



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Milton on Stour Church of England Primary School

Address Milton-on-Stour, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5QD

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, Hope and Joy
'Rejoice with me for I have found my lost sheep' Luke 15:6

Key findings

- The Christian vision and values are known well by the school community and underpin strategic and day to day life. They are beginning to have impact on the flourishing of pupils and adults through the development of a community where inclusion is of the highest importance. Every individual is valued and nurtured in this school.
- Leaders have prioritised the importance of spiritual development as key to the implementation of the Christian vision. Through recent training, staff have an initial agreed understanding of what spiritual development is and offer some relevant activities for pupils. This work is not yet planned and consistent.
- The vision of the school, with its emphasis on sharing love and hope, has led to strong connections with local communities. Pupils advocate for those disadvantaged or in need through local projects. They are not as engaged with their role as advocates of change globally. The curriculum does not offer clearly planned learning around injustice or deprivation on a wider scale.
- Collective worship is a valued and important part of life in this school. Worship is inclusive and includes many invitational opportunities. It is not always engaging and inspiring for pupils and adults.
- Religious education (RE) is well led and has a good profile in this school. Positive changes have been made to the curriculum, and its processes, to ensure pupils are making good progress and are flourishing academically in RE. The depth and precision of learning in the subject is not yet consistent across all classes or all religious worldviews studied.

Areas for development

- Encourage and equip pupils to become courageous advocates of change, recognising and responding to injustice and inequality locally, nationally and globally.
- Improve the depth and richness of the RE curriculum, to ensure all pupils are engaged with, and inspired by the subject.
- Identify and plan opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum, in order to increase spiritual flourishing throughout 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

Christian vision and the biblical underpinning of Jesus' example of the 'good shepherd' are evident at all levels in this school. Leaders and governors prioritise the associated values of love, hope and joy and these drive many decisions and actions. Senior leaders have a strong commitment to developing and nurturing staff to ensure they, and their pupils, are able to flourish and grow. Staff are clearly guided and supported to flourish in their work at the school. Governors have a model for self-evaluation and are beginning to regularly monitor the impact of the Christian vision and elements of Christian distinctiveness in the life of the school. The school and its leaders have good working relationships with both the local church and the diocesan education team.

The curriculum at Milton School is thoughtfully inspired by the Christian vision. 'Golden threads' of diversity, character and oracy underpin development to ensure all achieve well and are included. The staff team work hard on developing practice and improving processes for teaching and learning to ensure pupils grow personally and academically. For example, through work on oracy, they are more confident to use their voices and be heard in different ways. They make improved academic progress and increasingly, are able to flourish in an environment that instils respect, confidence and hope.

An ethos of embracing and including is at the heart of life and practice at Milton. Individual provision for all pupils, including those who are vulnerable or have special educational needs is prioritised by leaders at all levels. Where pupils have specific needs, resources in school are maximised to ensure every individual is able to succeed. At times, strong decisions are made regards the financial cost of this provision. Examples of this include emotional literacy support, adapting curriculum where required and the provision of whole class wellbeing lessons. There is new equipment on the playground to ensure all pupils engage with physical activity and have an opportunity for movement breaks when needed. Pupils are proud of these resources and enjoy playing together here during social times.

Character development is important to school leaders. They recognise their particular context in a rural, village setting and are committed to offering pupils chances to reach outwards in their aspirations and experiences. Through varied curricular opportunities, particularly those linked with the '11 before 11' programme, the school lives out its vision in offering hope and joy. A variety of extra-curricular opportunities are available, such as sports, dance and art clubs. These enhance pupils' enjoyment of life at Milton and support their development. There is potential for greater engagement and flourishing however, as the wider preferences of some pupils are not currently being met by these opportunities.

The school has excellent links with the local community. The school community works hard to raise funds for those in need locally. They help those in poverty through supporting the food bank and run campaigns and activities to support a family experiencing ill-health and very difficult times. Pupils do not receive as many opportunities to become courageous advocates of change on a national and international scale. They are largely unable to express an understanding of wider issues of injustice and inequality that they have learned about throughout the curriculum.

Leaders and staff in the school are working to develop an agreed understanding of spirituality and recognise the importance of this in fulfilling the Christian vision. They have an appreciation of the importance of times of stillness and reflection on pupil wellbeing and spiritual flourishing. Varied activities to support spiritual flourishing are engaged with at different times by some classes and this has some impact on pupils and adults alike. Pupils enjoy the chance to be still and reflective both in collective worship and in class, but the planning for these approaches is not always clear or consistent across the curriculum. Reflection tables are used in different ways in different classes and do not have significant impact on spiritual development or pupil engagement.

Pupils demonstrate good behaviour in class, in play and in collective worship. They are kind to one another and some of them express respect for each other's differences. The vision and its associated values of love, hope and joy are framing new approaches to behaviour management. Most staff now use practices grounded in forgiveness and reconciliation. Leaders describe the importance of a system based on restorative justice and 'educational consequences' rather than punishment. This is having clear impact on pupil flourishing and there have been no pupil exclusions this academic year. Parents report that issues of behaviour are dealt with positively and many staff value this more nurture based approach.

Collective worship is valued and prioritised at Milton School. Leaders maintain a clear liturgical structure and varied daily worship is planned and led by varied staff members. Everyone is thoughtfully included, and it provides an important opportunity for the community to stop and gather daily. Worship is used to explore the school vision, and pupils and adults identify what it means to them to be 'shepherds' or 'sheep' in their community. Opportunities for prayer and singing are invitational. Worship is not always engaging and inspiring, although pupils enjoy times when worship is led by the clergy team and do recall important messages from various collective worship activities. Good links are made between worship and RE learning through staff and pupil knowledge around the 'Big Bible narrative' and its key concepts.

RE is given priority by leaders and has a good profile in this school. There is strong leadership of the subject and work has been undertaken to improve the curriculum and processes for monitoring and assessment. Clarity and understanding is needed around the difference between RE, collective worship and other subjects. Pupil engagement is varied, not all enjoy RE lessons but many report finding it valuable and interesting. One pupil said they value RE because 'it is important to understand each other'. Most pupils have a clear understanding of Christianity. They enjoy exploring the meaning of biblical texts and asking questions about key theological concepts. Pupils recall facts about different worldviews well but lack depth in their religious literacy around varied faiths and their impact in the world. Leaders are in the process of developing the curriculum to ensure all religions and worldviews are taught with equal quality and depth.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The majority of pupils, including the most vulnerable, make good progress in RE. Knowledge organisers elicit clear information about what pupils need to learn at the beginning of a unit of work. As a result of new assessment procedures, clear information is known about individual progress. Quality resources are used to ensure pupils have an understanding of key Christian concepts. Work is now being undertaken to ensure quality resources are used for other religions and worldviews.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	Wednesday 7 December 2022	URN	113801
Date of previous inspection	06/07/15		
School status	Voluntary aided maintained primary school	NOR	127
Diocese	Salisbury		
Headteacher	Rhiannon Tidby		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Inspector's name	Laura Harris	No.	n/a sign off inspection