

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

### Semley Church of England Primary school.

<b>Address</b>	Semley, Shaftsbury, Dorset.		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	03 May 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	VA primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Salisbury	<b>URN</b>	126439

<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>Good</b>

#### School context

Semley is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school with 119 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 average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities is below national averages. The school serves a predominantly rural community and a significant number of pupils live outside of the designated catchment area. The headteacher has been in post for five years.

#### The school's Christian vision

Our vision for Semley school is to create a nurturing and inspiring environment in which to live, 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Our Christian ethos underpins our values of respect, aspiration, adventure and wonder in supporting children to grow and flourish in preparation for life's journey.

#### Key findings

- The strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher, supported by a team of committed staff and governors, is ensuring that the school's Christian vision is influential in all decision making.
- The school's vision, enriched by deeply embedded core Christian values, allows pupils to grow and flourish within a loving and respectful Christian community.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) contribute significantly in deepening pupils' understanding of the school's Christian values and their impact on daily life.
- Pupils are highly engaged in their learning and Semley's broad and exciting curriculum strongly supports spiritual development.

#### Areas for development

- Enable pupils to have an even greater role in worship organisation so their voice increasingly shapes worship planning and delivery.
- Governors should introduce increased formality to their current monitoring systems so the information gathered accurately guides future church school development.
- To support pupils with increased opportunities for reflection to enable deeper understanding of personal prayer.

## **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**

Semley's established Christian vision has a positive impact on the school, firmly underpinning leaders' decision making. A tangible feeling of mutual respect and encouragement permeates the school. A community consultation has resulted in the vision's wording being simplified to, 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). This encapsulates the vision's aim of educating all aspects of pupil development through a broad and exciting curriculum.

To fulfil this vision teachers are encouraged to introduce new ideas and practices. An example can be seen in the youngest class where adults and pupils remove their shoes. This practice, based on educational research, has created a particularly peaceful, calm and nurturing learning atmosphere. Semley's vision is positively supporting pupils' spiritual development. A recent visitor from the UK Space Agency commented, 'The children were extremely knowledgeable and very engaged in their learning, asking very insightful questions.' A shared adult understanding of spirituality allows planned and unplanned special moments to be fully appreciated. Pupils are keen to share these special moments. When a 1.5 metre model of the London Eye, made by the pupils, was positioned by the window facing the church, a pupil stated, 'Look, this circle is like God's never-ending love; when you look through it the church is at its centre.'

High standards of pupil behaviour are clearly evident, with respect and politeness particularly noticeable. Pupils devise their own 'Behaviour Charters' showing they have a very thorough understanding of why certain behaviours are acceptable or unacceptable. Vulnerable pupils benefit from learning within this environment where excellent examples of social and learning behaviour surround them. Numerous comments have been received from visitors to the school, such as, 'All the children were beautifully behaved – it was a pleasure to be here.'

Core Christian values of respect, aspiration, adventure and wonder underpin the school's vision. These values link with the school's involvement in the Rights Respecting Schools programme, positively impacting on pupils' academic and social development. Pupils can explain how Christian values support them. For example, they say 'aspiration' is something you have to work hard for; just wanting it is not enough. Pupils know that Christian values apply to life outside of school as well as during the school day. Responsibilities held by older children are helping them to develop effective leadership skills.

'Open The Book' worships organised by church members are greatly enjoyed by the pupils. They successfully increase pupil knowledge of Bible stories and the lessons within them. An 'Experience Easter' day organised by church members gave pupils an appreciation of why Easter is such an important time for Christians. Activities included key events during Holy Week that link to church practice today, such as the Eucharist. The local clergy regularly work within the school. The curate has been extremely valued by staff for his support and guidance during the introduction of the Understanding Christianity RE resource. Consultation and communication with the parent community has resulted in high levels of support and engagement. Parents say they appreciate the approachability of school staff, saying issues are dealt with sensitively and promptly. The school recognises and values the importance of parent partnerships in living out its Christian vision.

Governance includes regular monitoring, support and challenge. Staff and pupil interviews allow governors to gain a full perspective of the school's work, including pupil and staff wellbeing. However, an increased level of formality to monitoring systems would allow information gathered to inform future church school development more accurately. School leaders actively engage with the diocese for professional development and this partnership supports governors and staff in their roles.

Pupils feel comfortable when sharing ideas because they know they will be respectfully listened to. They know there are differing views when responding to questions. However, they also know each viewpoint is valid, even if they don't personally agree. In keeping with the school's Christian vision, this respectful learning atmosphere allows each pupil to be comfortable within their own unique individuality. Any barriers to learning are therefore minimised.

Semley's curriculum, combined with good standards of teaching, has led to pupils achieving well from their individual starting points. Academic results reach national standards for pupils of similar ages. Special learning needs are supported with finely tuned individual interventions. Pupils who have struggled in previous school settings are welcomed into the school and are now enjoying the success that Semley's learning environment allows them to experience.

Pupils clearly link Jesus' teaching and Christian values. They support charitable causes involving inequality and injustice. Pupil-initiated acts, such as wanting to make Christmas cards for children spending Christmas in hospital, demonstrate care and love for others.

The Christian vision and values form an integral part of school collective worship, which is planned around the Christian year with special services taking place within the church. Worship is invitational and inclusive. Time is given for reflection and prayer, allowing pupils to think more deeply about worship themes and their impact on daily life. A range of leaders give pupils a rich experience of worship styles. Pupils keenly share their views of worship and this influences future provision. An even greater role in worship organisation, planning and delivery would increase pupil ownership even further. Worship is also a time for pupils' achievements to be recognised and celebrated. For example, a letter of congratulations was sent to the school from the local May Day celebration organiser. The letter, which was read as part of worship, praised a pupil not only for her performance but also for how she supported younger children on the day. This clearly recognises the importance the school places on pupils living 'life in all its fullness' in all aspects of their lives. There is a central reflective space within the school, however, increased opportunities for reflection would enable deeper understanding of personal prayer.

Good teaching in RE helps pupils to understand cultural differences and diversity. They enjoy learning about a variety of world faiths and know that Christianity is followed across the world. RE is well planned by the subject leader and teachers feel supported in their teaching. Assessment systems effectively support future planning.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good.**

Good standards are evident in pupils' RE books with a balance between learning about religion and from religion. Pupils are exploring theological concepts, supported by high quality schemes of work. Pupils give their independent ideas around the topics being studied and this is supporting their understanding. Assessment systems allow leaders and teachers to support and challenge learning effectively including the identification of areas that may need further exploration. Pupils are able to discuss themes with each other openly and confidently. Questioning by teachers encourages pupils to think deeper so they can justify their individual responses. Pupils know and accept that there are differing opinions, respecting the views of pupils who come to different conclusions. Leaders support members of staff with their teaching. Professional development takes place within school and through external partnerships. Statutory requirements for RE are met.

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