THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

The Methodist Church

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christ Church Church of England VC Primary School					
Address	Church Road, Coseley, Bilston, Dudley WR14				
Date of inspection	7 February 2019	**Status of school**	VC primary		
Diocese	**Worcester**		**URN**	103838	

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**

School context

Christ Church is a large primary school with 588 pupils on roll, including 70 children in the Nursery. The school has relatively low levels of religious and cultural diversity. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above national averages. Leaders and the majority of staff were in post at the time of the previous SIAMS inspection.

The school's Christian vision

Dream It! Believe It! Achieve It!

Who are we? *"When God created humankind, He made them in the likeness of God." Genesis 5:1*
Why are we here? *"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." John 10:10*
So then, how do we live our lives? *"In everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you." Matthew 7:12*

Key findings

- The school is developing its vision and associated values to be more explicitly Christian. This is at an early stage and so adults and pupils cannot yet articulate the connection between the Christian vision and wider academic and personal outcomes. Early indicators suggest the vision builds on established strengths of the school.
- A highly inclusive culture encourages all pupils to lift their aspirations and so achieve more. Provision for younger children and pupils with additional needs is of very high quality.
- The curriculum is very well-planned to engage and inspire pupils in their learning.
- Committed leadership, modelled by the headteacher and senior leaders, has developed a very strong team spirit where adults as well as pupils flourish.
- Collective worship is not consistently linked to Bible teaching and the life and teaching of Jesus. Pupils are not clear when it is time for 'assembly' and when time is distinct for 'worship'. As areas for improvement noted in the previous report remain issues, these factors together prevent the grade from being higher.

Areas for development

- Leaders to promote the Christian vision so that all members of the school community embrace it and its impact may be evaluated.
- Review plans for worship so it has a consistent focus on Christian teaching and is distinct from 'assemblies'.
- Ensure pupils of all ages have opportunities to independently plan and lead worship to improve engagement.
- Increase the explicit teaching of religious education (RE) in the curriculum so that pupils have a wider knowledge of different cultures and religions, including Christianity.

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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

Inclusion and aspiration characterise this good school. With a deeply held commitment to inclusion, the school celebrates diversity, welcoming all as made in the image of God.

Over many years the school has been well led by a highly effective headteacher. Her uncompromising stance is that all will 'achieve'. This is embraced by all members of staff. Governors look to her for guidance. The recent work on the Christian vision and values is not possible to evaluate. However, as it builds on the long-established motto 'Dream It! Believe It! Achieve It!', pupils and adults understand the broad mission of the school. At this time, members of the school community are not able to articulate how the refreshed vision is enhancing academic standards and personal development. This is undoubtedly a good school, meeting the needs of its community. How far this is due to the Christian foundation of the school and its vision is more implicit than explicit. Governors express a sense of renewal after consideration of their purpose as a church school.

Staff are immensely proud of the school. A powerful sense of team work and mutual support means staff work tirelessly for the pupils in their care. Consequently, academic progress for most pupils is high. Sensitive, highly effective support is generously given to those who are more vulnerable or who have additional needs. This is evident across the school and particularly in the Nursery and Reception phase. Staff understand the limited horizons of some pupils and ensure that time in school raises aspirations for the future. This is attributable to the school's vision of making dreams a reality. This is also true for staff. Their experience is one of being nurtured within a united team. Examples abound of kindness shown to staff experiencing dark days in their personal lives. 'Life to the full' at Christ Church means those who face challenges are enfolded with love. Many staff remain in post at the school and are developed into leadership roles. This is testament to the commitment that all achieve and flourish.

Good behaviour reflects the school's determination that pupils feel they belong and are treated with respect. This value, among the core values, matters enormously to pupils. They understand that they must respect their teachers and try to respect each other even when they disagree. Attendance is good and shows how pupils love coming to school. Life for many pupils can be complex so the school is a haven for many, providing security and structure in their lives. In discussion with several pupils, a love of learning is fostered in tandem with a sense of self-worth. Living well together is part of the aspiration of the school. Pupils are guided to be reflective and accepting of each other, very much in the spirit of the Christian vision of inclusion.

The curriculum is creative and allows pupils to develop their interests and talents. As one pupil said, 'it is the chance to be ourselves in different parts of learning.' The imaginative use of books to shape studies across the curriculum is key to pupils seeing the bigger picture of learning. As a result of the broad curriculum, pupils are inspired to think about issues on the environment: for example, litter picking, a food bank and 'Water Aid'. Pupils are eager to take action in the service of others and this exemplifies their wish to treat everyone equally. While RE is part of the curriculum, it is less clear in pupils' books where the explicit teaching of Christianity and other religions features. As such, RE has a limited impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. The RE staff team is already considering how to capture activities in RE by using photos or notes in 'Big Books'. This demonstrates staff's constant drive for improvement. Working in subject as well as year group teams, engenders a dynamism and motivation which transmits to pupils.

Partnerships with families demonstrate the commitment to treating others as we all want to be treated. Parents speak warmly of the teachers and leadership team. They appreciate the support for families and that 'the door is open' if they have a problem. Any issues are 'nipped in the bud'. The school encourages parents to be part of the learning journey and many welcome the opportunity to visit during the school day for sessions like 'stay and learn'. As one parent said, 'The school expects a lot from us and rightly so.' This confirms that the school is raising the aspirations of families as well as pupils. Another parent commented that 'the teachers work their magic!'

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Support from the local church and clergy make an important contribution to the life of the school. The services held in the parish church are highlights of the year. These allow pupils to have an awareness of the main festivals in the Christian calendar. For even the youngest child in Nursery, the church becomes a familiar and safe place to be. A governor who is also a church warden commented on the vibrancy of the church when the school visits. In this way the school and church are a blessing to each other. Use of the school blessing and prayer in worship affirm the foundations as a church school. Clergy have supported the work on refreshing the vision and finding Bible texts to illustrate this. Collective worship, however, requires improvement. There is confusion among the pupils as to what constitutes worship. Their view of presentations on themes like anti-bullying as worship are muddled. Planning for worship has insufficient focus on the Bible, life and teaching of Jesus. Some pupils are aware that Christians believe that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils have opportunities to lead aspects of class worship. This has improved since the last inspection. Year 6 pupils are encouraged to contribute to whole school worship. Prayer spaces in classrooms give pupils opportunities to reflect and offer their thoughts and feelings in prayer. There is, therefore, growing provision for spiritual growth.

Governors know the school well. They wish to develop the Christian character of the school. Leaders engage with the diocese and access training. They aspire to achieve excellence as a church school and are taking appropriate steps towards that goal. Links with other church schools are limited by location. However, leaders are to be commended for building positive relationships with the local authority and neighbouring schools. Governors were mindful to prepare for this SIAMS inspection. They are aware that further support from the diocese or from other strong church schools might be beneficial to Christ Church. This exemplifies the 'can do' spirit which underpins the life of the school. As several people said, 'everything we do is for the children.' However, this inspection highlights that Christ Church also makes a difference to the lives of staff, families and its local community.

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Inspector's name and number	Allyson Taylor 768

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