

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Welford and Wickham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School			
Address	Welford Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8HL		
Date of inspection	12 March 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	109984

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

School context

Welford and Wickham is a small primary school with 97 pupils on roll. The majority of the 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 (SEND) is below national averages. The school changed its status to become voluntary aided in September 2016. There have been significant changes in governance since the previous inspection. The executive headteacher leads both this school and its partner school, Stockcross Church of England Primary School.

The school's Christian vision

The children come first; every child having roots and wings

Key findings

- The level of pastoral care in this inclusive and nurturing Christian family community, driven by the school's vision of children first having roots and wings, results in empathy and care for each individual and shapes them to be the people they are.
- The tremendous amount of goodwill and teamwork is visible in working across the two schools. This supports staff professional development very well. Leadership roles are being developed.
- The Christian festivals celebrated at St Gregory's Church and St Swithun's Church engage the whole community and provide lasting memories for all as an integral part of school and village life.
- Pupils give a thoughtful account of Christianity and are beginning to critically engage with biblical text in religious education (RE) thus supporting their academic and spiritual journeys in RE.

Areas for development

- Deepen the understanding and awareness of the Bible verses which are attributed to putting down roots and flying so the whole school community can readily articulate their meaning.
- In RE, deepen pupils' critical engagement with text so they can apply their understanding in their daily lives.
- Extend pupils' leadership roles in the worship team to include younger pupils in order to widen planning and development.

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

Undoubtedly, children come first at Welford and Wickham where they are given roots and wings to fly. Whilst there have been changes in staffing and governance, everyone is committed to serving the pupils and their families. The importance of putting down deep roots so pupils are equipped when they leave is well communicated by leaders. However, not all adults or pupils can readily articulate the biblical underpinning of their vision attributed to Ephesians 3:17 and Isaiah 40:31. This means the school is less securely good as a result. Pupils say they see the Bible verses emblazoned on the tree in the school entrance, but desire a deeper explanation of what they mean. Love is cited as the foundation of spiritual and academic learning here so all can flourish. Staff and governors have benefitted from diocesan support and training so all are appraised of Church school development. The teamwork and goodwill across the two schools shares expertise and supports staff professional development well. Monitoring and evaluation is in place with action plans formulated to support continual improvement in a Church school.

Inclusive pastoral care in this nurturing family community keeps families at the heart of all it does. In addition to ongoing bespoke support meeting the individual needs of any vulnerable pupils, a family support worker helps with parenting classes and home visits. As masters of differentiation, staff know pupils very well and enable pupils to fly and be upheld, even in difficult circumstances. The vision of roots and wings shapes a strong foundation with high expectations so pupils can take their aspirations into the future. Pupils are equipped with confidence and encouraged to support one another. For example, strategies to cope include a focus on the four B's of brain, book, buddy and boss which helps them to problem solve. Innovative family learning weeks also help to instil confidence as pupils emulate a variety of positive role models. All pupils make good progress throughout the school with spiritual development well supported.

One of the hallmarks of Welford and Wickham is the work they have engaged in with Stockcross Primary School through the Erasmus Project. Led by the executive headteacher, this enabled staff to visit other European countries. Today this still inspires staff to be agents of change by upholding moral values. In spreading the vision, and sharing good practice, pupils too have been encouraged to make a difference in society. Pupils' hopes are raised so they can become who they want to be, following the example of good role models. The school council have shown their strong social conscience in their concern for the effect of plastics on the environment. Driven by compassion, Year 4 and Year 5 had an in depth discussion challenging injustice and inequality.

Everyone works together here in peace and harmony within a spirit of inclusion and acceptance, guiding the pupils into the adults they will become. Genuine love and care for every single child and their family is central in this 'home from home' nurturing environment. Very good relationships at all levels ensure everyone is loved in this community and encouraged to flourish. For example, pupils experience taking

part in an annual dramatic production in a real local theatre. This can involve solo parts and is an amazing and exciting opportunity for pupils to grow wings, soar and flourish. Self-worth is of paramount importance, with a special emphasis throughout Lent on seeking forgiveness and moving on. Dignity and respect for all is well embedded, through policies and training for staff and positive curriculum experiences for pupils. All are valued as children of God. The executive headteacher is involved in a diocesan network group with a focus on resilience, wellbeing and leadership. The school hosts network meetings for Church school headteachers, sharing good practice.

Due to the rector's contribution to school, links with the two churches of St Gregory and St Swithun's are strong. The celebration of key Christian festivals, such as Nativity and Christingle are highly praised as are the Remembrance-tide commemorations. They involve the whole community and provide lasting memories as a deeply integral part of village life. Such times have been attributed to 'a sense of heaven touching earth' where everyone grows in love for one another. Pupils are reverent in church, with some pupils openly honest about being aware of their own faith. Pupils are inspired by biblical stories and modern day people of faith to 'treat others as you would like to be treated'. Prayer and reflection is very much part of everyday life, with pupils spontaneously writing and sharing their deepest thoughts. This is extended into home life. Pupils are growing in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and explain the significance of Pentecost in their own words. Pupils readily speak about Jesus rising from the tomb and how 'we still talk about that today and how he sacrificed himself for us'. The Year 5 worship team train the Year 4 pupils to take on their leadership roles in planning, leading and evaluating worship. However, the worship team agrees that involving some younger pupils beyond Year 4 is important to help shape the planning and development of worship. Currently, this is limited to a Year 5 responsibility. They say their role in worship helps them fly and become independent as they prepare to move on to secondary school.

Engaging and inspiring RE lessons at Welford and Wickham enable pupils to ask big questions about living world faiths. They are critically engaging with biblical text which is helping them to have a depth of understanding in Christianity. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to look for evidence in the gospels. Year 3 pupils closely examine Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. Pupils relate biblical material to everyday life. For example, one pupil said that the story of Zacchaeus 'helped me learn about Jesus and be a friend to everyone'. Encountering people of different faiths and beliefs in their places of worship or in school supports their spiritual and cultural development very well. RE is well led, managed and resourced with assessment and monitoring in place. Staff say the RE subject leader is 'a great source of knowledge and is always there to help'.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good and relevant to daily life. For example, many pupils are deeply thoughtful and ask questions. One pupil asked, 'How do you let Jesus into your life?' when reflecting on Holman Hunt's painting of Jesus. Another depicted the growing of an earthy potato as an important symbol of the school's ethos. This showed respect for Christian values and the 'roots and wings which our headteacher always speaks about'. Lessons are inclusive and interactive, enabling all pupils, including the most vulnerable, to take on key roles and shine. However, the ways in which pupils are critically engaging with sacred text of a range of religions, not just biblical text, is currently limited.

Executive headteacher	Katie Dickens
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244