

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Charlton-on-Otmoor Church of England Primary School			
Address	Fencott Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 2UT		
Date of inspection	19 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	123100

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	Requires Improvement
Additional Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Requires Improvement

School context

Charlton-on-Otmoor is a primary school with 73 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very 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 is in line with national averages. The school has nursery provision within the Reception class. Charlton School has been through a period of significant changes in leadership and staff over the last few years, but now has a permanent headteacher in post.

The school's Christian vision

'Achieving personal and academic fulfilment through learning and growing together'

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches. Matthew 13:31-32

Key findings

- The school vision to enable all to grow like a mustard seed and develop into a large tree supports the inclusive and nurturing environment found at Charlton-on-Otmoor.
- A new school vision and a set of Christian values has been formed and the process of rooting these into school life has begun.
- New, positive structures have now been put in place to support the development of religious education (RE).
- The school however, requires improvement, as its church school foundation has not been protected over the last few years, with points of development from the last SIAMS inspection in need of resolution.
- Whilst the church support for collective worship is strong, the daily act of collective worship lacks definition and any sense of Anglican tradition to bring the community together.

Areas for development

- Embed the new Christian vision and values, so they shape the school's public profile, life and documentation.
- Formalise systems and outline a structured plan for monitoring and evaluation, to secure both immediate, rapid progress, but also longer-term impact, going forwards as a Church school.
- Review and develop collective worship, so it is distinctively Christian, creative, inspiring and owned by the pupils, enabling spiritual growth.

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

Charlton-on-Otmoor is a welcoming, happy and inclusive school where children and staff feel valued. Indeed, it has been cherished and valued by generations of village members. A pupil commented, 'It's like a family. We all get on and work well as a team.' A parent said, 'We are happy to have our children here because we know staff care about children'. Parents and pupils agree staff are quick to help and support. This kind, nurturing environment leads to high standards of behaviour, positive and respectful relationships within the school, enabling all within to live and work well together. Staff know and understand their pupils, developing pupils' character and wellbeing. An initiative to have 'God's window' in each classroom gives pupils time to think. One commented, 'It helps me reflect on all the things I have to be grateful for'. The cohesive staff team say they receive support from one another and like to review and improve their practice. Pupils say there isn't really any bullying. They recognise sometimes children fall out with each other, but they say they quickly make friends again, modelling their school value of forgiveness. Pupils have opportunities to foster dignity and respect in their relationships with one another, but also through the weekly visit from pupils with special needs. Pupils say they love to welcome and help these visitors.

The broad and balanced curriculum recognises each child is unique and the school's vision enables pupils to grow and learn together. Pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, engage with their learning. In keeping with the vision, staff provide an environment where pupils' confidence can develop thus creating 'good soil' for seeds to grow. Pupils happily provide harvest gifts for the local foodbank and local senior citizens' homes. However, they are unable to convey an understanding of the need and impact of this social action. Academic attainment is improving, as shown in recent data. However, pupil progress across all areas is not secure. Improving weaker areas of attainment and progress so all pupils achieve academic fulfilment, is key to secure the school's vision and enable pupils to truly flourish.

Numerous personnel were involved in formulating the school's vision, underpinned with biblical roots. Members of the school community are beginning to see how the recently updated vision and Christian values apply to school life and their own thinking. An example of this is the older pupils' learning about the war and how they felt inspired by the resilience that soldiers needed during the blitz. A pupil in another class summarised the school vision, writing 'I am the seed, because as I learn, I grow. The more I grow, the more I want to learn'. Good attendance indicates that pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn. The school has yet to embed the newly formulated vision and its Christian values into its documentation and website to secure its profile as a Church school.

The school has strong links with the local church. The importance of the school is evident in village and church life. All within the community adore the annual May day festival. An after school church club for children and their parents is extremely popular. Seats for school services are highly prized, due to very positive levels of attendance by parents. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the 'Open the Book' acts of worship and their enjoyment and engagement is clear. Whilst acts of worship support pupils' understanding of the school's values with some ability to link to Bible stories, development of collective worship is in its early stages. It is not yet enabling full realisation of the school's vision, growth of the mustard seed into a tree. The school's policy does not identify key features and expectations for Charlton's acts of worship. Daily acts of worship lack definition and prevent the grade from being higher. Pupils do not have a secure understanding of common features of Anglican traditions of worship. They are keen to develop spiritually and take more ownership in the planning and leading of different elements of collective worship. There are limited opportunities for pupils to explore prayer and explore its value. The school recognise the need to support pupils' understanding of the Trinity.

The school requires improvement as monitoring lacks rigour and progress since the previous inspection is poor. Areas identified for development have not been resolved, leaving the foundation of the school in doubt. The new headteacher however, has correctly outlined foci for development, which includes the development of the school's Christian character. He has made it a priority to establish strong links with the Diocese and local authority to ensure the school makes secure progress in its journey of improvement. Whilst governors visit the school, are keen to actively support and monitor aspects of school life, they do not as yet have a clear understanding of the part they play in securing improvement. They have not formulated a clear structure or plan for monitoring and evaluation and show a lack of understanding of what success will look like.

Those within the school community readily admit the school lost its way as a Church school over the last few years. The headteacher has now ensured the profile of religious education (RE) is raised by securing weekly lesson time. Pupils say RE is more organised and they are pleased to now have their own RE book. The recently appointed RE leader is keen to develop this subject area and the headteacher has put training in place for staff. Pupils have a basic understanding of some different religions and find learning about these interesting. They speak positively about their educational visits, enjoying opportunities to see other places of worship for themselves. Through such experiences, pupils increase in knowledge beyond their own experience. This helps them to think more globally about life and to grow from the seeds of their learning.

The journey of restoration of this church school has begun. Structures are now in place to foster spiritual development and to enable all to achieve personal and academic fulfilment through learning and growing together.

Headteacher	Ross Griffin
Inspector's name and number	Jacque Coles 840