

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Over St John's Church of England VC Primary School

Address Delamere Street, Winsford, Cheshire, United Kingdom, CW7 2LU

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

School's vision

'Let your light shine before others.' Matthew 5:16 Over St. John's puts children first. From our roots of faith and respect, we accept challenge, develop confidence and inspire learning so that children grow in the love of God, prepared for their future.

Key findings

- The school's vision, along with its values and mission, are deeply rooted in the Bible. They powerfully inform everything that is done in each area of the life and work of the school. This results in a welcoming, highly inclusive, happy school where relationships are strong and in which pupils and adults flourish.
- Religious education (RE) is a strength of the school. It is skilfully and passionately led enabling opportunities for pupils to develop an impressive depth of understanding of Christianity and world religions. Well trained staff enable pupils to make strong progress.
- Collective worship is impactful on pupils, staff and parents. It provides opportunities for meaningful worship and celebration, and builds the community. Children are keen to share what they learn at home. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is at a very early stage of development. This prevents all stakeholders from fully contributing to further developments.
- The school is effective in meeting the needs of all pupils through the curriculum. The Christian vision infuses all decisions made. Leaders have made bold choices to implement specific programmes which have had a positive impact on vulnerable pupils. Spiritual development in the curriculum is not yet fully developed. Pupils and staff cannot fluently articulate its meaning and impact on themselves and others.
- The good mental health and well-being of all is a key priority for leaders. Children, staff and parents have appreciated the support offered. Staff use their knowledge and skills effectively to engage pupils. Fast and efficient interventions are initiated when necessary. Pupils and staff are successful in using opportunities to let their light shine enabling all to flourish at Over St. John's. While the children support a number of projects to improve the lives of others, they have not yet developed a clear understanding of courageous advocacy.

Areas for development

- To embed a rigorous, evaluative process for collective worship so that pupils' experiences are further enriched.
- To promote a deeper, richer understanding of spirituality to enable the community to fluently explore and articulate its impact on themselves and others.
- To deepen the pupils' understanding of courageous advocacy so that they can challenge social injustice at a national and global level.

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 whole community of Over St. John's School is passionate about living and breathing every element of its deeply embedded vision and values. Its highly committed headteacher, leaders and staff promote the vision and values at every opportunity. They are strongly supported by a very well-established partnership with local clergy. The vision and values are firmly rooted in the Bible and are passionately articulated by everyone. Governors ensure that the robust self-evaluation process ensures development in this important aspect of church school life. Staff and governors attend relevant church school training with the Diocese and local clusters. This further strengthens their understanding of an effective church school and allows them to benefit from sharing good practice.

The vision and values have driven decisions which shape the school's curriculum, ensuring that it meets the needs of every individual. This results in pupils enjoying their studies, being motivated in their learning and making good progress. Support and provision for those with additional learning or personal needs or vulnerabilities is strong. Any required interventions are quickly and effectively identified and addressed by highly skilled staff. Because of this, barriers to learning are removed and pupils feel confident to grow and flourish in their studies. Pupils' awareness of diversity is enhanced through the quality of the texts that are chosen for literacy as well as for personal, social and health education. This enables them to understand and accept the similarities and differences that exist between a range of cultures. Whilst there are various opportunities for spiritual development, this does not richly infuse all areas of the curriculum. This means that pupils' deeper understanding of spirituality, and their ability to speak about it, is limited.

Support for the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is a significant strength. It relates directly to the school's vision and its commitment to support all members of the school community. Provision for those with additional learning or personal needs, and those who are vulnerable, is also strong. Well targeted strategies are successfully used to support learners, and a safe space is available for children who need to regulate their emotions. Families are encouraged to have high expectations for their children. Pupils are able to articulate the importance of aspiring to always be the best version of themselves.

Pupils understand the importance of respect and appreciate that each person is unique. The resulting affirmative ethos permeates the school through character development, relationships, behaviour and attitudes. Consequently, pupils unfailingly behave calmly, courteously and with dignity. They show their immense loyalty to each other and the school. Forgiveness and reconciliation come naturally and are well-established in the environment of deep mutual respect.

During COVID lockdown, leaders and staff lived out the vision, ensuring that each member of the school family, whether at home or in class, was safe. Social time, worship and lessons were frequently provided online, giving routine and support. When necessary, staff were able to offer support and reassurance to ensure the wellbeing of the school community. The staff are committed to developing confidence and resilience in their pupils following the experience of COVID-19. This gives pupils the opportunity to experience success at all levels.

There is a powerful sense of community within the school. Staff and governors have an in-depth knowledge of the local area and engage well with the community. Extra-curricular opportunities are well planned for pupils. Staff, pupils and parents recently celebrated the Delamere Festival where children were invited to perform. This allowed the school to successfully let their light shine before others. The school involves itself

in a variety of charity work both locally and abroad. The pupils are wholly committed to providing a crisp packet blanket for the homeless. They are also driven to achieve plastic-free status. This valuable work supports pupils in developing compassion, but does not yet extend to them being courageous advocates for social justice.

Collective worship is invitational and inclusive, and the school's vision is clearly shared during this time together. Through interactive engagement it provides a place for all to consider how they can let their light shine. Pupils and staff embrace and celebrate difference and diversity. They are inspired to ensure that everyone is valued through the No Outsiders programme. As a result, all pupils participate in collective worship and there are opportunities for members of the school to reflect upon what they have learned. Enthusiastic singing and the use of Makaton help to create meaningful and uplifting worship experiences for pupils and staff. Pupils are keen to share what they learn in collective worship at home. Prayer and time for reflection are used effectively. This enables the development of spirituality for adults and pupils alike. Recently developed prayer spaces in the classrooms, however, are not accessed consistently by the children. While children have the opportunity to lead worship, there is little evidence of pupil participation in its planning and evaluation.

Religious education is given a high profile and is enthusiastically and skilfully led. The school's vision is evident in RE curriculum planning. Assessments are used effectively and staff seek to meet the needs of all learners through both challenge and support. Statutory requirements are met and the subject is in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The RE curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis, and interpretation in a safe environment. Pupils are able to relate learning to associated Christian values and articulate its meaning to their lives. They have a clear understanding of Christianity as a living world faith. An understanding of disadvantage, deprivation and the exploitation of the natural world is explored through careful planning. Pupils respond thoughtfully to big questions and they demonstrate an informed and respectful understanding of major world faiths. This has been further enhanced by an inter-faith week project. These learning opportunities enable pupils to reveal an impressive depth of knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Considerable strengths of leadership evident and a strong team at Over St. John's makes this a vibrant, happy and successful school. Through this, pupils and staff are encouraged to let their light shine before others enabling all to flourish.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	29 June 2022	URN	111263
Date of previous inspection	18 June 2015		
School status	VC	NOR	134
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation			
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Chester		
Headteacher	Mrs. Emma Snowdon		
Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged	Above National Average		
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Above National Average		
Inspector's name	Anna Brooksbank	No.	0974