

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great Witley CofE VA Primary School

Address Worcester Road, Great Witley, Worcester, United Kingdom, WR6 6HR

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Overall grade

Good

The impact of collective worship

Good

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Good

School's vision

Love Learn Live We follow Jesus' example by valuing and cherishing all God's children in an ever-changing world. We are loved so we can love, we learn so that we can grow and therefore live our lives to the full, flourishing in the eyes of God today and in the future. 'Let Your Light so shine, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven'. Matthew 5:16

Key findings

- Leaders, including those at trust level, exemplify the Christian-based vision and values of loving, learning and living. They work with great passion and skill to give pupils and adults a safe, nurturing place to 'let their light shine'. The Bible roots of the vision are less well known. Monitoring is not yet focused explicitly on the impact of the vision.
- Excellent curriculum provision excites and inspires staff and pupils alike. All ages progress well, living as global citizens, with a growing awareness of worldwide issues in our diverse world.
- Support for those who have additional needs and for positive mental health and wellbeing is exemplary. Staff, including support staff, are unstinting in their determination that all are understood, all feel valued and so all are able to learn.
- Collective worship unites the school community. It is engaging, lively and valued. However, some aspects of worship are not always invitational and so it may be assumed that all who are present share the same beliefs.
- RE is well-led and well-resourced. Pupils enjoy the subject and are clear of its benefits as citizens of a multi-cultural and multi-faith world. Some pupils, however, are less secure in their knowledge and recall of the range of religions studied.

Areas for development

- Leaders to ensure the Christian vision and its Bible roots are more explicitly referenced in monitoring and evaluation to drive improvement as a Church school.

- Review the programme of study in RE to improve pupils' understanding of concepts, beliefs and practices in a range of religions and worldviews.
- Consider the language routinely used in acts of worship so that it is fully inclusive and enables all to participate as their views allow.

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

Great Witley is a school securely built on love and the teaching of Jesus. One leader commented it is 'the lynch pin.' Staff and parents talk with conviction that love 'seeps from our very bricks.' Leaders in school, and at the Rivers trust, live out the inclusive and aspirational vision with commitment and demonstrable impact. Rarely are so many in a school community so passionate about their work for and with each other. Staff are nurtured to develop their skills and interests. Pupils flourish and are delightful young citizens with a mature desire to make a difference in the world. The Christian vision and its suite of much-loved values are the foundations of a nourishing environment for academic, personal and spiritual growth. The theology from Matthew's Gospel, which underpins the vision, is less well known.

Staff are highly motivated and benefit from the partnerships with other schools in the trust. Curriculum expertise is generously shared, and this benefits pupils and staff at Great Witley and in the other schools. Leaders ensure staff are well supported in their professional development and in their personal lives. Teaching and support staff are warm in their praise for the approachable senior leadership. A member of staff who has experienced trauma commented, 'I feel valued as a person, and I know that the vision has helped me to live again.' The vision of helping all to shine is transformational. It helps pupils and adults alike to overcome barriers to learning.

The positive relationship with the school and its partners is key to the effectiveness of Great Witley. The trust has recruited 'Christian distinctiveness advocates' to safeguard and develop the Church school aspects. While this is a new role within governance structures, it demonstrates the commitment of leaders to the school as a Church school. Leaders closely monitor the effectiveness of the school and follow Diocesan advice on this process. Partnership with the Diocese is beneficial and recent improvements in RE are a result of the specialist support provided. However, monitoring systems and evaluations do not explicitly reference the Christian vision.

Pastoral care and support for those pupils with additional needs are highly effective. As a result of staff expertise, several pupils who struggled to attend school now engage well. The considerable experience of the head of school drives inclusion and the successful integration of those pupils who may find learning a challenge. Parents affirm this. They love that their children 'can be who they truly are, live as the best version of themselves'. The rising number on roll is testament to the high reputation of the school and the excellent care given to all pupils.

The curriculum is rich, creatively crafted, and gives appropriate focus on global sustainability. This innovative approach means pupils think widely about their place in our world. The 'sustainability squad' presentations in worship have significant impact. Pupils actively consider environmental issues, for example, creating a guide to reduce energy usage overnight. Pupils thrive on the many outdoor learning activities. These enrich the learning experience and are extremely popular. It is a joy to see pupils painting with mud, including on themselves! Forest school sessions support wider spiritual development, although this aspect is not clear in the curriculum overview currently in place. The school's work on developing a shared understanding of spirituality is ongoing. The policy on spirituality suggests that spiritual development is only rooted in Christianity which does not match the inclusive nature of the school.

Relationships across all the ages are founded on acceptance and love. There is a palpable sense of harmony and mutual respect. Pupils undertake a growing range of impressive leadership roles. The 'learning ambassadors' are keen to explain lessons to a visitor. Some Year 5 pupils are trained to support positive mental health when they move into Year 6. Environmental issues are also championed, demonstrating that

pupils are agents of change. It is hard to distinguish those with additional needs from their peers, so well are all ages and aptitudes integrated. Sensitive support from adults and other pupils allows all those with special or additional needs to contribute and share their views. Living well together is seen at every turn. This is a direct result of pupils' deeply held belief that they 'shine' when they enable others to do the same.

Collective worship is an example of the vision of sharing good works. Acts of worship unite the school and strongly express the vision of a thriving community, living in love. Worship is well-planned and has relevant Bible links. A cheerful and reassuring structure involves greetings, time for reflection and joyful singing. Some of the language used in worship is more appropriate to church services. It assumes those present are of the Christian faith and is therefore not inclusive of those with different beliefs. The pupil leaders, known as 'CREW', support worship and are delighted that they contribute more than during lockdowns. Clergy and parishioners make a valuable contribution to worship. Pupils look forward to 'Open the Book' worship and are excited to take part in the dramatic retelling of Bible stories. The regular pattern of worship is comforting, and pupils look forward to their chance to 'shine' in class assemblies on specific themes or recent classroom work. Prayer and time for reflection are important to the life of the school. Prayers that are said at lunch and at the end of the day add to the ethos of love surrounding each individual.

RE excites pupils. They explain how the subject 'helps us to be better citizens of the world'. Pupils study a range of religions and worldviews, in line with the national expectations for RE in Church of England schools. Lessons are thought-provoking and based on enquiry. Staff questioning is skillful and draws out some profound responses. A pupil discussing aspects of Hinduism commented, 'doing good things makes your soul pure'. The subject lead engages with and contributes to a deanery RE 'hub', illustrating that the subject has a high profile and is integral to the rich curriculum. Pupils' work is assessed and moderated and progress noted.

Great Witley is rooted in its vision of loving, learning and living. It is a community where all ages grow and where flourishing is secured. As a member of staff said, 'We are love.'



The effectiveness of RE is

Good

Pupils are enthusiastic to learn and benefit from a rich and balanced RE curriculum. Teaching and learning are informed by local and national thinking on the subject. Progress, notably for those who are more vulnerable, is good. In a few cases, pupils' responses go beyond that expected for their age. Work in books and on displays confirms pupils' flourish in RE. However, some pupils are less secure in talking about their knowledge of the wide range of worldviews studied.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	30 June 2022	URN	142706
Date of previous inspection	15 October 2014		
School status	VA	NOR	200
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation	Rivers Church of England MAT		
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Worcester		
Headteacher	Head of School Kate Ramsey		
Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged	Below National Average		
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	In Line with National Average		
Additional significant information (if needed)			

Inspector's name	Allyson Taylor	No.	0768
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