

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St Oswald's Church of England Primary School

<b>Address</b>	The Green, Guiseley, Leeds, LS20 9BT		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	17 June 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Diocese</b>	Leeds	<b>URN</b>	108008

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

#### School context

St Oswald's is a primary school with 389 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 and/or disabilities is below national averages. Since the last inspection St Oswald's has enlarged to become a primary school, and has experienced significant changes of senior leadership, with the current substantive headteacher taking up post in January 2019.

#### The school's Christian vision

To encourage children to climb to new heights by supporting them to achieve the highest academic standards possible, developing the whole child and ensuring that our strong Christian values underpin all school life. Through this, we fulfil our school motto: *'To serve one another.'*

#### Key findings

- With the guidance of new leadership, the school community has recently worked together to refocus its Christian vision. This now drives the school's determination to ensure pupils benefit from a high quality education and tailored support for personal wellbeing. This is reflected in the judgement of Good.
- Significant, beneficial changes currently underway in how religious education (RE) is taught through the school need further time to become fully embedded, so this subject cannot yet be graded as Good.
- Inclusive stimulating worship themes invite all pupils, irrespective of personal belief or viewpoint, to join together as a school family in exploration of faith. Worship engages pupils and adults in spiritual reflection, using the school's biblical faith to explore the relevance of global concerns, within a framework of Christian liturgy. Because of its beneficial impact, worship is graded as Good.
- The supportive interaction between all members of the staff team provides an effective role model of mutual respect and thoughtful behaviour which pupils strive to emulate.

#### Areas for development

- Embed, support and monitor the transfer of responsibility for RE teaching to each class teacher, alongside the provision of regular opportunities for teachers to observe exemplary RE teaching. Regular monitoring of RE will ensure it is well taught and fully integrated within each class's wider curriculum.
- Ensure frequent, inspirational opportunities for pupils to grow and develop spiritually are built into the topic-based class curriculum, as an essential aspect of each teacher's planned learning provision for pupils.
- Enable pupils to grow in independence in their involvement in worship planning and leadership, whilst also extending the range of worship evaluations to a wider range of stakeholders to inform worship plans more fully.

## **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**

With the incisive leadership of the headteacher, effectively supported by the governing board and diocese, the school community is working together to successfully renew the St Oswald's Christian vision. The headteacher has given the highest priority to this task, which has had the positive effect of bringing together the school family in its revitalisation. Because all school stakeholders feel involved in this development, there is a positive sense of shared ownership. There is also a shared determination that the reinvigorated vision and associated Christian values create a positive difference that will benefit all pupils.

Governors are active in the life of the school, with effective links to key areas of its life. Because of this, they are able to evaluate the impact of the refreshed Christian vision, and to monitor the many changes this has brought about.

As befits this core subject of the school, the influence and relevance of RE has been reviewed by senior leaders, alongside consideration of how best to ensure all pupils learn in RE at optimum levels. This review has resulted in the change-over from the deputy headteacher as the specialist teaching RE through school, to its delegation to each class teacher, who now has responsibility for this key subject. This enables RE learning to be fully integrated into the wider curriculum, ensuring that rich opportunities for pupils to grow spiritually can be a regular, important aspect of each teacher's planning. It also enables worship themes to be included within wider class discussion, in age-appropriate ways.

The school has recently added the 'Understanding Christianity' learning approaches to its use of the diocesan RE syllabus. This focus supports pupils with opportunities to engage with and use appropriate theological language in their wide-ranging but respectful discussions of the 'big questions' of life and belief.

The school believes that every pupil has the right to achieve high academic standards, linking this to the school vision's New Testament teaching: 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.' School data shows that, by the end of Year 6, almost all pupils are attaining at or above national expectations. However, pupil progress through the school is not as strong. Consequently this is a high priority for the school, as is the need to stimulate a greater depth of learning for able pupils. Because pupils enjoy the challenges of their classroom learning, they want to be in school regularly. Caring support is given to the small minority of families who cause concern, because of their children's lack of regular, punctual attendance.

The school recognises that in order for pupils to be able to achieve the best learning outcomes, their wellbeing and mental health need to be supported. Pupils know that their concerns can be shared with support staff. This team works alongside class teachers to ensure potential blocks to pupils' individual progress are identified, and where possible, eliminated. The need for adult mental health and wellbeing is championed by the school, with signposting to external agencies when appropriate. The professional development of the staff team is prioritised, with effective, targeted use made of links to the diocese, other local schools and the local authority.

Vulnerable pupils are supported well because of additional tailored support and nurture. Staff seek to provide the most appropriate personalised strategies for individuals, alongside input from parents and external agencies. Parents value this approach, as indicated in their positive responses to recent surveys. Parents also comment on how the school's religious life is not forced on any pupil, but offers 'a very natural way of coming together in worship as a whole school'. They appreciate the many invitations that the school extends, so families can join in the pupils' worship both in church and school.

Daily collective worship is regarded a priority in the life of St Oswald's. Its inclusivity enables all to meet in worship, under the 'welcoming umbrella of Christianity'. The worship highlights the importance of Christian festivals and seasons, as well as linking to local and global events, and including due reference to other major world faiths. A Muslim pupil explained, 'My own faith is important for me, but I like us all praying together in school.' Because the impact of worship is currently evaluated only by pupils and governors, the views of other stakeholders do not inform future worship plans. The pupils benefit from the range and variety of worship leaders. They include the school staff, classes of pupils, occasional visitors, members of the church congregation and the parish priest, whose school chaplain role supports and enhances school life. Whilst pupils enjoy volunteering to take part within the liturgy, they are not given opportunities to independently plan and lead school worship.

Pupils gain an insight into Anglican tradition through the use of the cross as a clear focal point. The lighting of a worship candle signifies the start and finish of the worship, and emphasises Christ's presence. Pupils gain a wider understanding of Anglican worship traditions in school services held in the nearby church. In this traditional setting, the school also celebrates the major festivals of the Christian year with pupils' extended families. An

annual school Eucharist at Eastertide uses specially-written liturgy to help pupils appreciate its importance for Christians. Pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of the Christian teaching of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit via worship and RE themes. Singing and prayer are integral to worship, pupils sometimes choosing to use school prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, at home. A child explained, 'When you pray, you let God connect with you and into your life.'

Pupils understand the need to live out the Christian value of friendship in their care and respect for each other. Epitomising the faith value of service, pupils are keen to give of their time in helping other in need, with many instances of pupils promoting fund-raising for charitable causes. Pupils also engage in age-appropriate social action as responsible citizens. Their concerns have centred on damage to God's created world and challenge for global inequality. Their actions are focused through democratic processes, publicity and innovative use of social media.

Although the local community is not diverse, the school ensures that pupils develop their understanding and respect for differing cultures and other faiths. Pupils understand the need for all to show mutual care and concern, which ensures that bullying and prejudice are rarely encountered in school. Pupils know that senior staff will always ensure a quick resolution of any such difficulties. Explaining why this is important, an older pupil commented, 'Desmond Tutu helped to create peace by showing that it isn't right to be racist.'



### **The effectiveness of RE requires improvement**

School leaders have been supported by the diocese in their thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of RE as a core curriculum subject. The outcomes of this evaluation have led to recent significant changes being instigated, to increase the connectivity between RE and the wider curriculum and the quality of learning outcomes for all pupils.

Currently, whilst most pupils attain RE standards that equate to those of other core subjects, insufficient pupils are engaged in RE learning at greater depth. Additionally, vulnerable pupils do not regularly make optimum progress from individual starting points in this subject.

The changes recently made by the school ensure that RE is a key part of pupils' topic-based learning, planned and delivered by each class teacher. These changes to RE are in their early stages, so they require careful monitoring and guidance to ensure the pupils' RE learning fully benefits from the integrated teaching structure.

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