

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Down Ampney Church of England Primary School			
Address	Down Ampney, Cirencester, GL7 5QR		
Date of inspection	23 January 2020	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Gloucester	URN	115664

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 Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Requires Improvement

School context

Down Ampney is a rural primary school with 43 pupils on roll. The number on roll has risen. 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 has increased and is above national averages. The headteacher and several staff have been appointed since the previous denominational inspection. In October 2018, Ofsted judged the school to be good.

The school's Christian vision

Everyone Achieving, Everyone Believing, Everyone Caring.

Our vision is to create a community based on Christian teachings within a nurturing environment. We will empower our children to flourish through the development of relationships in order that they have life in all its fullness in our changing world. (John 10:10)

Key findings

- Leaders' faithful commitment to improving Down Ampney as a Church school means the school is in a much better place than at the time of the previous denominational inspection. Governor monitoring now includes the vision although such evaluations are at an early stage in directing improvement plans.
- A carefully considered Christian vision and associated values have transformed pupils' behaviour and so readiness to learn. Pupils and staff are engaged and inspired by the creative curriculum.
- Exemplary nurture for all pupils, notably those with additional needs, ensures that barriers to learning are overcome.
- Religious education (RE) opens pupils' minds to the wider world and so contributes to flourishing. The degree of challenge in the subject is inconsistent.
- Collective worship explores the vision and pupils are developing confidence to lead aspects. Pupils are familiar with a limited range of Anglican traditions.

Areas for development

- Embed monitoring of the Christian vision so its impact is captured and directly informs the ongoing development of the school as a Church school.
- Improve planning of collective worship to ensure a wider range of Anglican traditions and Christian teaching are explored and that prayer invites those present to participate, as their views determine.
- Increase the level of challenge in RE so the subject makes a deeper contribution to the wider flourishing of all ages.

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

Positive relationships, based on examples from Christianity, are central to the flourishing of this school. A parent described Down Ampney as a 'little diamond.' This inspection confirms that it is a school starting to sparkle brightly and shine the light of Christ into the lives of its pupils and adults.

Under the dynamic leadership of the headteacher the school has grown and welcomed many new pupils. From being a school without a clear Christian identity, Down Ampney exemplifies how a considered and deeply held vision and values transform a community. Governors, leaders and staff are to be commended for the thoughtful way the vision and values were determined and linked to Bible teaching. These provide a constant compass which is understood by all ages. Even the youngest pupils talk with confidence of the three Bible stories which exemplify the vision of achieving, believing and caring. Their Lego models of the story of the Paralysed Man are displayed with pride. Leaders credit the fresh impetus on being a Church school to the high quality of training and support from the Diocese. As one said, 'We had a Road to Damascus experience at SIAMS training.' The partnership with the incumbent and parish adds a dimension to the life of the school that is greatly cherished. Prayerful and practical support from governors is given unstintingly and reflects the strong family feel of this good Church school.

The impact of the vision of flourishing is best seen in the improvements to pupils' behaviour. Regular reference to the vision means pupils reflect on their own behaviour and are able to support good behaviour in others. Consequently, attitudes to lessons are positive and pupils are empowered to learn. Academic progress is improving rapidly as a result. The curriculum is highly creative and provides for a depth of study, often in practical ways. Pupils delight in the way their interests and talents are fostered. The range of learning tasks, including those in RE, gives pupils a sense of their place in our diverse world. RE contributes to flourishing. Pupils have a growing knowledge of the main concepts of Christianity and other world religions. Their understanding is, however, limited by inconsistent levels of challenge. Recent work has focused on exploring the Christian basis of the new vision. As a result, pupils are developing their knowledge of Bible texts. Activities that offer spiritual growth are more implicit than explicitly planned within the curriculum.

To ensure the growing range of needs are met, governors make ethical decisions to increase staffing. This affirms their commitment to flourishing and for all to experience life in all its fullness. Alongside this, staff development is prioritised, despite financial constraints. Staff engage well with other local schools, particularly in maths. Training to promote good mental health and wellbeing is supporting pupils' self-esteem. Staff are true 'extra-milers,' devoting considerable time and energy beyond that expected of their roles. This is hugely appreciated by parents and pupils. A pupil said, 'The grown-ups are always kind, they help us no matter what happens, but we also help each other.' Where pupils have additional learning or personal needs, these are met with dignity and respect.

Partnerships with parents and members of the local church community are very positive. Parents say they are 'invested in and proud of the school.' Under the present leadership, good attendance is promoted and secured for the majority pupils. Working with, and for, families in a Christian manner is key to this. The headteacher models this positive outlook in his engagement with colleagues and parents. While still relatively new to leading a Church school, his enthusiasm for this is infectious and his heart and mind are open to learn. This means staff feel valued and are motivated to provide a learning environment which is exciting and enables learning for their classes. Pupils cooperate across the ages and classes, following the excellent role models of the staff. In this way, the mixed age classes work well together, giving pupils confidence and growing independence in their learning.

The spiritual life of adults and pupils is nurtured through worship. Work is underway to develop worship to include more pupil leadership and so increase engagement. This is at too early a stage for its impact to be clear. Pupil feedback is shaping this work, for example changing the organisation so that all pupils sit on chairs. Worship is planned around the vision and there are links made to Bible texts. The 'Open the Book' team and incumbent are key to delivering acts of worship that pupils recognise as distinct from 'assembly'. Services in

Church support pupils' awareness of the seasons and main events in the Christian calendar. At this time, worship requires improvement as it lacks sufficient focus on the life and teaching of Jesus and involves a limited range of Anglican traditions. Pupils have few opportunities to praise through music or singing. Prayers said in classes before lunch and during worship do not consistently invite, rather than expect, those present to join in. Areas set aside for prayer in both classes are not readily accessible and so are displays rather than spaces for reflection, particularly for pupils in key stage 2.

Pupils are motivated to take action in the service of others. Within the community, the school has shown great compassion for those who have experienced bereavement. A parent described staff as, 'unsung heroes'. Engaging with local and national charities is an outworking of the vision. Support for 'the Samaritans' reflects the school's care for those in distress. Pupils are keenly aware of environmental issues.

Governors and the headteacher rightly state that there is work to do to further the Christian character of Down Ampney. However, the wholehearted commitment of all members of the school family, supported by expertise from the Diocese, means this school is more faithful to its foundations as a Church school. These foundations are now secure and ready to build upon.

Headteacher	Adam Clark
Inspector's name and number	Allyson Taylor 768