

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Walsh Memorial Church of England VC Infant School	
Address	Ash Street, Ash, Aldershot, GU12 6LT
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 to create a safe, nurturing, Christian school Community in which everyone is valued and given opportunities to flourish in every area of life. Our motto is 'Flourishing together, with God as our firm foundation'.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision and Christian values shape the direction of this Church school. Staff work well with families involving them in their child's learning. This caring community welcomes all, so that pupils treat one another with dignity and respect. • Leaders raise the impact which this Church school makes. They ensure the vision drives improvements and Christian values are woven into daily life so all see their importance. However, monitoring is not systematic and does not evaluate the impact the vision makes on all aspects of a Church school. • The provision for meeting the diverse needs of all is good, pupils know they are loved and valued. They are nurtured to recognise their feelings using strategies which help them to flourish. • Ongoing improvements in collective worship raise the impact this has for everyone, so they understand the difference the vision and Christian values make. At present, pupils do not plan, lead or evaluate worship. • 'Pause days' enrich pupils' understanding of religious education (RE) in creative ways, developing a good knowledge of Bible stories. Staff have not established an agreed understanding of spirituality, nor are opportunities for flourishing in this area identified in planning.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a systematic approach to evaluate the impact which the Christian vision has on all aspects of being a Church school. This is to enable involvement from all members of the school family, leading to ongoing foci for improvement. • Establish an agreed understanding of spirituality and identify in planning where there are opportunities for pupils to flourish further. • Enable pupils to have opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship so they have greater ownership in this area and contribute to improvements.

Inspection findings

Leaders bring stability to this school after a time of significant change. They emphasise the work of being a Church school and use the vision to drive improvements. These include developing pupils' communication skills so they can share ideas effectively and widen their experiences of the world and locality. The Christian vision was simplified, so that all can readily understand its significance. A cohesive staff team works well together. They perceive their role as living out the vision so all can see the difference this makes. The vision addresses the needs of the locality. It enthuses staff to build strong relationships with parents and carers, so they feel valued. Staff help to meet the needs of families enabling them to support their children's learning. There is a focus on helping pupils to recognise their talents and raise their aspirations. Leaders articulate a growing understanding of the biblical principles underpinning the vision. They seek to model their work on St. Peter, to whom the local church is dedicated. From his life they identify the three Christian values of love, community and perseverance and how all can learn from him. Jesus' teachings are drawn upon showing how all can live together well, being the best person we can be. Leaders make astute decisions on priorities to develop. Governors are supportive, but their monitoring does not consistently lead to improvements. At present, there is not a systematic approach to effectively evaluate all aspects of being a Church school.

The vision of flourishing together drives staff to build strong relationships with families. A range of support is offered, for instance, workshops on mental health and wellbeing. 'Family days' are opportunities for parents to share sporting or other activities with their children. There is a distinct focus to ensure all can flourish. This leads staff to effectively address the diverse needs of pupils. Those who find behaviour challenging are immersed in a loving, calm environment where they are valued. This changes attitudes for the better. All are guided to recognise and articulate their emotions. Effective strategies help pupils to be calm. Some have individualised approaches which support them. Resources, such as a rainbow room, give time for reflection, so they are ready to learn. Mental health workshops give pupils mindful breathing strategies, whilst Yoga reflection ideas help them when they are worried. Staff wellbeing is equally nurtured. Integral to this is a positive culture of aspirations. Learning experiences are closely matched to pupils' needs, so they feel successful. This is supported by affirming relationships of trust, so each feels safe to take risks. This encourages everyone to see mistakes as opportunities for additional learning. Additional opportunities allow pupils to discover talents which are always celebrated. This further raises pupils' self-esteem.

Leaders shape the learning experiences so there is a variety, which extend pupils' knowledge of the locality. The language of Christian values is used throughout learning and daily life. This enables pupils to recognise the contribution they make to their thinking. For example, they rightly talk enthusiastically of the importance of perseverance. Teachers are aware of experiences which promote spiritual thinking. However, there is no agreed understanding of spirituality and opportunities are not planned across all subject areas. Pupils have limited ways to express their thinking of spirituality. They do have some awareness of global communities. Their knowledge of diversity is stronger where they explore artists and figures from different ethnic communities. Pupils who have experience of another culture or belief are invited to share these with peers. This raises their respect for difference. Literature from different authors about a range of countries enhance pupils' knowledge. They have a growing knowledge of caring for God's world, challenging pollution and waste. The pupils' council take ideas from peers and turn these into projects, modelling how to be positive agents for change. They challenge the local authority and liaise with a care home. There is an emphasis on local issues, such as the foodbank, although many

champion the protection of wild animals.

The vision and Christian values shape this caring community where pupils find this a safe space and feel valued. Everyone treats one another with dignity and respect. They are aware of the importance of forgiveness and use Jesus' teaching so they can move on together.

Effective use of partnerships enriches the provision and enables all to flourish. The school draws upon resources from the Good Shepherd Multi-Academy Trust. This provides subject leaders with opportunities to share good practice, further strengthening leadership and monitoring. Diocesan support is significant, using planning in both RE and collective worship. This provides a clear progression in themes and skills. The local church serves the school through governance and celebrating Christian festivals.

Recent improvements enhance the impact that collective worship makes, where it is regarded as a valuable part of the day. It is central to deepening pupils' understanding of the vision and Christian values and what these look like. Pupils receive 'star awards' for living out these values, and fully appreciate their influence. Utilising Diocesan planning gives a clear structure and progressive learning themes. Worship is enhanced by a range of visual images. Leaders ensure there is time to reflect on themes, what these mean and how each can respond. Big questions of meaning and purpose challenge pupils' ideas and extend their thinking. They have a secure understanding of prayer and express their thinking thoughtfully. At present, pupils do not plan, lead or evaluate worship, but would like to be more involved. They talk about Christian festivals in some detail, aware of their importance. Their knowledge of Bible stories is good.

Pupils' understanding of RE themes is enriched by creative 'Pause days'. For instance, they explore the Christian value of love and what this means to them. Others explore the life of St. Peter, another Advent through the picture of angels. These are given to homes, sharing an encouraging Bible verse. Ongoing improvement ensures that RE is seen as an important subject. Introduction pages for each unit identify specific religious vocabulary, which help pupils gain a secure understanding. Diocesan planning gives clear guidance and progression, so key RE skills are effectively developed. Leaders ensure assessments of pupils' progress result in guidance being given to those requiring further support. This process shapes future plans. Pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of core religious concepts, where they are developing confidence to articulate these. World views are developing well, so pupils recognise similarity and difference and how faith is important to others. Pupils enjoy RE, aware of how it shapes their thinking.

Information			
School	Walsh Memorial CofE VC Infant	Inspection date	16 June 2023
URN	125135	VC/VA/Academy	VC
Diocese/District	Guildford	Pupils on roll	176
Acting Headteacher	Helen Wall		
Chair of Governors	Yvonne McLeod		
Inspector	David Hatrey	No.	844