

God has given each of you gifts from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

1 Peter 4:10

Our vision is for all to be inspired to use their God given gifts; to see learning as a joy; to love each other unconditionally; to recognise and value our differences; to take care of each other and our environment.

Key findings

- Leaders have developed a pertinent, biblically based Christian, vision. It is well known and impressively serves the good of its community and the wider world. The big theological ideas underpinning it are very well expressed by leaders. Pupils and their families are beginning to grasp them too.
- Spiritual development is a golden thread running through the school's provision, including the curriculum. Pupils and adults flourish spiritually, expressing spiritual responses to their experiences.
- In this small village school, the outward looking vision of service is inspiring. Pupils have an excellent understanding of themselves as global neighbours, acting for change locally and internationally.
- Collective worship gives strong biblical context to the Christian values and vision. It inspires service and relationships. Pupil leadership is a significant strength, though occasionally, it doesn't enable the full participation and response of everyone.
- Religious education (RE) is a priority and has a strong, effective role in pointing pupils' eyes beyond their village setting. Pupils have an excellent understanding of Christianity, world faiths and views.

Areas for development

- Deepen everyone's understanding of the big theological ideas underpinning the Christian vision, so that it is fully appreciated as the inspiration for 'God's work in this place'.
- Support pupils who lead collective worship, to actively and creatively engage everyone through spiritual encounters. This will ensure that participants can 'have their hearts strangely warmed'.
- Further develop the curriculum to ensure that diversity in all its forms is fully explored.

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 Christian vision in this excellent school takes full account of the benefits and limitations of its rural context. It promotes flourishing for everyone, turning pupils' eyes beyond their village. Pupils' understanding of Bible stories giving the vision meaning, is very well developed. Leaders describe their motivation for 'God's work in this place' through the theological ideas in the vision. Deepening understanding of uniqueness, service and unconditional love, for pupils and their families, will enable them to appreciate this rationale. Since the last denominational inspection, monitoring of the Christian character of the school has improved. Governors have a robust plan for their evaluation activities. These are recorded in detail and drive improvement planning. Therefore, inspirational leaders have deep insight into how the Christian vision is being realised.

Leaders of this small school reach out, forming partnerships that help them fulfil their vision. Training, provided by the diocese for staff and governors, has a strong impact. Leaders appreciate current thinking in Church school education and apply this appropriately in their context. The school treasures its links with the local church. Regular joint services for families in both school and church maintain this link. The school even involved the church community in responding to some of the 'big questions' they ask, such as 'what's not fair?' In response, when a new toilet was installed in church, a joint toilet twinning project was prompted. Recognising the limited diversity locally, leaders have connected with a school in Birmingham. Through this, pupils encounter diversity in faith and heritage. They celebrate new friendships with 'children who are the same but different'.

The bespoke curriculum makes the most of the rural setting. It also includes many outward-looking experiences to broaden pupils' horizons. The spiritual focus in the vision is evident in spiritual development that is a golden thread running through the curriculum. It is evident in teaching and learning and supported by many visits and visitors. As a result, everyone expresses the spiritual impact of their experiences. Pupils wonder at the morning mist that lies on the fields beside their school. They feel pride as they are affirmed by the flying of the school flag to celebrate their birthday. Their spiritual flourishing is seen in creative expressions of ideas and questions. Leaders have strengthened planning for spiritual development which now thoroughly underpins the planned curriculum. Adults capture the spiritual growth of pupils meaningfully using the 'windows, mirrors, doors' approach. They use this to ensure that all pupils develop spiritually, over time.

The vision for inclusion and appreciation of everyone, is deeply apparent in everyone's sense of worth and belonging. Pupils are individually nurtured by adults. They are supported in their learning and wellbeing so that they achieve as well as they can. Pupils reach standards that are often better than those achieved nationally. Their progress is similar to the national picture. Leaders take timely and appropriate action to accelerate progress for any pupils who fall behind. They give close attention to those who have one or more vulnerabilities. Relationships across the school are unconditionally loving. It is touching to see the care that older pupils show to the younger ones. Peer mediators give support in occasional disagreements. Pupils respect each other's views and opinions. The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They understand what bullying is. Though it is very rare, pupils readily seek help so that it stops quickly. The school is reviewing its curriculum to ensure that pupils understand diversity in all its forms. This will equip them to challenge all forms of discrimination.

Staff are very well supported in their roles and wellbeing. Training ensures they grow professionally, including in their teaching of RE and delivery of collective worship. The school invests in good mental health for everyone. Pupils have mental health passports which foster talk about feelings. The head teacher is a mental health first aider, supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing. In the spirit of 'sharing our gifts', the school offers its expertise in emotional and social support to nearby schools. Everyone appreciates the Christian culture and the love received daily, especially when they are troubled.

The embedded global consciousness of the school shines out, reflecting the school's outward looking vision. It is preparing pupils for life in a diverse, unequal society. They have earned the silver 'Global Neighbours' award for their international work; the first in the country. This testifies to how this small school has a big heart for those who have no voice. Pupils passionately act as advocates for them, through fund raising and campaigning. They have introduced battery recycling and glass milk bottles in school. They have also written to their member of parliament, challenging the government about issues they care about. These include pollution, reducing waste and ensuring that all children in the world have access to education. This work tangibly expresses the school's Christian vision of sharing and serving.

Collective worship is a rich expression of the Christian vision. Jesus' teaching inspires humanitarian responses to national and global events. For example, pupils were touched by accounts of flooding and prompted to raise money for the emergency fund. Clergy involvement deepens pupils' often thoughtful biblical knowledge. They appreciate many Anglican practices and traditions. Pupils encounter and articulate the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Many creative spaces invite pupils' prayers, reflections and deep questions. These further demonstrate the profound spiritual heart of the school. The nurturing and sharing of varied gifts are poignantly seen in pupils' confident and independent leadership of collective worship. They regularly lead whole school and class worship, choosing greetings, offering prayers and presenting Bible stories. Pupils express this as serving, offering their gifts to God, just as the widow gave what she had in the temple. Purposeful evaluation of worship by pupils leads to improvement. They noticed that sometimes they don't remember to invite other pupils to contribute or reflect. Making better use of their puppet, Oscar, is suggested by pupils to engage everybody more fully. Growing this skill will ensure that 'hearts are [always] strangely warmed' in worship. Pupil worship leaders work with those from a partner school to share their skills and learn from others. This extends the vision of sharing God's gifts widely.

The carefully developed RE curriculum and thorough assessment ensure that pupils achieve well. Pupils' work is very well presented. RE is thoughtfully taught through enquiry and questioning. As a result, pupils' understanding of the different paths of faith that people follow is impressive. They are thoroughly respectful of different views and live comfortably with them. Through focussed themes such as light and celebration, pupils delight in similarities found in religious practices. Pupils' understanding of Christianity deepens over time. They have expressed their understanding of the big story of the Bible in some theologically astute art pieces.

This excellent Church school is making sure that its pupils 'share their gifts' to understand and serve their world. The provision to develop pupils spiritually is exemplary. It utilises its rural setting to wonder at the created world, whilst always setting pupils' eyes beyond it. Pupils here deeply appreciate diversity in belief and culture and understand themselves as global neighbours. They act willingly and variously to help make God's world as he intended it to be.

Headteacher	Emma Ross
Inspector's name and number	Jane Martin 646