

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

English Bicknor Church of England Primary School			
Address	English Bicknor, Coleford, Gloucester GL16 7PG		
Date of inspection	23 October 2019	Status of school	VC Primary
Diocese	Gloucester	URN	115621

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

School context

English Bicknor Church of England Primary School is a school with 58 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. No 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 broadly in line with national averages. A higher than average number of pupils join the school at times other than during the Reception year. The majority of members of the governing body are relatively new to their posts.

The school's Christian vision

Value, Enrich, Aspire. Through the quality of the education we provide, the example of Christ, and the teachings of the Bible, we aim to value and develop the whole child to reach their full potential, with limitless aspirations and a lifelong passion for learning. 'All things are possible for one who believes' Mark 9:23.

Key findings

- English Bicknor Church of England Primary School has a strong Christian vision. This is known and lived out by all members of the school community and guides the strategic development of the school.
- The strong emphasis placed on caring for one another ensures that wellbeing is strong and all feel valued and respected.
- The school's focus on limitless aspirations ensures that pupils and adults strive to do their best in all aspects of school life and are flourishing as a result.
- Pupils enjoy leading and taking part in collective worship, but they do not regularly plan worship or evaluate its impact.
- Pupils do not retain knowledge about a range of faiths from their religious education (RE) lessons. This means that they are unable to compare the key features of these faiths.

Areas for development

- Enrich pupils' lives by developing deep experiences of spirituality across the curriculum.
- Build on pupils' skills as leaders of collective worship, so that they take ownership of the planning and evaluation of worship.
- Reinforce pupils' understanding of a range of faiths, so that they can apply their knowledge and make connections.

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

Leaders at English Bicknor Church of England Primary School have established a strong Christian vision based on three concepts: to value, enrich and aspire. These are underpinned by a verse from St Mark's Gospel which says that 'All things are possible for one who believes'. The school has a broad interpretation of belief, seeing it as developing self-belief as well as giving pupils the tools to develop their own personal beliefs. The vision is lived out through four carefully chosen Christian values of trust, respect, compassion and perseverance. Together, the vision and values are highly effective because everyone knows them well and can say how they inspire and guide them. The headteacher has a clear vision of how she values the uniqueness of every adult and child in the school, aiming to enrich their lives and build aspiration for the future. Staff feel valued and trusted and say that their aspirations are raised by the quality of professional development they receive. Pupils talk about how aspiration can be about long term aims for their future or simply persevering day by day to behave better or improve their handwriting. Governors also use the vision as inspiration in their strategic decisions about the school. For example, they approach difficult staffing issues with compassion and respect. Governors have rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school vision. Their findings feed into the school development plan, leading to further improvement.

The starting point for the school's vision is that all members of the school community value one another. This is seen in the way children who join the school part way through the primary years quickly become valued members of the school. Parents speak movingly of how their children have been warmly welcomed and have developed confidence and aspiration which they lacked in their previous school. The sense of valuing one another also ensures that pupils develop a strong respect for difference and diversity. As one pupil said, someone joining them from a faith or culture different from their own is 'just as special' as anyone else. Behaviour in the school is very good. This is because pupils are asked to reflect on their behaviour and consider the impact of inappropriate behaviour on others. Relationships are underpinned by forgiveness and trust. Vulnerable children thrive in this calm, caring atmosphere and make good progress in their work as a result. Overall the level of pupils' progress, often from low starting points, is good. Staff say that they feel valued and supported in their work. This is because governors value the wellbeing of the headteacher and staff. This is shown in practical ways such as ensuring that meetings occur at times which are convenient to staff. The rector also carries out individual meetings with staff to help address their pastoral needs and ensure their sense of wellbeing is high.

The carefully designed curriculum is an important means by which the school realises its vision of enriching pupils' lives and giving them limitless aspirations. Staff ask pupils thought-provoking questions which help them to consider important issues in life. As a result, pupils are developing an understanding of unfairness and exploitation in areas as diverse as plastic use and racism in football. They want to make a difference where they see injustice, for example through supporting the local foodbank. There is a programme of regular visits out of school, designed to challenge pupils to think beyond their immediate environment. Visitors to the school open up a range of careers and opportunities. Consequently, pupils have ambitious plans for their future such as 'mending planes for the RAF'. In the classroom, pupils are given strategies to help them act independently and to learn from their mistakes. The core Christian value of perseverance inspires them to try new challenges and conquer their fears. One boy talked about the school helping him to persevere to learn to swim, even though he had a fear of water. Staff have also considered ways to develop children's spirituality and they regularly use the school's beautiful surroundings for reflection. However, staff have not come to a common understanding of spirituality. This means that they do not plan experiences of spirituality across the curriculum to enable pupils to deepen their sense of spirituality as they get older.

Pupils enjoy collective worship, particularly singing with the rector playing his guitar! Worship is well planned to teach a range of Christian values and good links are made with the Bible. This means that pupils can talk about how their behaviour and actions are influenced by Christian values and messages they learn from Bible stories. However, pupils' knowledge of how the Church's year reflects the life of Jesus is less strong. There is good provision for prayer. Pupils write prayers or pray spontaneously in worship and there are areas for prayer and reflection around the school. Pupils derive great strength from the sand tray, where they can write down their worries and then see them wiped away, and enjoy the peace and calm of the spiritual garden. There are supportive links with the local church. For example, the rector leads school worship and members of the congregation join the school when they celebrate major festivals in the church. The school has made some good

progress with developing pupils' leadership of worship since the last inspection. They now lead parts of worship each week and plan their own introductions and prayers. However, they do not fully plan acts of worship or regularly evaluate its impact.

RE is led effectively by the enthusiastic RE leader who has established a rigorous system of assessment and meets with leaders from neighbouring schools to ensure that standards of work are good. Pupils enjoy the varied approaches to learning which teachers adopt and particularly welcome the opportunities in RE to think for themselves. This is because teachers create a climate in their classrooms where pupils talk about their own feelings and beliefs with confidence, knowing they will be valued and respected. In this way, RE is another means through which the key elements of the school's Christian vision are lived out. Although the curriculum is rich and comprehensive, some pupils struggle to recall key knowledge about the range of faiths which they study. This means that it is difficult for them to draw connections between different faiths and to understand similarities and differences. Despite this, pupils recognise that RE is important for learning about other people whose beliefs may be different from their own.

Through its distinctive and highly effective Christian vision, all members of English Bicknor Church of England Primary School value one another and do their utmost to enrich one another's lives and raise aspirations without limit.

Headteacher	Hayley Alliston
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