

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Criftins Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Criftins, Ellesmere, Shropshire, SY12 9LT

School vision
<p>Our school vision is that all children will achieve a deep understanding of their world and their place in it. We believe that life has a purpose and that we can each have an important, unique role to play. We will celebrate together, value each person equally, and live life with eyes wide open to opportunity, embracing new challenges with positivity and fearless endeavour!</p> <p>School motto: 'Achieve, Believe and Celebrate'.</p> <p>'For I know the plans I have for you declares The Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.' Jeremiah 29:11</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision, clearly underpinned by biblical teaching, is central to every aspect of the life of the school. It is well understood and influences everything that the school undertakes. The vision gives pupils and adults confidence and enables them to grow and flourish. • The vision actively promotes a strong, life-affirming culture that makes certain that each member of the school community is known, nurtured and inspired. Everyone has a voice in this encouraging and optimistic Church school. This enables them to grow and live life in all its fullness. • Leaders, motivated by the vision, have created an ambitious curriculum that challenges, engages and often excites pupils. Because of this, they enjoy their studies and extra-curricular activities, and are very keen to attend school every day. • Because of the vision, wellbeing is a significant priority for the school. Much thought and skill is invested in a wealth of provision ensuring that each individual's needs can be met. Consequently, an extremely caring culture has been created where pupils and adults are able to thrive. • Collective worship has a significant impact upon the life of the school and is central to its work. Through it, pupils and adults are well-supported in the development of their spirituality. Worship promotes a sense of their place in the world and how they might live their lives.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the curriculum for religious education (RE) is structured so that pupils have the opportunity to develop, deepen and retain their knowledge and understanding of world religions and worldviews, in addition to Christianity. • Develop ways to extend and enrich pupils' experience of diversity. This is to help them to enhance their views and understanding of the world. <p>□</p>

Inspection findings

Criftins School has a rich vision with clear, carefully selected biblical roots. These are strongly complemented by the biblical strapline of Mere's Edge Federation and underpinned by clear and coherent values. Every aspect of this small, rural school's work and mission is entirely focussed upon these elements. The vision and its values are lived by all. Inspirational leaders clearly understand what it means to lead a Church school. Together with a dedicated staff team, they create a welcoming, inclusive and highly successful Church school in which adults and pupils flourish. Through this, all embrace Jeremiah's words, that The Lord has '... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.' Leaders and governors know the school well and are successful in ensuring that resources are used effectively. Their decisions and plans are true to the vision. This enables each person to be 'the best version of themselves'. It results in many staff, pupils and parents describing a life-enhancing confidence that powerfully equips and empowers them day-by-day. Meaningful partnerships with local schools and the diocese result in opportunities to share the school's effective practice in such areas as Church school leadership.

The vision firmly anchors the school's ambitious curriculum. At its core is the stated intention that children know that there is an exciting purpose for their life. It is planned and implemented to make certain that every child is included. This creates a rich environment for learning that all pupils can access. They find it challenging, motivating and enjoyable. Skills and experiences are enhanced and horizons are widened through a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Timely, targeted monitoring and support by skilled, specialist staff means that provision for pupils who are vulnerable is strong. Leaders and staff constantly reflect on the curriculum to confirm its effectiveness in realising the vision and motivating everyone. Pupils have a growing understanding of spiritual development through planned, as well as spontaneous opportunities. These arise across the curriculum, in collective worship and in activities such as innovative 'journey days' and forest school. In referring to spirituality, many pupils include the idea that it is 'keeping the light shining within our soul'. Diversity has a significant place in the curriculum. It supports the development of pupils' knowledge of this important theme. However, there are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to gain experiences that will promote and extend their understanding.

The whole school community anticipate and enjoy the rhythm of collective worship, which is central to its daily life. Key themes of the Christian life and journey, and the Bible are explored through the strong foundation of the vision. These gathered times are inclusive, and all are invited to join in. They are often inspirational, challenge thought, promote values, and strongly support everyone's understanding of spirituality. Pupils volunteer to lead times of prayer because they feel confident in this as a natural and meaningful element of worship. A highly effective, and mutually beneficial relationship is maintained with the diocese. The impact of the work with the worship team has resulted in extending the pupil planning and leadership of whole-school and class worship. Through this, they have developed a greater understanding of the place of reflection on their self-development and growth. Significant and beneficial links are maintained with the parish, clergy and a Christian schools' worker. They support worship, visits to the church and the celebration of key festivals. These enrich pupils' understanding of the relevance of faith and worship.

The Christian vision, supported by a planned exploration of the school values, establishes a culture that motivates the community and treats one another remarkably. This is achieved through the positive atmosphere of inclusion, acceptance, responsibility and respect. It results in every person being treated with dignity, and nurtured to become the person that God created them to be. Provision for pastoral support and the mental health and wellbeing of everyone is a strength. Carefully planned events, class work and resources for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and / or disabilities, enable everyone to make sense of their feelings. People look out for one another keenly. Consequently, those who may be experiencing difficulty are quickly

offered kindness and care. This ensures that anyone who may be struggling is quickly noticed and supported. Relationships throughout the school are exceptionally strong and positive, and behaviour is excellent. This results in a calm, safe and supportive atmosphere. On rare occasions when things go wrong, matters are quickly resolved in a climate of forgiveness and reconciliation. Staff value the strong, principled leadership that they experience, and appreciate the compassionate way in which requests for personal support are treated.

RE has a high status in the school, is enthusiastically led by a qualified specialist. It reflects the school vision and meets the requirements for the subject as a Church school. RE is meticulously planned and skilfully builds on pupils' prior learning. Professional learning for staff is knowledgeably led, and up-to-date materials and resources facilitate relevant and well-sequenced lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy RE and speak confidently about all aspects of Christianity. Their books reflect engaging opportunities that are used to develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The environment promotes a feeling of confidence and safety as views, opinions and beliefs are discussed, explored and respected. Religious literacy, in relation to Christianity, is strong, helping pupils to understand its diversity as a worldwide faith. Whilst the planned curriculum for RE includes a broad range of worldviews and faiths, pupils do not retain sufficient knowledge and understanding beyond Christianity.

The school applies its vision and values to enrich its place in the tightly knit local community. This results in it being a focus for, and partner in, a range of impactful events. These celebrate and promote the village's strong sense of heritage. An example includes an evocative Remembrance Day worship. Here, members of the school, and wider community, are being challenged and moved during the exploration of values including courage, respect and forgiveness. Because of the vision, leaders understand the importance and benefits of meaningful partnerships that extend far beyond the locality. As a result, the school is outward looking in promoting a broadening of pupils' horizons. This enables pupils to begin to grasp the differences of lives and experience beyond their own. The vision inspires opportunities for pupils to explore matters of justice and responsibility. Through this, pupils have developed positive attitudes and respond in practical ways, sometimes initiating action themselves. This results in a growing understanding of the importance of challenging and overcoming injustice and inequality.

Criftins is a nurturing, joyful and successful Church school. Its aspirational Christian vision inspires and empowers each member of its community. Adults and pupils live life in all its fullness, learning, growing and flourishing together.

The inspection findings indicate that Criftins Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	13 November 2023	URN	123472
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	97
Diocese	Lichfield		
MAT/Federation	The Mere's Edge Federation		
Headteacher	Mandy Jones		
Chair	Elizabeth Edwards		
Inspector	Peter Coates	No.	937

