

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christ Church Church of England VC Primary School, Cressage	
Address	Sheinton Road, Cressage, Shrewsbury, SY5 6DH

School vision
<p style="text-align: center;">‘Preparing, Sowing, Growing’</p> <p>Our vision is rooted in the Parable of the Mustard Seed. (Matthew 13: 31-32): A mustard seed ...’is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that birds come and perch in its branches.’</p> <p>This is a picture of God’s Kingdom and our School: the transforming power of Christian life to impact individuals and through their changed lives, build community.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A deep understanding of the needs of the community clearly underpins the school’s distinctively Christian vision. It is interwoven through all aspects of school life, shaping leaders’ decision making, at all levels. • Inspired by the vision, leaders have created an enriched and inclusive learning environment. Barriers are removed as provision is tailored to meet the individual needs of pupils. • Worship is skilfully planned. Invitational, inclusive and inspirational worship that engages and enthuses those taking part is the outcome. • Overwhelming Christian love, that grows from the seed of compassion, shapes the caring relationships at Christ Church. Staff embrace the community, fostering a culture of support and trust. This enables pupils and adults to develop a strong sense of wellbeing. • Leaders have established a clear understanding of spirituality, which is shared by adults and pupils. As an expression of the school’s vision, it deepens spiritual flourishing throughout the community.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen opportunities for pupils to independently challenge injustice. This is to empower them to be positive agents of change. • Secure pupils’ prior learning experiences in religious education (RE). This is to ensure learning is retained over time.
Inspection findings
<p>A warm, enthusiastic welcome greets the families at this loving school each morning. This ensures pupils are seen and cherished, fostering a positive start to their day. Inspirational leadership has ensured that a deeply Christian vision is embedded at Christ Church. The words from Matthew 14, rooted in the mustard seed, supports this small rural community to live out the vision. Pupils are inspired to grow as learners and readily enthuse about their school. Consequently, pupils and adults passionately talk about the impact of the vision on them personally. The school’s partnerships with local churches, the diocese and the community are strong. It embodies how community is at the</p>

heart of this Church school. Governors have robust evaluation processes in place, giving them deep insights into the way the vision impacts on pupils and adults. Accurately identifying areas for improvement is the result. The decision to offer toddler and nursery provision to ‘prepare and sow’ children to grow at Christ Church, demonstrates this. Consequently, the distinctively Christian work of the school has enabled long term change for the community.

Sowing the seeds of rich and engaging learning experiences, through the values based curriculum, drives the school’s inclusive provision. Leaders ensure pupils are supported to expand their world view and understanding of diversity through careful lesson planning. This is enhanced by the school’s visual historical timeline and enriched through international partnerships, visits and visitors to school. An understanding of the wider world in which pupils live is the outcome. As one pupil puts it, ‘It is so I can understand and talk to people when I go to college.’ Staff know their pupils well. Provision is tailored to meet individual needs to ensure barriers to learning are removed. This is sustained through the breadth of training staff receive. Leaders are committed to ensuring pupils develop spiritually. The school’s values are explicitly planned for across subjects to foster an understanding of self, others and the beauty beyond. The ‘celebration tree’ celebrates when staff see values demonstrated. It recognises pupils’ unique contributions to others in the community. Parents and carers appreciate how the values impact on their children’s thinking and questioning. They say being included in the school’s Christian values, through online learning, has been transformational for their families. Outdoor experiences support bespoke learning opportunities, as well as pupils’ spiritual development. Pupils and staff give examples of how the outdoors helps them to connect with themselves, nature and God. Staff say, ‘No one is embarrassed to hug a tree.’ They value these connections. As such, adults and pupils have a deep understanding of where their personal spiritual growth can be enhanced. Thus, significantly contributing to spiritual flourishing. A breadth of extra-curricular activities are offered to further develop pupils’ personal talents and interests. Financial barriers are removed to ensure access for all. This is intrinsic to the school’s vision to grow pupils’ potential and aspirations, clearly reflecting the school’s Christian vision. As a result, the ambitious and inclusive Christian education enables pupils and adults to flourish.

Vibrant, inspirational worship is skilfully planned to ensure it is inclusive. It helps pupils understand what the vision and values mean to them. An individualised approach is offered through a variety of ways. These include, different worship leaders, a range of environments and a breadth of multisensory activities. This has a profound impact on the engagement of pupils. Opportunities for calm, reflection and prayer permeate the daily act of worship, fostering a deep sense of spirituality. These allow time and space to consider the Christian messages and to make spiritual connections. Pupils and staff value the variety of outdoor quiet areas. They appreciate the opportunity it gives them, during breaktimes, to pray, reflect and feel calm. Engagement with local church services and events led by the diocese such as, ‘school ventures’ and the ‘prayer project’, enriches the worship life of the school. Adults and pupils express how much they enjoy these experiences. Regular monitoring and evaluation gives leaders and pupils a clear understanding of how effectively worship enriches the community. This ensures the school’s spiritual life is sustained.

Christian love is at the centre of the caring and trusting relationships at Christ Church. Unwavering in their dedication to prioritise wellbeing, leaders, including governors, ensure staff are nurtured personally and professionally. The school enhances this through their programme that supports emotional health, as well as widening opportunities for accredited qualifications. This has a powerful effect, creating a staff team who flourish because leaders care deeply about their individual wellbeing. Consequently, staff are united in knowing that they are valued and loved. Parents and carers say that school ‘nips things in the bud’ with empathy and understanding. They are in unanimous agreement that teachers care for each individual child. As a consequence, families cherish the excellent relationships the school provides. Older pupils care for younger ones and are kind towards one another. Leaders ensure the Christian ethos is embedded through the behaviour

policy. This is reflected in the way pupils resolve any disagreements through forgiveness. Therefore, the culture of support and trust has enabled the school's Christian life to transform and change lives. As such, the community has a strong sense of togetherness and wellbeing.

The school's vision creates a rich culture of justice and responsibility. Pupils from Year 1 upwards are invited to become a member of one of the five school councils. Leaders have devised the councils to strengthen pupils' sense of responsibility. This enhances the equitable nature of the school. Opportunities for developing their understanding around morally complex issues are woven through the curriculum. These include issues such as, plastics in oceans and equality in education. Pupils share their ideas with the wider community and positively impact as change makers, through fundraising and accredited awards. These activities empower pupils to make a difference. However, occasions for them to independently make ethical choices, influencing meaningful changes are underdeveloped.

RE is well-planned and effectively balanced, meeting the statutory expectations of a Church school. 'Big questions' encourage pupils to reflect on their beliefs and on the beliefs of others. This stimulates critical thinking and supports spiritual flourishing during RE. A range of faiths and worldviews are covered in the curriculum, which pupils are keen to discuss. However, a deeper understanding of major religions and worldviews is not embedded. Visits to various places of worship, as well as the church in Much Wenlock enhance and enrich pupils' experiences. To increase staff confidence, leaders ensure they access a range of training. Effective monitoring and evaluation means an accurate understanding of the provision and of the next steps.

The inspection findings indicate that Christ Church Church of England VC Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	19 June 2024	URN	123471
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	128
Diocese	Hereford		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Tracey Cansdale		
Chair	Louise Wagstaff		
Inspector	Beverley Roberts	No.	2122