

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Coberley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address	Coberley, Cheltenham, GL53 9QZ		
Date of inspection	10 October 2019	Status of school	VC Primary
Diocese	Gloucester	URN	115617

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

School context

Coberley is a primary school with 70 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. The headteacher has been in post for 4 years. Ofsted found the school to be 'good' when it was inspected in 2017. Less than half of all pupils live in the catchment area.

The school's Christian vision

The school's values of Happiness, Perseverance, Community, Kindness and Creativity are encompassed with the desire to give "Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day". Voiced by Galatians 3:28 that "Everyone should be treated equally although we are all different." and that children are given every opportunity with the promise of, "Life in all its fullness." (John 10:10)

Key findings

- This is a good school because leaders have developed a clear vision which flows into every area of the school's work.
- The headteacher and his staff care passionately about every child and family. This has led to a curriculum that fulfils the school's vision for the children to be 'given every opportunity'.
- The whole school has a clear understanding of spiritual development. Consequently, the Trivium curriculum engages pupils in meaningful dialogue so that they have progressively deeper spiritual experiences as they move through the school.
- The close partnership with the church is much valued by all stakeholders. This is very evident during collective worship, which fully expresses the school's vision and values.
- Religious education (RE) is engaging and supports pupils very well so that they have a high degree of understanding across a wide range of ethical and spiritual issues.

Areas for development

- Actively seek ways in which the school's expertise as a church school can be used to lead and develop good practice in a wider context.
- Ensure that there is a formal self-evaluation process in place so that governors' monitoring of the school's Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE is robust and continuous.
- Further develop the curriculum, including in RE, so that it explicitly enables pupils to explore a wide range of diverse communities.

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

Coberley is a good church school, well on its way to becoming excellent. Since the appointment of the inspirational headteacher the school has worked hard to ensure that its distinctively Christian vision underpins every aspect of its work. This vision is understood by all stakeholders to be grounded in a clear theology. All staff understand how the vision drives everything they do as they live out the Christian values every day. Governors give many examples of how the vision drives the actions of the school. For example, the new football field is seen as a resource for the whole community not just for the school. Pupils behave very well and enjoy each other's company. Older pupils are assiduous in looking after younger ones. This is because the school's values are at the heart of many policies, particularly the behaviour policy. Pupils set the school rules annually. These clearly reflect their increasing understanding of the impact of the values on their daily lives. Kindness is at the heart of their actions both in class and at play. Everyone looks out for pupils who are displaying the five core values so that their actions can be rewarded in celebration assemblies. Everyone feels truly included in the life of the school, cared for and supported.

All pupils achieve well at Coberley because they make good progress from their starting points. The small class sizes and high staff numbers enable the school to specifically tailor the provision they offer. In this way leaders fulfil their vision of 'every child, every chance, every day'. Parents appreciate the individual care that their children receive. In many ways, children experience an idyllic childhood with den-building in the playground, weekly morning runs and a wide variety of visits and visitors. In this way, the school fulfils its promise of 'life in all its fullness'. These support the Coberley understanding of spirituality through exploring a sense of awe and wonder. Pupils understand their own spiritual journey because they are used to exploring difficult questions in depth. They are open to a sense of 'other'. This whole school understanding of spiritual development enhances the curriculum because it is based on the school vision of all being equals. The headteacher has led staff in developing a creative curriculum that encourages knowledge, debate and action. Based on the Trivium theory, the curriculum is adept at inspiring pupils to explore their thoughts and ideas in a safe place. However, pupils' understanding of diversity is limited. This is because the artists and role models chosen for exploration through the curriculum are generally male and white. As such, they do not reflect the demographic of the school or the wider world.

The school has a particularly close link with the local church and the Diocese, which benefits all. The wild-life garden in the churchyard, created and maintained by pupils, is a joy to the whole community. Clergy and lay members are frequent visitors, supporting the school at lunchtime and in collective worship. Governors are keen to build upon partnerships so that Coberley has an increasing capacity to share its innovative practice with others. Governors visit regularly and are adept at asking challenging questions. However, there is not a robust, formal system of monitoring the school's distinctively Christian character, collective worship or RE. Evaluations in these areas are not recorded which means that the impact of these visits is not sufficiently understood and then built upon.

Collective worship is a time when pupils and staff explore the vision and values and how they make a difference to people's lives. The newly appointed worship leaders are ambitious for their role. They are already adept at leading these times. They explain how they will be expected to plan and lead whole worship sessions as the year progresses. It is now a tradition that the older children plan and lead the Easter service in church, completely independently. This was an action point from the last inspection. The Anglican foundation of the school is explored during worship in the use of liturgical cloths and the lighting of three candles. Pupils have an age appropriate understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although the values are taught using both the new and old testaments pupils do not always understand the values to be set within a Christian context. They understand them as good moral values that are important for now and their future lives. Collective worship is very good at enhancing pupils' spiritual development. Key questions, referenced to the Bible story just explored, are asked at the end of their time together. Pupils are asked to put a counter in a jar to reflect their response. In this way, the effectiveness of pupils' understanding is evaluated. Prayer is understood by all to be an important part of both school and their own lives. They see prayer as 'a message to God' and understand that it can be useful for many purposes. 'It makes me feel safe' explained a Year 4 child. The prayer box in school is well-used and pupils are proud when their prayers are used during worship. The outside butterfly garden, is appreciated by all as a special place for reflection and prayer; developed in response to the previous inspection."

Collective worship very much expresses the school vision of all being equal. It is good at helping pupils to see the relevance of the values to their lives.

The school council and eco council are fierce warriors for the school in action. They have a key role in changes within school. A link with an English-speaking school in the Caribbean is beginning to help pupils understand the impact of their actions on far-away countries. The Eco-council has highlighted the need to reduce the amount of plastic in school and they are planning plastic-free days. The school council chooses the charitable works that pupils will support. Pupils see these as ways in which they can raise funds but are not yet motivated by a sense of injustice or inequality.

Pupils enjoy their RE lessons because they are encouraged to think deeply about difficult issues. It embraces the Trivium curriculum so that pupils are encouraged to learn the tenets of a range of faiths. Pupils understanding of Christianity is much more secure than in the other religions studied through the local syllabus. This is because the curriculum, designed to encourage the comparison of key beliefs across a range of religions, is in the early days of implementation. Pupils understand that it is important that they learn how other people worship 'because we need to treat everyone with respect'. Pupil experience of diversity is limited because there are not sufficient visits or visitors where pupils are enabled to explore different faiths and beliefs at first-hand.

Headteacher	Andrew Milner
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