

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Churchgate Church of England VA Primary, Harlow	
Address	Hobbs Cross Road, Harlow, CM17 0LB
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
Churchgate is a distinctively Christian school, at the centre of a close-knit community. Relationships are at the heart of everything we do and we believe in "nurturing life in all its fullness" John 10:10. The values of thankfulness, courage and compassion are central to our vision and culture. #Churchgatetogether
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision defines Churchgate. It has a powerful impact on all ages, exemplified by pupils' confidence to describe how they have 'life in all its fullness'. Leaders monitor aspects of this Church school although their findings less clearly inform the strategic direction. • Care for pupils with special educational and additional needs is exemplary. All staff support more vulnerable pupils to overcome barriers to their learning. The vision of 'togetherness' is a lived reality. • Leaders and staff have an excellent shared understanding of spirituality as it relates to their school. Pupils have nourishing experiences but have a limited language with which to express their spiritual growth. • Collective worship has a clear Christian focus. It is relevant and regularly inspires pupils to take action in support of others. Contributions from the collective worship pupil team and visitors from the church enrich worship. Not all staff attend times of worship, so its impact is limited. • Pupils have an extensive knowledge and understanding of the topics studied in religious education (RE). The subject is well-led, taught and resourced. Consequently, RE is integral to the nurture of pupils.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders, including governors, to develop systems so their evaluation of the Christian vision more explicitly shapes the ongoing development of this Church school. • Embed a shared language around spirituality so that pupils have a wider vocabulary with which to express their views. • Consider ways to broaden the inclusivity of worship so it has a deeper impact on adults as well as pupils.

Inspection findings

This is a community-focused school where positive relationships bind adults and pupils in a shared goal. It is clear that the vision has grown to answer the needs of the local community. This is seen in the '#Churchgatetogether' message, which evolved in response to times of challenge. What is truly remarkable is how the school community has supported its members young and old. Notably, how key staff have stepped into leadership responsibility with skill, grace and humility. Governors ensure school leaders are provided with professional and personal support to fulfil their roles. Pupils talk with passion and commitment of how the vision helps them. One rightly commented 'it helps me have a balance in life and to make good choices'.

Senior leaders are held in high regard by staff, pupils and parents. Their 'servant leadership', modelled on Christian teaching, is a profound expression of the vision for all to flourish. Their role model and vision inspire staff to go beyond their usual job scope in meeting pupils' needs. Leaders' commitment to community flourishing drives their decisions on spending and staff development. Governors know the school well and understand the changing context of those on roll presenting with additional learning or personal needs. They undertake regular monitoring and work with staff to ensure pupils make progress and develop as individuals. Within the formal monitoring work, it is less clear that the Christian vision is driving the developments of the school.

Staff work diligently and with great patience to meet pupils' needs. They rely on each other to support their work and know that leaders will respond and guide them. The school curriculum is well-considered so that pupils make progress and explore their interests and talents. Learning experiences are rich and enhanced by a wealth of extra-curricular activities. Consequently, pupils, some with complex needs, are welcomed and enabled to learn. They are cherished and nurtured individuals.

There is a unity of spirit, of aim and of commitment between adults and pupils. This is directly linked to the Christian vision of a life-giving community. Further to the vision, the parable of the 'Good Samaritan' is a touchstone that ignites compassion and courage. Staff and pupils see themselves as 'good Samaritans' to each other. As a result, behaviour across the school is mostly respectful and good natured. Staff are valued and many are highly appreciative of the way leaders encourage them. Attendance rates are improving because of the inclusive culture. This is evidence that pupils enjoy school and want to be there. They are safe, feel secure, and so are able to learn.


A culture of spiritual reflection pervades all aspects of the school day. Pupils are sensitively guided to respond to 'I wonder?' questions in RE and other curriculum subjects. The school has worked with its Diocese to develop a shared understanding and language of spirituality. This is becoming established, and pupils are at an early stage of articulating their thoughts. However, spiritual flourishing is an important part of the school's work to ensure all thrive. A member of staff insightfully summed up spirituality, 'it is about the contentious and messy aspects of being human'.

Collective worship also supports the spiritual flourishing of pupils. Those elected to serve on the 'worship team' are eager to support the experience of all ages. These delightful youngsters see their role as helping everyone feel they belong. They take care that 'assemblies' allow all present to feel comfortable with the Christian-themed stories, songs and prayers. The team is well-supported by key staff to offer experiences that inspire others to respond. 'Action not just words' as a theme provokes lively discussion of how all ages may effect positive change in the lives of others. 'We show love for all, even if they are not our

friends,' is a sentiment reported by several. Pupils undertook a 40 mile walk for Lent and CAFOD appeals in response to the difficulties many face in accessing water. To them, compassion is more than charity. Campaigns for good causes, particularly for local charities, are often initiated by the pupils themselves. Clergy and visitors from the local church make a valuable contribution to the worship experience. Pupils are familiar with a range of beliefs and traditions of Christian worship and are aware that there are different styles within Christianity. The sense of 'togetherness' is strengthened by the partnership with the church and other members of the local community. While some staff join worship over the week, not all attend and pupils prefer Fridays when all staff are present. At this time, the impact of worship on adults is, therefore, limited. Pupils also value the times when they visit the parish church to honour the main festivals in the Christian calendar. They are made welcome on the regular 'pilgrimage' walks to church. These reinforce their sense of belonging to an extended Christian-based family.

RE has a positive effect on flourishing. Staff receive up to date advice and guidance from the RE leader, present and past. Diocesan expertise supports the development of the curriculum, including ongoing plans for a wider 'worldview' approach to learning. Pupils are confident and very well-informed about the religions studied. They understand the subject builds mutual respect and cooperation with those from a range of backgrounds. Pupils are especially enthused by the practical aspects of RE, such as lively debate, art and drama.

Churchgate is a school living out its deeply held Christian vision through its values of thankfulness, compassion and courage. It is, therefore, at the heart of the community it serves. Parents accurately comment, 'fullness of life means being nourished in body, mind and soul. Here, we and our children are well-fed'.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Good
	<p>Pupils demonstrate an impressive recall and vocabulary to talk about of the range of religious concepts and traditions studied. The work they undertake challenges their thinking and often generates responses of considerable depth. Work in books is generally of good quality and gives pupils opportunities to reflect and gain insight into their learning. The subject is an important factor in the success of the school as a Church school. Pupils make good progress because of good teaching.</p>		
Information			
School	Churchgate Church of England VA Primary, Harlow	Inspection date	30 June 2023
URN	115170	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided
Diocese/District	Chelmsford	Pupils on roll	196
Headteacher	Jonathan Tye		
Chair of Governors	Mark Adams		
Inspector	Allyson Taylor	No.	768