

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ampney Crucis C of E Primary School			
Address	School Lane, Ampney Crucis, Cirencester GL7 5SD		
Date of inspection	8 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	Gloucester	URN	115673

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Requires Improvement
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Ampney Crucis is a primary school with 88 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is around national averages, although this varies between year groups. The headteacher joined the school in September 2019, following a year with interim leadership arrangements.

The school's Christian vision

Together we live, learn and flourish

We strive to be a school family where everyone supports each other and works as a team. We want to welcome all and walk alongside those who need it most, looking outward, recognising when one part of our community suffers, we all suffer yet one flourishes, we all flourish.

Our vision is based on the Parable of the Good Samaritan and 1 Corinthians 12: 24-26

Key findings

- A sense of renewal is captured in the new vision statement. This is rooted in biblical teaching and is already refocusing the community on what it means to be a Church school.
- The headteacher is having a remarkable impact. She is uniting and energising the whole school community with a clear drive to make more explicit its Christian foundation.
- Governors know the school well and have taken positive action to sustain the school since the last denominational inspection. However, their monitoring and evaluation is not sufficiently robust.
- Partnerships with the local church and Diocese are supportive. These affirm the school as a Church school, particularly with support for worship, although this aspect requires improvement.
- Religious education (RE) contributes well to pupils' sense of their place in our diverse world.

Areas for development

- Leaders, including governors, to apply the vision consistently in their work, so that monitoring and evaluation drive sustained improvements in the school as a Church of England school.
- Extend the age range of pupils in the worship group to increase pupil engagement and leadership and enhance opportunities for spiritual development.
- Refine assessment in RE so pupils know their next steps in learning and all abilities continue to flourish.

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

After a period of instability in leadership, a fresh impetus to move forward is evident. Governors are to be commended for appointing a dynamic, experienced leader as the headteacher. She is breathing new life and so new learning into the daily life of the school. Undoubtedly, the school is blessed in her wisdom and energy. In a few weeks, several aspects of the life of the school are transformed. In May, the vision was considered, widely consulted upon and communicated. In operation since September, it is already impacting positively on adults and pupils. The vision of living and learning together gives all in school a shared language and understanding of their core purpose. Since the last denominational inspection, governors have worked tirelessly with parents and the local community to raise funds and build a new classroom. This is testament to their commitment to secure a single age class for Reception children, as there is no pre-school locally. Their dedication, despite several challenges in the last year, shines. This is seen in the ethical decision on staff deployment to support pupils with complex needs. All leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to make the vision a reality, and their frankness and humility is refreshing. Governors are aware that their monitoring requires a sharper and more integrated approach. The work of the governors' ethos committee is not yet informing school development plans. The recommendations from the last inspection are largely met, although some aspects remain ongoing. The Christian foundation of the school has sustained leaders through recent difficulties as key posts in school and around the governing body became vacant. Leaders speak eloquently of their wish to do the best by every pupil and how hard this can be in the current financial climate. Nevertheless, governors provide stalwart and compassionate support and are themselves upheld by the shared vision of working together.

Pupils are lively and delightful company! They too appreciate the recent changes. It is clear that aspirations and expectations are high. Pupils' excitement on spending a week writing about Anthony Brown's book 'The Tunnel' to showcase this to their parents was palpable. The curriculum is creative and allows pupils to grow and flourish in exploring their different interests. Attendance is high and this demonstrates that pupils enjoy school. Governors commissioned specialists to advise on resources to meet additional needs. As a result, the majority of pupils make good progress. RE makes an important contribution to flourishing. Pupils enjoy the practical activities offered and those which encourage them to reflect on 'big questions.' RE is valued and pupils know the subject helps them understand they are part of a global community, with different cultures and beliefs. It is impressive that a small village school takes part in several local sporting and creative arts events. Pupils also convey a strong message that they are safe and feel valued. Respectful and genuine affection between pupils and adults characterises this school. The caring 'family feel' of working together extends to staff. Already, they cite feeling more valued and appreciated by leaders and are relishing the sense of building on their existing culture of mutual support. Pupils of different ages and backgrounds learn and play well together. Behaviour is positive. Staff are skilled at referring to the well-established Christian values when encouraging pupils to maintain friendships.

Partnerships with parents are improving and several commented on how much they appreciate the headteacher welcoming all at the gate each day. Excellent support from the 'Friends' makes a difference to the range of activities offered. Links with the parish church and village community support the school and leaders wish to extend this further. The Diocese has given significant support in the last year. Advice from diocesan colleagues on the vision, spirituality, and securing interim leadership, has been timely and helpful. Ampney Crucis benefits from informal links with other schools. Such links give staff the opportunity to share best practice with colleagues elsewhere. These examples of partnership reflect the vision to work together.

Further afield, the school engages well with a range of charities. Pupils are well-informed, for example about eco-issues. They demonstrate a commitment to look beyond their community in the service of others. Recently, this is seen in their support for the British Legion Poppy Appeal. Many adults and children spoke of how moved they were by the Remembrance service, led by pupils.

Collective worship plays an important part in binding the community together. Worship explores the vision and values and gives pupils experience of some Anglican traditions, for example a greeting and sending out. Pupils have a basic awareness of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They encounter

teaching about the Eucharist through RE. Acts of worship are mostly adult planned and led. In the past, pupils played a more active role in leading worship, but this has lapsed. The pupils in the new worship group are passionate about their role and keen to extend it. They wish to work with younger friends to make worship more engaging and relevant to different ages. Developing pupils' active role in planning, leading and evaluating worship was identified for improvement in 2014. This has not been fully addressed and so affects the grade awarded in this inspection. Pupils celebrate the main festivals in the church's year. They appreciate worship led by the incumbent and 'Open the Book' team. However, worship is not consistently invitational in approach. This means those who do not wish to pray may feel compelled to take part. A pupil said, 'We should say what Reverend John says and make the prayers our own if we choose to.' The prayer life of the school centres on the Lord's Prayer and school prayer. Some prayers written by pupils are used at lunchtimes and the end of the day, but not regularly in whole school worship. It is clear that much has been done to improve opportunities for spiritual development. The beautiful area for reflection outdoors is valued by those who wish for quiet at playtimes. Spaces for reflection in classrooms have recently been introduced and pupils enjoy adding their thoughts to the displays there. There exists some confusion between reflective activities which are worship and those planned within RE lessons. Some pupils are, therefore, muddled as to what constitutes worship and what is RE, as an academic subject.

It is clear that Ampney Crucis is in a more positive place. While there is much to do, much has been done in a very short time. This indicates that the fundamental foundations of this good Church school remain secure and are ready to be built upon.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Pupils make generally good progress across year groups due to competent teaching. They are confident to discuss their learning about a range of religions. Standards achieved are comparable to those in other subjects. The 'Understanding Christianity' resource has a positive impact on pupils' knowledge of that faith. The subject lead recognises that systems for assessment require development to ensure all abilities achieve their potential.

Headteacher	Tana Wood
Inspector's name and number	Allyson Taylor 768