

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Woodford Valley CE Primary Academy			
Address	Middle Woodford, Salisbury, Wilts SP4 6NR		
Date of inspection	08 February 2019	Status of school	Single academy inspected as VA. Woodford Valley CE Primary Academy Trust
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	138188

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	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Woodford Valley VA Academy is a primary school with 198 pupils on roll. The school has very low levels of religious and cultural diversity and 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 in line with national averages. Numbers have increased rapidly in recent years and the school is oversubscribed. Since the previous inspection, the well-established resource base for pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder has closed.

The school's Christian vision

Towards Christian life, learning and love.

'And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.' John 13: 34-35

Key findings

- The highly distinctive Christian vision and underpinning values drive the actions of the school and have a transforming impact on the lives of pupils and adults.
- The very rich and varied curriculum supports the development of pupils exceptionally well, allowing them to grow as socially aware, caring individuals with strong values upon which they are prepared to act.
- The extremely productive and purposeful partnership working with the local church, as seen in the church's valuable contribution to the 'Easter experience' and the contribution of the vicar and lay readers to collective worship, serves to strengthen the school's distinctive character.
- Collective worship is inspiring, integral to the life of the school and its value is clearly understood by everyone. It helps to develop pupils' spirituality.
- Pupils have a good biblical knowledge. Older pupils have developed the skill to ask and answer challenging questions of faith. Younger pupils have been given less opportunity to develop this.

Areas for development

- Extend the opportunity for younger pupils to explore questions of meaning so that their ability to explain and understand the nature of faith deepens.
- Develop teachers' confidence in teaching about world faiths and so help pupils deepen their own knowledge and understanding.

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

The well-established Christian vision, strongly guided by biblical narrative, directs the school's every action. As one parent said, 'The vision is like the skin of the school and the values are its organs.' Seeking to ensure 'Christian love, learning and life' was central to a curriculum review. This had as its aim that all pupils would flourish and develop their knowledge and character within a strongly Christian environment. The school has been highly successful in this. All associated with the school know the vision, the theology behind it and the values associated with it. Pupils and adults know its relevance to their lives and are united in their responses to it. Pupils have a strongly developed social conscience and sense of compassion and seek to help others less fortunate than themselves by, for example, toilet twinning with a village in Africa. They openly equate this to showing Christian love. Pupil mission ambassadors work on fundraising and take an active part exemplified by actions such as helping to pack food for the Trussell Trust or writing letters about risks posed by pollution. The pupils speak fluently of injustice and the need for its eradication. The school site is used imaginatively to allow pupils to appreciate the wonders of nature and hence develop their spirituality beyond collective worship. Nature walks, forest school and holding worship outside allow pupils to reflect on God's creation. The impact of the vision on pupils is demonstrated through their resilience, perseverance and exemplary behaviour. They confidently share their thoughts and opinions, clearly appreciate the need for tolerance and value both diversity and difference. Pupils support one another very well. This is evident through buddying of older and younger pupils, the use of friendship benches and an understanding that forgiveness is central to Christian life. Respect and dignity are deeply embedded. The school's work in encouraging good mental health has been recognised as a model by the Department for Education.

Interesting teaching, the nurturing and caring culture and support for disadvantaged pupils in overcoming challenges have ensured pupils make strong progress, especially in Reception and Key Stage 1. Standards of attainment are above the national average. In 2018 there was a dip in outcomes at Key Stage 2, which is currently being addressed.

The headteacher, senior team, staff and governors work with total commitment to promote the vision. They refer to the biblical narrative frequently. It underpins their practice, for example, in policy development and school development planning. The governors know the school well and monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the vision and the church school ethos thoroughly and rigorously. When faced with a difficult ethical decision over the closure of the well-loved resource base, they considered the impact on the vision. They ensured the pupils affected were well catered for. Their care of all vulnerable pupils is seen in the provision of riding for children and the employment of additional staff in food technology. Both allow pupils to develop confidence and a sense of success to foster their social development. These bold curriculum decisions show that leaders remain totally adamant that this must be an inclusive school. Partnership working is strong, and the school has excellent links with other schools in its cluster, with the diocese and the local church. It has provided effective support to another academy.

Adults within the school flourish. All have opportunities for professional development and two senior leaders have become headteachers of church schools. Staff universally feel valued by the headteacher. They appreciate the support they are given and the care taken over their well-being. Parents are highly supportive of the school and commend its vision.

Collective worship is known by the pupils and staff as very important. It is inclusive and engaging. Pupils readily talk of the impact it has on their everyday lives because of the themes and values covered. Staff appreciate it as a time of stillness and reflection and the sense it gives of all being part of a Christian community. The use of candles, Christian greetings, music, bible stories, prayer and hymns are regarded by pupils as part of talking to God. Worship is totally invitational and those not wishing to join in prayer respect the views of others. A pupil prayer group meets regularly to pray for the school and the world, and a centrally located prayer chair is well used. Each class has a reflective space, which is utilised creatively. A worship plan, drawn up by the headteacher and developed by the pupils, ensures continuity and progression within the worship themes. Pupils' engagement is high, with frequent pupil-led worship which develops their spirituality well. Pupils play a central role in evaluation of worship. External visitors, for example lay preachers and visitors from the local Baptist church, bring different traditions of worship and give further enrichment to Christian belief and practice. The support of the local church and vicar enhances the spiritual life of the school. Pupils see the adjoining parish church as an extension of the school. Events such as

the Easter experience reinforce the fact that the school is a worshipping part of the parish. The termly celebration of the Eucharist, often in the open air, and the opportunity to choose to be confirmed in a highly personalised service in the vicarage garden raises pupils' understanding of Christian life.

Pupils enjoy religious education (RE). It is regarded as a highly important subject. Planning is thorough and the school's use of Understanding Christianity, along with the Agreed Syllabus, ensures all pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories and their meaning. Older pupils, through RE and their Philosophy for Children lessons, explore theological ideas, concepts and questions of meaning. However, younger pupils have less chance to debate questions of faith and meaning. Teaching about other religions is part of the curriculum. Currently, staff have less confidence in teaching these. The subject leader is committed and enthusiastic. She is new in post and is being supported by a more experienced member of staff.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Teaching and learning in RE is good overall. Teachers employ a range of strategies to engage pupils, such as drama, art and the use of music. In one class, pupils were exploring the concept of the Trinity by making models in dough. They were busily discussing the relationship between the parts and even those who found learning more challenging made good progress. RE is regularly monitored by the RE leader along with the headteacher and the governors who frequently join lessons. The school has recently introduced a new system of assessment. Internal school moderation has taken place but as yet there has been none with other schools. Assessment indicates that pupils are making good progress, and this was seen in the lessons observed.

Headteacher

Rebecca Carson

Inspector's name and number

Marcia Headon 761