

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Pontesbury Church of England Primary School			
Address	Bogey Lane, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 0TF		
Date of inspection	3 March 2020	Status of school	VC primary
Diocese	Hereford	URN	123493

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 Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Pontesbury is a primary school with 213 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 in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. The headteacher and the majority of staff are long standing and were in post at the last denominational inspection.

The school's Christian vision

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. Hebrews 10:24

Our vision is that our children: flourish as imaginative, inspired and successful learners; grow as kind, encouraging individuals who value diversity; and develop a sense of confidence, pride, belonging and service as valued contributors to the school and wider community.

Our children will leave our school with the confidence and resilience to embrace opportunities, fulfil their potential and make the world a better place.

Key findings

- The school's recently revised vision statement reflects the school's practice and the very good outcomes that flow from its holistic and inclusive approach. As this is at an early stage, not all adults and pupils can yet articulate the connection between the vision and wider academic and personal outcomes.
- Pontesbury is a highly aspirational and nurturing community. The dedicated staff team work relentlessly to support all children, including the most vulnerable, enabling all to flourish.
- Harmonious relationships and exemplary behaviour are a result of the calm, positive Christian ethos built on Christian values.
- Collective worship is engaging, inspiring and relevant. It promotes personal reflection and a sense of belonging in a close-knit community.
- Religious education (RE) is well led and monitoring is effective in identifying areas for development. The majority of pupils enjoy creative, fun lessons, rich in discussion and as a result have good knowledge of a range of world faiths.

Areas for development

- Leaders to promote the Christian vision so that all members of the school community can articulate how it is shaping strategy and daily life.
- Review provision for RE to ensure that teaching and learning is consistently good across Key Stage 2, so that all pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Embed a shared, school understanding of spirituality, so that staff can plan for a range of high quality spiritual experiences in all areas of the curriculum.

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

Pontesbury is a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing community. Everyone feels safe, happy and immensely proud to belong to the school.

The school's Christian vision focuses on everyone aspiring to be their best selves, through caring for one another within a supportive environment. It encourages both pupils and adults to be resilient and strong in order to make informed life choices. It has recently been revised in order to strengthen and root it expressly in biblical teaching. The vision now needs to be embraced by the whole school so that pupils, staff, parents and the wider community can explicitly know and rejoice in its Christian foundations. There is a well-established, carefully planned Christian values programme. This is used as one of the vehicles for delivery of collective worship and is also a fundamental driver of the school curriculum. The school's vision and values are a clear expression of who the school are. Governors know the school well. They ensure that financial and human resources are used effectively so that all pupils can flourish and achieve. Through regular monitoring visits, they have a clear idea of school performance, achievement and the way in which the vision is lived out.

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 attributable to the school's vision of showing concern and love for one another, enabling all to be their best self. This is also true for staff. Their experience is one of being nurtured within a united team. There are plentiful examples of kindness shown to staff experiencing dark days in their personal lives. The employment of a specialist teaching assistant, fondly known to the pupils as 'the counsellor of the school' exemplifies a wider concern for pupils' mental wellbeing. There is also a dedicated nurture room providing a calm, safe space. Parents speak warmly of the teachers and leadership team. They appreciate the support for families and that the door 'is open' and staff are approachable and supportive. One parent said staff go 'above and beyond' to care for the pupils.

The bold and creative curriculum has recently been a key focus of school development. It meets the academic needs of pupils well because it is designed to reflect the context of the school population and individual pupils' needs. The curriculum is an outworking of the Christian vision as it equips, enriches and inspires pupils. It helps them appreciate the wider world. An example of this is the pupils' study of Africa where they learn to respect diverse cultures and ways of living. The curriculum is rich in music, art and sport and is enhanced by numerous opportunities for extracurricular activities. Pupils enjoy all the school offers and as a result attendance is good. At present there is no shared understanding of the concept of spirituality. This means that times when spirituality might be developed tend to be 'in the moment' rather than planned for. Consequently, planning does not foster a progressive understanding of how spirituality can be built on as children mature.

Harmonious relationships and excellent behaviour are a result of a very strong culture of embracing, respecting and understanding difference and diversity. This allows all to live well together. One year 2 pupil said, 'Everyone is welcome, we like everyone to join our school even if they're different'. Links with Merridale Primary school serve to strengthen pupils' understanding of difference and diversity. Together pupils visited a Gurdwara and attended a bhangra dancing workshop. This link is allowing children to consider a very different context to their own that is also in the West Midlands.

Pupils are aware of global issues and they are knowledgeable about people who are in much less fortunate circumstances both locally and internationally. There are regular opportunities to engage in social action, most of which is pupil-identified. Their inspired action includes support for the local homeless, developing hope for others as they look beyond themselves. One pupil slept out overnight in Telford whilst another pupil is running a marathon in a month. A strong sense of justice prevails in their concern for world problems such as plastic pollution. Pupils and adults are keen to make a meaningful difference beyond their local context as global agents of change.

Daily collective worship is an important part of school life. It is centred on the Bible and teachings of Jesus. It is varied, well planned and consistently linked to the school's values. Both staff and pupils appreciate the special time to come together as a school family. There are opportunities for stillness and prayer and pupils value the time for reflection. At the end of collective worship a candle is lit as children are asked to reflect on the key message of that day's worship: 'what does that mean to us?' The collective worship lead is passionate that worship is an outworking of the vision. Pupils must be able to 'lift something practical' out of worship that helps them 'to be their best self'. Included within worship are elements of Anglican tradition, including observance of the special seasons of the Christian year. Pupils participate actively, answering questions and helping to act out Bible stories. Prayer is an important part of collective worship and everyday life at Pontesbury. Staff spoke with enthusiasm about the prayer labyrinth, a room set up with prayer stations during Lent. It gives adults and children chance to reflect and pray. The school's prayer box is well used. All pupils, including the very young know that you can pray, 'anytime, anywhere, about anything'.

Religious education fully expresses the school vision in relation to broadening the horizons of the pupils, allowing them to grow as critical, deep thinkers who can see beyond their context. Leadership of RE is strong, provision is good and reflects the Church of England's statement of entitlement. Robust monitoring and self-evaluation by the RE lead is leading to improving standards. Pupils explore world religions and beliefs and enjoy lessons that are varied in approach. Lessons are rich in discussion and debate. Since the introduction of the Understanding Christianity resource, pupils' skills of engaging with biblical text are improving and there is a better understanding and use of religious vocabulary. Appropriate assessment practices help shape planning to the needs of the pupils.

The Pontesbury school family is a community where 'every person is really precious'. Everyone lives out the school's vision and values on a daily basis, enabling adults and pupils to flourish together.

Headteacher	Richard Langford
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