

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ash Cartwright and Kelsey Church of England Primary School			
Address	School Road, Ash, Kent, CT3 2JD		
Date of inspection	27/09/2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	Canterbury	URN	118745
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	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good
School context			
<p>Ash Cartwright and Kelsey primary school has 158 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils considered to be disadvantaged is around the national average. The proportion who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is slightly above the national average and increasing. A very small proportion of pupils attend Church outside of their involvement through school. Following a period of instability, the staff team is now settled. Pupils' attainment and progress is showing an upward trend.</p>			
The school's Christian vision			
<p>Our Christian vision guides our journey to provide a rich, well-rounded education enabling all to become the very best that God intended. We treat adults and pupils with love and dignity in a space where Christian values are developed, and everyone can flourish.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Through God's love and strength all flourish</p>			
Key findings			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been very rapid improvement since the previous denominational inspection, coinciding with the arrival of the current headteacher and the effective staff team which she has built. The refreshed Christian vision is successfully guiding all aspects of this welcoming and inclusive school in which pupils and adults flourish. • The associated Christian values impact strongly and positive actions. There is a clear focus on how educational provision supports the development of character. Although not embedded, this approach is already showing positive impact. • Pastoral care effectively shows practical Christian compassion. Leaders are deeply committed to restorative justice approaches, focusing on love, justice and forgiveness. This has been introduced recently to good effect. • Collective worship and religious education (RE) show extensive improvement over the past two years. • The school has improved considerably its engagement with the local community, but global links are limited. 			
Areas for development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As instances arise, take opportunity to share leaders' excellent practice for school improvement which is based firmly on Christian vision. • Embed restorative justice and character development opportunities to further deepen the school's Christian distinctiveness. • Enhance pupils' appreciation of difference and diversity by expanding existing and addressing new partnerships at a global level. 			

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

The headteacher, in post since 2017, has quickly and successfully built a stable team which is deeply committed to placing pupils at the heart of all development. The significant driving force for this improvement is its revised Christian vision, based on an appreciation that God's love and strength is for all. This means that the school works towards the best for everyone in its community. Consequently, senior leaders and a committed governing body, ably supported by the staff team, have a clear focus on the importance of both academic and personal development. Accordingly, achievement is on an upward trajectory with any gaps between different groups of pupils being minimised. It is now at least at national expectations. Attendance has improved considerably.

Senior leaders and governors know their school well. They have taken appropriate steps to bring about rapid improvement that is sustainable and based on a clear Christian vision with an inclusive and aspirational view of education. This is shared by leaders at all levels with parents and the wider community being suitably consulted and involved.

The school's Christian vision is supported by its associated values which are clearly linked to biblical teaching. They are well known and impact constructively on pupils' actions and reactions. Relationships and behaviour are excellent, and pupils are engaging consistently well with their learning. Pupils demonstrate respect for each other and respond positively when exploring different points of view. Expressing its Christian foundation, the school has recently introduced restorative justice approaches to support improved behaviour and relationships. Pupils relate this to the school's Christian values and to the importance of love within Christian teaching.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is shaped appropriately by the school's Christian vision in that it is well-balanced and increasingly rich. A strong focus on curriculum breadth and on consistent teaching and learning is in evidence. Thus, pupils are receiving a well-rounded education which enables those of different abilities and aptitudes to flourish. Values development was a key area for improvement previously and this has been wisely fostered to include a focus on character development. This inventive approach to curriculum planning is beginning to impact constructively. The planning and implementation of this is exemplary. Focused opportunities engage pupils with reflection and questioning skills, thus supporting their spiritual development very well. There is a helpful understanding of spiritual development shared across the school which enhances curriculum planning and the learning experiences of pupils. Topics in RE start with a big question such as 'What does it mean if God is holy and loving?'. The approach in RE is being rolled out across the curriculum with, for example, big ideas being addressed to shape topics in science. Pupils reflect on issues of justice and equality and many recognise that they can engage and make a difference, such as through the eco group. Good extra-curricular provision, including a fortnightly after-school Christian club held at the church, and visits locally and further afield, such as to London, enhance pupils' experience further. There is a strong relationship with the parish church and with the diocese which strengthens the school's Christian and spiritual life.

Expressing love and dignity, pastoral care is very strong and effective. There is a clear emphasis on pupils' and adults' wellbeing and mental health in order to help them become the very best that God intended. This leads to the school being a friendly and welcoming place. This is affirmed by parents, who rightly recognise improved communication about whole school priorities and their own children, as a reflection of its Christian vision. All staff are now well supported for working within the Church school sector with their professional development given a high priority. Leaders encourage the school to be outward looking, such as through positive engagement with a local hub of schools and with a local rural schools' network. This broadens staff experience, enabling them to learn and to share their expertise as well as broadening and enriching pupils' experiences. Thus, both pupils and adults flourish.

In keeping with the inclusive and aspirational Christian vision, leaders are committed to celebrating difference and diversity. This means that appropriate opportunities are taken to expand pupils' understanding and appreciation of the range of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds of the United Kingdom. In addition, the school is the first primary school locally to attain LGBT+ friendly status. The impetus for this is their Christian vision focused on enabling all to flourish, and it successfully draws recent Church of England thinking such as a document called, Valuing All God's Children. Global links are embryonic. Year 4 have pen-pals in a school in France and there is a strong possibility of linking with a school in Brazil which is already supported by the parish church.

The daily worship programme is central to school life and is very well led, managed and monitored. The views of teachers and pupils are considered to refine practice. Its focus on the school's vision and associated values, along with Christian beliefs and biblical stories, successfully encourages the community to apply these to everyday life. Through worship, pupils have a growing appreciation of key Christian concepts, such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They recognise the relevance of Jesus for Christians and understand the importance of Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Prayer and reflection are enriched by pupils leading written and spontaneous prayer in assembly and at other points in the school day. The programme is inclusive which means that pupils and adults recognise its contribution to school life, feel comfortable in leading and joining in, and they benefit from it personally. Consequently, engagement in and enjoyment of worship is strong.

There have been rapid improvements in RE over the past 18 months, under the effective leadership of the deputy headteacher. The RE curriculum is well balanced. Governors and senior leaders ensure that RE has adequate time and resources and that staff are trained appropriately. RE meets statutory requirements and positively reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. This demonstrates its importance as a core subject and its positive impact on providing a rich and well-rounded education. Pupils enjoy RE saying that it, 'helps you think about important things.'. Assessment practice has been refined so that pupils and staff know what is needed to enhance learning further. Work in both class and individual books is exemplary.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The teaching of RE is regularly monitored and evaluated across the school. It is judged to be consistently good. This was verified during the inspection. Through effective leadership and support, teachers are developing a real confidence in teaching RE. Teachers effectively guide pupils' learning so that they make good progress from their various starting points. This is the case in both written and oral responses. Teaching is enriched by effectively providing a range of different approaches which broaden pupils' experiences and engagement very well. Commenting on the variety of approaches, pupils said, 'they are exciting and interesting, and they help you learn'. Thus, pupils achieve at least in line with other core subjects within the school and flourish as they develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Headteacher

Fiona Crascall

Inspector's name and number

Pamela Draycott (161)