

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Hertingfordbury Cowper Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Birch Green, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 2LR

School vision
<p style="text-align: center;">‘Rooted in Jesus, Growing in Wisdom, Overflowing with Thankfulness.’ Colossians 2:7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We plant a seed and enable pupils children to establish deep roots into Jesus’ teachings. Together we grow strong to form a place of belonging from which we can reach out to others. Matthew 13: 31-32</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The school’s values are: Koinonia; Justice; Reconciliation; Reverence; Humility; Love.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The renewed vision reflects the context of the school. It enables adults and pupils to come together with a sense of purpose. This impacts positively on relationships in school and the community. ● Learning opportunities are carefully crafted to challenge pupils, aligning with the school’s Christian vision. This enables pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or who are vulnerable, to ‘grow in wisdom.’ ● The school community is characterised by its nurturing ethos. Adults and pupils receive friendship, support and guidance allowing them to flourish. ● The values promote a culture where justice and responsibility towards others is central. This has a significant impact on the daily decisions made by pupils and adults. ● Collective worship is an important part of the school day, valued by both adults and pupils. It provides an opportunity to reflect, reinforces the values and contributes to spiritual development.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embed pupils’ knowledge of a range of world religions and world views, including Christianity. This is so that they have a greater understanding of the diversity of faiths and beliefs. ● Build on the agreed understanding of spirituality. This is in order for adults and pupils to recognise and appreciate spiritual moments that are both planned and spontaneous. ● Develop independent pupil leadership, so that they are able to take the initiative and influence change in school and beyond.

Inspection findings

The Christian vision is central in shaping the school's identity and ethos. Recently renewed by the whole community, it is understood and lived out. To ensure the vision actively enriches the school's communal and individual life, leaders have implemented a series of innovative strategies. Collaborative events are used to introduce and reinforce the vision. These include designated focus weeks, worship sessions and an annual Vision Day, ending at 'The Great Oak' which acts as a symbol for the school. A range of whole school activities effectively integrates the values into daily life and policies. Enhanced visibility through themed posters, the tree logo and regular newsletter updates places the vision in the forefront of everyone's mind. This also promotes their practical applications. Positive feedback from pupils and parents confirms the vision's significant impact on the school's culture. The environment is calm as a result. Pupils are confident when talking about their learning and enjoy being at Hertingfordbury Cowper. Special spaces, such as class reflection areas, and special times, such as pupil-led prayer, provide a supportive environment. The outcome is that there is a strong, caring community working in the best interests of each individual.

The curriculum brings the vision meaningfully into activities within and beyond the school day, championing inclusivity and equity throughout. Opportunities for spiritual growth are planned to enrich learning experiences. However, these are not embedded. Careful monitoring by leaders, including with strategic external partners, ensures high quality learning. All staff have access to professional development, consistent with the vision for them to 'grow in wisdom.' A strong focus is given to ensuring all pupils can participate in the broad range of activities offered. This includes vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. Koinonia (meaning community) is a core value characterised by strong partnerships. Everyone is familiar with this value and applies it with understanding. Parents and staff are enthusiastic in their praise for the 'school family' atmosphere and how the values positively affect their lives outside of school.

Daily collective worship connects the school with its vision. It is also a point when there is a clear focus on the values. It is invitational to all. Leaders, staff and pupils are actively engaged in discussions, leading and taking part. All expressed how they value these times, stressing how this promotes the importance of unity. Worship is important for spiritual health. It holds a central place in the school's culture. Carefully integrating the values with the Church calendar means that worship follows the Church's themes across the year. The outcome is that pupils have carefully planned, Bible based sessions that have a clear message. Collective worship, involving everyone from clergy to nursery children, highlights the school's commitment to inclusivity and shared values. Thoughtful planning makes it suitable for every age group and those with a range of beliefs. Pupils benefit from a variety of worship styles through the planned involvement of nearby churches. This provides a rich resource of experiences. An inclusive environment welcomes broader community involvement from parents and others. In line with the vision to 'reach out to others,' it fosters a sense of belonging and communal engagement. Professional development ensures staff feel confident to lead worship.

The updated Christian vision creates a supportive atmosphere that values dignity and respect for all. It promotes personal growth and belonging, affirming everyone's worth. To sustain this, a long-term strategy underpins the school's commitment to mental wellbeing. Targeted support and specialist assistance is available for those in need, including from the mental health lead. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils to stay healthy, safe and ready for the modern world. It plays a key role in supporting wellbeing, with a particular focus on inclusivity. It has helped establish a safe place to express thoughts and feelings and upholds the school vision by providing strategies for personal growth. This also encourages spiritual, moral and cultural understanding.

A culture of responsibility and justice carefully balances individual rights with collective responsibilities, nurturing positive relationships and ethical actions. Pupils take on leadership roles in charity work which is led by the advocates team and Year 6 captains. Members of the team enthusiastically explain the impact they have from small actions, such as turning off lights in an empty room to supporting national charity events including Children In Need. These opportunities allow pupils to make a positive impact, embodying the school's vision in real-world situations. It also provides a purposeful space for pupils to use their voice. Pupils are aware that they should consider how they live their lives beyond school. One summed this up by saying, "it helps everybody to think

about others and not be selfish and think of yourself.” However, most activities are adult led rather than pupil driven. Other partnerships with local and global organisations, particularly Orphaid in Ecuador, increase wider impact, allowing the school to live out its principles in tangible ways. Through these partnerships and collaborations, the school contributes to the wider community.

RE is carefully structured to provide pupils with a coherent and sequential curriculum, embedding key Christian concepts and biblical understanding. Carefully chosen resources are well used to support learning. Units on sustainability link Christian stewardship with broader global responsibilities and ethical living, reflecting a commitment to environmental issues. A dynamic approach, encompassing debates, art and performance are part of lessons. RE extends beyond the classroom, with planned outdoor activities designed to offer a diverse learning experience. Pupils enjoy RE and see it as an important part of their learning. They explain how it enables them to understand the importance of religious beliefs. The school is committed to developing RE so that it continues to meet the needs of all learners. Staff are supported to share good practice, bringing greater consistency to lessons. Clear assessment criteria supports the tracking of pupil progress. This builds on past learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about special events in RE, particularly the Vision Day. This is an annual highlight used to refocus the whole community on its vision. Pupils’ understanding of Christianity is well developed. Their knowledge is enriched through following biblical themes. However, they do not show the same depth of learning for a range of world religions and beliefs. The Diocese of St Albans provides training opportunities that support staff skills in teaching RE, keeping them current. Pupils develop an understanding of their place in the world and how to live in it respectfully. Regular checks and assessments show this approach works well, keeping RE challenging and in line with the school's Christian vision and values.

The inspection findings indicate that Hertingfordbury Cowper C of E (VA) Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	07/02/2024	URN	117563
VA/VC/Academy	VA	Pupils on roll	225
Diocese	St Albans		
MAT/Federation	N/A		
Headteacher	Lorraine Gauld		
Chair	John Grubb		
Inspector	Anthony David	No.	C23/24