

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holt Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address	The Gravel, Holt, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 6RA		
Date of inspection	6 December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	126329

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

Holt is a primary school with 167 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. 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 in line with national averages. The school has strong links with both the local Anglican and United Reformed Church.

The school's Christian vision

'Rooted and Established in Love.' Ephesians 3:17

Growing a love of learning, of each other, of our faith, of our community and of the world around us.

We provide a rich and creative curriculum within the context of Christian values and beliefs, which will foster within each child a lifelong love of learning. We recognise each child as unique in the eyes of God and strive to ensure that within our care they realise their full potential. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promote and embed key Christian values through the life and work of our school community.

Key findings

- The vision is influential in shaping the school's strategic direction and daily life. Christian values have a high profile, woven across all aspects of the curriculum.
- Big questions in religious education (RE) stimulate deep discussions where pupils are confident to share and refine their ideas. However, evaluations in RE lack rigour to lead to ongoing improvements.
- Pupils are nurtured to develop high aspirations and belief in their own ability. This enables all pupils to flourish. However, the provision for spirituality is not fully developed.
- Leaders are passionate about the work of this Church school. There is an ongoing commitment to offer the best possible education for all and providing opportunities to develop all pupils' talents.
- Pupils are engaged in worship led by a number of leaders who bring a variety of approaches. Planning is detailed and progressively develops pupils' understanding of Christian values.

Areas for development

- Establish an agreed definition of spirituality and identify progressive opportunities for reflection and spiritual development which enable pupils to express their ideas in a variety of creative ways.
- Enable pupils to express their ideas and learning from across the curriculum by creatively leading collective worship, so they feel that they have greater ownership.
- Refine evaluations by governors, pupils and staff in RE and collective worship, creating greater rigour which consistently informs improvements.

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 vision is fundamental to the school's life and development, shaping relationships and the rich sense of community. The vision informs the school's strategic direction so that the needs of all pupils, particularly those that are vulnerable, are effectively met. Pupils talk confidently about how the vision promotes a love of learning, others and God's creation, which reflects their rural setting. Leaders passionately articulate the theological principles underpinning the vision. A staff member summarised this; 'God loves us, so we show this love to others.' Leaders talk about each pupil being precious to God as they are wonderfully made. Staff see it as their mission to enable pupils to achieve their God-given gifts.

The importance of relationships reflects the vision. Pupils have a highly-developed understanding of respect for everyone. Staff live out the Christian values in their daily relationships with pupils and families. Pupils talk of feeling special. Older buddies play a major role in supporting younger peers, a relationship that goes beyond the school. Pupils refer to displays explaining what compassion can look like in everyday situations. They have a high degree of empathy for others. They challenge stereotypes and injustices, explaining their ideas. The importance of forgiveness, informed by biblical examples, is well understood. Older pupils use restorative justice approaches to resolve minor disputes.

The language of being the best that you can be and successful is well-established across learning. Staff consistently celebrate pupils' achievements which raises their self-belief. Pupils' aspirations are raised through interviewing adults from different careers who explain how they have overcome barriers to be successful. This reinforces the skills and knowledge pupils need for later life, so they appreciate the significance of learning. Pupils' self-esteem is enhanced through a wide range of opportunities, where talents are developed so they 'shine'. A fine example, is in sport, where all pupils represent the school. The language of Christian values is woven across all curriculum areas and pupils can explain which values enhance their learning. Vulnerable pupils are effectively supported by a skilled team who raise pupils' emotional and social development. Staff know pupils really well which leads to highly individualised approaches. Families celebrate the support they receive and the difference this has made. Pupils' progress and attainment is consistently good, and often above, national expectations. Vulnerable pupils make similar progress to their peers and develop positive attitudes.

The vision informs the school's partnerships, so they enrich the experiences pupils have and enable them to learn from others. Strong relationships with the local Anglican and United Reformed churches enrich the quality and diversity of worship. Church ministers are frequent visitors who support staff and play a major role in governance. Specialist lead teachers make significant contributions to the Trowbridge Area Schools Collaborative through sharing expertise in sport and science. The school has benefitted by leaders from the collaborative undertaking joint monitoring which has extended self-evaluation strategies. A well-established link with a school in Juba in South Sudan has deepened pupils' understanding of diversity and disadvantage. Pupils talk about the different culture and lifestyles. This has inspired some pupils to take action and raise funds paying for two pupils to attend their school in Juba. This reflects the school's vision so these pupils can develop a love of learning. Pupils are confident advocates for change.

Pupils welcome and appreciate the opportunities to take leadership responsibilities. This enhances their love of learning, reflected in the vision. A fine example is the Eco team, who have been challenged by curriculum experiences on the use of plastic, endangered animals and the exploitation of the natural world. They created a school action plan to reduce waste, encouraging all to take action. Pupils understand that reflection is a key learning skill and value opportunities to think about learning and ideas which challenge them. However, there is no agreed understanding of spirituality from which staff work, nor are opportunities identified in planning.

Pupils are enthusiastic about wrestling with philosophical and theological ideas which are part of big questions posed in RE. They are confident to reason through their thinking, listen to others and shape their beliefs. Pupils use starter sentences which deepen their thinking. They see this as a safe place to share ideas, knowing everyone's thoughts are important. Pupils see that Christianity has a relevance for their developing lives and thinking. They have a well-developed understanding of diversity through exploring different world faiths. Visits to a range of

places of worship help them to understand the importance of faiths and worship for others. Pupils and families of different faiths lead lessons which enrich pupils' respect. At present pupils' understanding of key Christian concepts are at an early stage of development. Pupils' self-assessment enable them to consider what they have learned and where they might do better. Assessment strategies are secure with staff judgements being moderated. Evaluations are regularly undertaken by governors. However, they have lacked clear focus and rigour to lead to further improvements.

Collective worship is shaped by the vision. Detailed planning draws upon biblical teaching enabling pupils to understand what loving others and God's world looks like in daily life. Various aspects of Christian values are progressively explored and pupils have time to consider how they can respond. Pupils feel that worship is a valuable part of the day, a time to be calm and come together. They use different types of prayer, inspired by their reflections on the vision. Pupils feel that prayer helps them to be calm and share their problems. At present only the very oldest pupils have the opportunity to plan and lead worship. Younger pupils do not feel they can fully contribute. Pupils talk in some depth about Christian festivals and their significance for Christians. They talk about the Eucharist and some of its symbols. They make thoughtful links to Easter and how this is a special time for Christians. Pupils have an understanding of the trinitarian nature of God. Whilst evaluations have been ongoing, they have lacked rigour and not informed further development.

Leaders are passionate and dedicated to the work of this Church school, one that is built around an understanding of God's love for all. They have created this warm caring community where all feel valued and special. A committed cohesive staff team work extremely well together and share this vision. Middle leaders have been carefully nurtured, developing their leadership potential. All staff feel they have been enabled to flourish. Governors provide a good degree of support working closely with the staff. The annual monitoring and evaluation plans identify which areas to evaluate, reflecting priorities.

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