

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

<b>Witley Church of England Infant School</b>			
Address	Church Lane, Witley, Godalming, Surrey, GU8 5PN		
Date of inspection	14 January 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Infant
Diocese	Guildford	URN	125159

<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>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Additional Judgement</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Witley is an infant school with 82 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 well below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. During the period of the inspection, the headteacher was absent and the school was led by the acting headteacher.

### The school's Christian vision

Our small Christian school nurtures and inspires children as they take their first steps on the journey of lifelong learning. Collective worship and prayer are integral elements of our school day.

'Start the children off on the way they should go and even when they are old, they will not turn from it' (Proverbs 22:6).

### Key findings

- Witley has a warm and inclusive ethos and the pupils are keen to come to school. Their behaviour and their attitudes to learning are positive.
- Lack of an aspirational and theologically grounded vision limits the drive for planning and developing the school's Christian distinctiveness. Core values effectively support learning and moral development, although pupils are often unable to understand them in terms of the Christian narrative.
- Governance is committed and very supportive, but there is a lack of a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation for encouraging and deepening Christian distinctiveness.
- The partnership between school and parish church is productive and mutually beneficial to all concerned.
- Collective worship is inclusive and forms a very important aspect of school life. In line with the vision statement, prayer is an important and established part of each school day and contributes well to pupils' spiritual development..
- Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) and the subject is an overall strength of the school.

### Areas for development

- Review the Christian vision to ensure that it is fully embedded in context and theological understanding, and can effectively drive the school's Christian character.
- Deepen understanding of the Christian values by ensuring that all pupils can link them to the Christian/biblical narrative.
- Provide a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation in order to improve forward planning for Christian distinctiveness.

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

Witley is a small rural school, serving a village community and its surrounding area. The school is a warm and caring place where everyone feels safe, valued and included. The school is an attractive learning environment, and outside learning is well-provided for. Parents are very supportive of the school, justifiably describing it as nurturing, happy and welcoming.

The school's Christian vision has a strong focus on nurture, as a basis for encouraging and inspiring lifelong learning. This is underpinned by a verse from the biblical wisdom literature (Proverbs). Nevertheless, the vision statement presents as more of a description than an aspiration, lacking the necessary drive to look outwards to others and upwards to faith and belief. It is not specifically rooted in the local context and lacks a clear and coherent theological underpinning. Aims have been specified in order to 'fulfil our vision', although these do not identify any aspects of Christian distinctiveness. A set of core values underpins the life of the school. These are frequently and successfully called upon in terms of learning and moral development. However, pupils are often unable to relate them to the Christian/biblical narrative. Equally, they are unaware of there being a vision.

Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is a notable strength, with consideration and respect being the watchwords of practice. Relationships are supported through the school's positive approach to the wellbeing and mental health of all. Linked to the school's positive ethos, attendance is above national averages and there have been no exclusions in recent times. Pupils have constructive attitudes to their learning and to that of others. The school's values have a positive effect in determining pupils' moral development and character formation. Teachers ensure that academic needs are carefully identified and, where necessary, appropriate interventions implemented. The proportion of pupils achieving expected standards is above national averages. The proportions achieving at greater depth is nearer to the national averages overall. Currently the improvement of outcomes for higher achievers is a school priority. A further priority concerns the relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils. Here the changes made, and the attention given, is demonstrating positive learning outcomes.

The curriculum offers a carefully-chosen breadth of activities. These enable pupils to achieve well across a range of experience. This includes opportunities to address some appropriately challenging and meaningful questions, especially through using the established approach of philosophy for children (P4C). The school helpfully addresses pupils' growing understanding of diversity. They encounter different cultures and viewpoints through, for example, their work in supporting local and international charities. However, when it comes to developing a global awareness, their age-appropriate understanding as to how they can make a difference is limited. Many have not grasped the cultural richness and possibilities of peoples who are living in the majority (developing) world. This results in some tendency to lean towards too negative a viewpoint that is focused primarily on economic dependency. The newly appointed pupil eco-warriors have made a good start in beginning to consider how they can improve the school's environmental footprint. Nevertheless, they have not yet developed a sense of a deeper purpose that could be driven through a compelling Christian vision.

Governors are very committed and provide a generous amount of time and energy. They know many aspects of their school well and offer invaluable support and a good sense of general strategic direction. However, there is not a sufficiently robust and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating aspects of Christian distinctiveness, an area for improvement at the previous inspection. While the school's three-year development plan, now at the mid-point of the cycle, identifies Christian distinctiveness as a priority, there are no precise and practical 'next steps' outlined in the school's self-evaluation. Accordingly this limits possibilities in the forward planning when it comes to consideration of the school's Christian character. There is a particularly close and very productive partnership with the local parish church. Clergy take an active part in the life of the school, including governance and leading collective worship. There is a close relationship with the diocese and members of staff attend regular updates and take an active part in discussions. Recently this has encompassed moderation of pupils' work and outcomes in RE

As referenced in the vision, collective worship is inclusive and forms a very important aspect of school life. The worship, known as assemblies, focuses on showing reverence to God, affirming others and learning about faith.

Planning demonstrates the regular use of the Bible and the imaginative contribution from groups such as Open the Book. Pupils help organise assemblies and lead prayers, but their role in evaluation and planning, is not as well-developed; pupil planning was an area for improvement from the previous inspection. Personal spirituality, also an area for improvement at the previous inspection, is very important to pupils and adults and provision and opportunities have been successfully developed. Physical spaces for spiritual reflection have been established, such as that featuring a prayer tree expressing the school's values, set within a common area of the school. Forest School teaches skills associated with co-operation, being part of a team, looking and wondering at God's creation. In line with the vision, prayer is an important and spiritually beneficial part of each day for everyone. Pupils say that prayer is about 'talking to God'. They offer grace before lunch and often pray at the end of the school day. Governors' meetings begin with prayer.

RE occupies an appropriate amount of time within the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the work they are given and their learning journey is thoughtfully captured in books and journals. The subject is well-led and subject-specific expertise is shared, to good effect, among all members of staff. Using the Locally Agreed Syllabus as a basis for planning, the school meets the recommendations of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Accurate assessments help teachers gauge pupil progress and act as a basis for helpful feedback. 'Pause days', for example at Easter time, give opportunities for more reflection and developing deeper understanding. Pupils learn about Judaism and Islam and have benefitted from visitors into school who are associated these religions. In some instances, the more able pupils do not get enough challenge through questioning and task design.

In summary, Witley has many notable strengths; especially in terms of its caring and nurturing ethos. Staff and governors work hard to help pupils so that all can succeed. However, it has not been sufficiently effective in considering how the school's Christian vision can drive Christian distinctiveness. This accordingly affects the overall grade of this denominational inspection. Collective worship and RE meets statutory requirements.

Headteacher	Kate Turner
Inspector's name and number	Dr Trevor Walker 908