



# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## Wantage Church of England Primary School

**Address** Newbury Street, Wantage, Oxfordshire, OX12 8DJ

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

Our vision is: 'Learning for Life' where everyone learns, is inspired, flourishes and enjoys life in all its fullness; in a community of love, respect, hope, forgiveness, courage and thankfulness. This is inspired by Jesus' words from John 10:10.

### Key findings

- The Christian vision and associated values underpin and permeate all elements of the school curriculum. Leaders of the school are ambitious for its pupils.
- Leadership at all levels, including the relationship the school has within the multi-academy trust (MAT), is a strength of the school. Systems to evaluate the impact of the vision are not fully embedded.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is planned effectively. Pupils think critically and explore deep questions successfully.
- Collective worship is inclusive and invitational. Not all members of the school community are engaged in planning, leading and monitoring acts of worship.
- The commitment to ensuring the wellbeing and pastoral needs of all pupils and their families is an area of excellence. This was especially true during lockdowns and periods of remote education.

### Areas for development

- Broaden opportunities for pupils to engage in social action and to actively challenge injustice so that they are inspired to make a difference in the world in which they live.
- Leaders to establish more formal monitoring of the vision so that they fully understand its impact on all pupils and adults.
- Enhance worship by increasing pupils' role in planning and leading so that worship is more engaging and inspiring to all members of the school community.

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

Wantage is a school where the Christian vision is used to underpin all strategic development. Leaders have developed the phrase 'Learn, Inspire, Flourish and Enjoy'. This emphasises to pupils and adults the link between John 10:10 'Life in Abundance' and their own lives. This results in a community where everyone works together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the pupils. The staff have strong relationships with the pupils and their families and wellbeing is prioritised. The dedicated pastoral team ensures that families are well-supported. This means that all pupils are able to access school life to the full. The care and dedication of this team during lockdown and periods of remote learning was exemplary. Staff made sure that all families had enough food and that all pupils could access remote learning. To ensure no pupils missed out, staff delivered cooking ingredients to their homes. This meant they could take part in a virtual cookery lesson. Parents valued the remote teaching, the in-depth communication and the focus placed on ensuring positive mental health for their children. This enabled relationships and friendships to remain strong.

Leaders are accurate in their self-evaluation of their school and take action to address development areas. They have, quite rightly, been focusing on enriching and improving the learning experiences for every pupil. The vision weaves through the engaging and inspiring curriculum which means pupils enjoy their learning. Although the vision is fundamental to the work of the leadership team, there is little evidence to demonstrate how leaders know that the vision is enabling all pupils and adults to flourish. The newly introduced learning powers are having a positive impact on learning behaviours. Pupils talk about how Mirabel Mouse has helped them to be resilient and to not give up when their learning is challenging. Parents also recognise the importance of the learning powers and share how that, in a short space of time, they have helped their children to have confidence in their own learning. The big questions enable pupils to think deeply, critically and to be evaluative and reflective. In turn, this enhances pupils' spiritual development. The Year 5 question of 'the last straw?' encourages the pupils to think about the wider world and the impact their actions may have. However, pupils do not yet have a deep understanding of the part that they can play to make a difference to the world around them. They do not fully recognise the need to engage in social action projects or understand their importance.

The school's role within the MAT has positively impacted on the leadership of the school. The school has maintained its historic Christian foundation and has made sure that policy and practice is informed by current Church school thinking. The newly appointed deanery chaplain, employed by the MAT, is working strategically with the headteacher. This impacts positively on the spiritual needs of all adults and pupils. The school has good mutual links with the Diocese. It is recognised by the Diocese for the positive impact it has on the community.

The approach to collective worship is invitational and inclusive. A highlight for all pupils and staff is the 'open the book' worship. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus, this worship style has engaged the whole school community, especially during lockdown. The Year 5 passion play allows pupils to experience a variety of styles of worship. Prayer is central to worship. Pupils understand that there are different ways that they can pray. They talk about praying spontaneously, using the prayer dice and about praying to help them in troubling times. Leaders plan collective worship so that it is an expression of the school's vision and the key values. There is a shared understanding that worship helps pupils to learn about being spiritual and how worship can inspire pupils to be reflective. Pupils have very few opportunities to plan worship, to lead worship and to monitor worship. This means that they do not have an understanding of their role in worship and the part that they can play.

Pupils understand what 'Learning for Life' means. One pupil said 'to learn I need to be inspired. If I am inspired I flourish like a flower and then I enjoy my learning.' They are quick to give examples of how learning is inspiring and engaging. One pupil shared how a science lesson had ignited a passion in him for physics. Staff recognise that they are role models to the pupils. They understand how the vision helps them to inspire each other, how they are all learning, how they can support each other and how this helps pupils to flourish.

There is a culture throughout the school where everybody is treated with dignity and respect. There are very few incidents of bullying but when there are, pupils talk openly about how these have been resolved. The whole school approach to behaviour is consistent with the school's vision and focuses on restorative practices and

forgiveness. The school prepares their pupils for the future through the relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum. This means that pupils know how to keep themselves safe and how to form healthy relationships.

Pupils enjoy RE lessons. They find the subject interesting and challenging. Pupils understand the importance of learning about different faiths and beliefs. They have a pragmatic approach and say that RE teaching helps to give them knowledge so that they can form their own beliefs. They understand the importance of deepening and broadening their views. Leaders ensure the planning of RE is effective and progressive throughout the school. The work in the class big books demonstrates how RE is age appropriate and allows pupils to think critically. The newly appointed RE leader is well-supported in her role and engages with support and training from the MAT and Diocese. The leaders of the school have made sure that all staff have access to professional development opportunities to support them in their RE teaching.

Amongst the school community, there is recognition that this diverse school is led compassionately by its leaders. This results in an environment where all adults and pupils learn, are inspired, flourish and enjoy life in all its fullness.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	10 November 2021	URN	140255
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2015		
School status	Voluntary Controlled	NOR	420
Name of MAT	Vale Academy Trust		
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Andrew Browne		
Pupil profile	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.		
Inspector's name	Angela Wheatcroft	No.	872