

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Tewin Cowper CE Primary School			
Address	Cannons Meadow, Tewin, Welwyn AL6 0JU		
Date of inspection	2 December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	St. Albans	URN	117457

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	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Tewin Cowper is a primary school with 176 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. 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 also below national averages. The school has grown in recent years and now has single age classes. A new classroom was built to accommodate the Reception class. The RE leader was new to post in September 2019. In January 2019 the school was judged Good by Ofsted.

The school's Christian vision

The new vision is inspired by the story in Genesis 28:10-22, of Jacob and his dream, and the Bible verse: 'the Lord, the God of Jacob, will teach us His ways so that we may walk in His paths.' Micah 4:2. Each part of this story is used to illustrate the school's work, for example, encouraging pupils to flourish by making good choices, persevering and learning from mistakes.

Key findings

- The headteacher has a strong Christian vision and an accurate assessment of the school's strengths and its areas for development.
- Worship is excellent and enriches the lives of pupils and staff. Pupils evaluate its impact on them and leaders use this information to ensure that worship is always appropriate and meaningful.
- The new religious education (RE) leader has had considerable impact in improving outcomes and developing children's opportunities to ask deep questions and discuss one another's differing views.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they talk about the ways in which their behaviour reflects the school's core Christian values. They show much compassion for those who are less fortunate.
- Governors support and challenge leaders although their monitoring sometimes lacks rigor.

Areas for development

- Ensure that all adults and pupils understand the vision and see the links between the vision and their opportunities to flourish.
- Governors develop their monitoring role in line with the vision and the school development plan so that it is robust and links to the school's main priorities.

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 headteacher has led staff and governors in reshaping the vision, establishing it as the driving force behind everyone's opportunities to flourish. This work has not been completely accomplished. The vision is based on the story of Jacob, helping pupils understand how to persevere and achieve their goals. It is represented visually by a ladder, with one core value on each rung. Pupils understand these values, and attribute them to well-known Bible passages. Although pupils and adults know they flourish because of the support, nurturing and encouragement they receive, they do not articulate the impact of the vision readily. They talk more about the values which underpin the school's ethos. Decisions and policies reflect the depth of concern the school has, not only for pupils but also for staff and families. There are examples of the way this has transformed lives. Governors are a very supportive presence and evaluate the school's work. They know how effective the school is although their monitoring sometimes lacks rigor and is not generally linked to development priorities. The recommendations of the last inspection report have been met, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing improvement. Leaders consider current thinking in Church school education. The new RE leader, in particular, has developed teachers' skills in encouraging pupils to reflect and explore deep questions in lessons. For example, older pupils have compared Creation with the Big Bang theory. She has raised the profile of RE in the curriculum and helped teachers make links between RE and other learning. She has supported them well with training and resources and identified further potential improvements, for example, in assessment. Pupils are inspired by RE and value learning about different faiths. They feel this prepares them for adult life in a multicultural society.

A determination to share best practice and provide the best opportunities for pupils and staff has led leaders to work closely with local Church schools, and with the diocese. They have forged strong and mutually beneficial links with the local community and the parish church. Parishioners run an after school club where pupils can learn more about the Bible. The school's buildings are often used for community events. The school shows a deep commitment to developing its staff as future leaders of Church schools. The partnership with parents is very strong and they appreciate excellent communication and the engaging curriculum which inspires their children. Pupils achieve well academically because staff have high expectations and follow a curriculum which values diversity and difference. Pupils also make very good progress in their personal development, emerging as well rounded and responsible citizens. Pupils who find learning challenging are given appropriate support and thrive in this nurturing atmosphere. They develop their confidence and feel completely included. Activities are engaging and memorable. For example, younger children retell the story of the Nativity using props. Older pupils reflect on the real meaning of Christmas by stripping back the materialism to focus on Mary, Joseph and the Christ child.

Pupils develop their skills as courageous advocates, determined to make a difference in the world and to help those less fortunate. They raise money for many causes, often organising their own charity events. They support schools in Malawi and South Africa which helps them begin to understand Christianity as a global faith. They comment on the common features and differences. Pupils support the food bank and a homeless shelter. Leaders care about the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils. They have made changes, for example, to the workload of staff, showing a determination for them to flourish personally and to feel valued. The school is an extremely harmonious place with excellent relationships, tolerance and respect for everyone. Older pupils are especially supportive of the younger ones. There is a new strategy for managing behaviour, encouraging pupils to make the right choices, to forgive, and to make links to the core Christian values. Each value is in focus for several weeks so that pupils really understand its significance. Pupils and families who do not hold Christian beliefs feel completely respected and fully included within the school community. Parents and pupils talk of the way every knows and cares about one another, irrespective of their background. Pupils say how important it is to learn about those of different faiths because this helps everyone in society to respect and help one another. They have made visits to places of worship and visitors have explained their beliefs and traditions to them to develop this understanding.

All staff are involved in planning and leading worship which is uplifting and includes everyone in the community. Each class plans and leads a service in church at a special time such as Harvest, Remembrance or Christingle. Parents attend these services and feel extremely welcome, irrespective of their personal beliefs. Pupils visit the

church regularly, both to worship and to learn more about the Christian faith. The incumbent makes an exceptional contribution, leading worship herself and supporting staff in leading worship, and planning and delivering RE lessons. Young worship leaders help to prepare the holy table with lit candles at the beginning of daily worship, and this reminds pupils that they have come together in God's presence. Pupils and adults are invited to participate. Pupils readily demonstrate their understanding by answering questions and behave with great respect. They enjoy different approaches including stillness, music and role play. They join together in prayers including ones they have written. They understand the seasons of the church year and the main events in the life of Christ. They learn about Trinity, the Transfiguration and the importance of the sacrament of Eucharist using age appropriate language. They reflect on what they have heard and consider how it relates to their own lives. The school involves its local community in worship. For example, during Advent models of Mary, Joseph and their donkey are passed round the village between families and their children explain to their classmates how they have helped them on their journey to Bethlehem. A Christmas event for parents allows them to offer up their own reflections and aspirations, and they have established a prayer group. Parents know how inspirational worship is because of the feedback they receive from their children. Pupils evaluate worship and the impact it has on them in their reflection books. Leaders use this information well to judge whether worship is appropriate and meaningful for pupils. There are areas in each classroom where pupils can reflect or read the prayers they and their classmates have written. Displays celebrate pupils' learning in worship and RE and they are collaborating on the design for an outdoor reflection area.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

ONLY

Teaching in RE is good and often better, ensuring that all pupils, including the most vulnerable, make good progress. The new RE leader has developed the assessment process so that teachers know that all pupils are appropriately challenged. Leaders' monitor RE well so that it is always relevant and inspiring.

Headteacher

Alison Simpson

Inspector's name and number

Gill Walley 644