

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sutton Benger Church of England Primary School

Address	Chestnut Road, Sutton Benger, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 4RP		
Date of inspection	27/06/2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided
Diocese	Bristol	URN	126486
Overall Judgement			Grade Requires Improvement
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?			
Additional Judgements			
The impact of collective worship		Grade	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)		Grade	Requires Improvement

School context

Sutton Benger is a primary school with 163 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 was graded Requires Improvement by Ofsted in February 2019. Since January, the headteacher of a neighbouring church school has been seconded as executive headteacher. The school is currently consulting to join the Diocese of Bristol Multi-Academy Trust.

The school's Christian vision

Together, as one family, we **Strive** for faith, love and peace (2 Timothy 2:22) **Believe** in the values of God and **Succeed** with grace
All are inspired to fulfil their aspirations through the twelve Christian values of forgiveness, trust, thankfulness, justice, service, truthfulness, perseverance, friendship, respect, generosity, compassion and courage.

Key findings

- The school's new vision and values are enhancing pupils' personal development and well-being but as yet are not evident on pupils' achievement.
- The school's self-evaluation process has not been effective over the last few years thereby reducing the impact of the school's Christian character.
- Religious education (RE) has not been regarded as a core subject and as a result, pupils' progress is below expectations and the vision is not enabling them to flourish.
- Very supportive partnerships with the church community are contributing much to the life of the school, including the leadership of worship and opportunities for pupils to participate in the benefice choir.

Areas for development

- Embed a rigorous self-evaluation process, involving the whole school community, to identify the difference the school's vision has on pupils' learning.
- Raise the profile of RE to that of the other core subjects in order to increase pupils' achievement and deepen their understanding of the distinctive Christian vision.
- Increase the profile of the vision and values so as to create a greater link with their learning strategies and a stronger culture of aspiration.

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

Sutton Benger's new vision has recently been developed by effectively linking its long established motto Strive, Believe, Succeed with biblical teaching. The motto is well known by the whole school community because the three words begin with the same initials as the school. However, the biblical principles are not readily articulated by school leaders and are understood by pupils in a different context to the biblical meaning. Instability of school leaders since the last inspection has resulted in a lack of direction for the school's Christian character. The executive headteacher and interim headteacher have now initiated changes with beneficial outcomes. Leaders have ensured that pupils are now involved in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship. This was an area for development from the last inspection. As a result, collective worship has been prioritised and its quality maintained. However, the role of RE in the life of the school has not been prioritised until recently and as a result, pupils' attainment has fallen. This is the result of a weak self-evaluation process and subsequent lack of challenge by governors.

The school has not made full use of training opportunities from the diocese. Therefore, the school has not moved forward over the recent period, in-line with recent developments in church school education. The school's partnership with the local church community is strong as are links with local church schools. Both partnerships clearly benefit the life of the school in a variety of ways, such as by sharing good practice. School church link meetings are regularly held which bring mutual benefits. These include the benefice choir club led by a professional organist, in which many pupils from the school participate.

The school's creative curriculum is effective in reflecting its Christian vision. The broad and relevant curriculum engages pupils in their learning. Themes are exciting and visits and visitors very well linked to enhance learning experiences. Trips, such as to the nearby Living Rainforest connected with the theme of the Amazon, enthuse pupils. As a result, pupils are encouraged to think about global and ethical issues, such as the deforestation of the rainforest in Brazil. This is deepening pupils' understanding of the exploitation of the natural world. Staff have a shared understanding of spiritual development. This is enabling pupils to question and explore ideas which arise across the curriculum. However, progress in the core subjects of reading is well below, but writing is below and mathematics in line with national averages.

The new vision promotes aspiration by raising pupils' self-belief and 'faith in yourself'. However, learning strategies do not sufficiently promote Christian values such as perseverance and so do not address pupils' underachievement. Big questions are used effectively across the curriculum to encourage pupils to think deeply and develop their own ideas. Within these discussions pupils are able to disagree well and accept and respect contradictory viewpoints. This offers opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of disadvantage and deprivation. The school's sponsorship of a boy in Nepal enables pupils to reflect on the life of another child growing up in a different country and culture. Pupils are motivated by compassion and a strong desire to help the child who is regarded as part of their community. The vision promotes values of inclusion and equality stressed in the words 'together as one family'. Activities to promote diversity and difference across the curriculum are very effective in developing pupils' open, accepting attitudes.

The first words of the vision 'together as a family' create a strong sense of community. Older pupils recognise that they are now playing a greater role as play leaders at playtimes and this is having a good impact. Relationships throughout the school are warm and supportive. Any disagreements between pupils are resolved in a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness. Staff are supportive of one another and feel valued by school leaders. They know that members of the church communities pray for them and the school which has a beneficial effect on their well-being and mental health.

Collective worship is central to daily life. Christian teaching, often from Bible stories reflect the school's vision and values. For instance, pupils understand that the value of truthfulness, based on one of the parables, shows them how to lead a happy and fulfilling life. Pupils recognise that worship provides important messages about their behaviour and attitudes. They talk of how the value of thankfulness enables them to appreciate all the advantages they have in life and inspires them to help others. They understand and value opportunities for stillness, prayer and reflection in worship. The class prayer books based on each value and used in worship are highly regarded by pupils. As a result, worship promotes spiritual development very effectively. A member of the school staff from the church community plays a key role in leading worship and promoting the strong church and school partnership. They have organised prayer spaces in school which have had a good impact on developing a sense of personal spirituality of all members of the community. The planning for worship is shared between all leaders. The pupils' worship team have enjoyed and valued the greater role they now play in supporting worship. Pupils lead worship in church for major Christian festivals and have a good understanding of the importance of

the church year in the life of Christians. Collective worship promotes a good understanding of Anglican practice. Liturgical responses are used well. These include a response for the lighting of the three candles which has enabled pupils to have a good understanding of the trinitarian nature of God.

Religious education has not, until recently, been recognised as an important core subject. Class teachers have now taken responsibility for teaching RE themselves. As a result, links are being made between themes in RE, the school's vision and values and the whole curriculum. A new resource for teaching Christianity is being introduced which is starting to raise the quality of learning in-line with local expectations. For example, pupils are learning theological concepts such as Salvation linked to Easter. Pupils enjoy using enquiry skills, interpreting and exploring meanings within biblical texts. Big questions are linked to learning themes and are used to good effect in developing spiritual awareness. Pupils have positive attitudes and demonstrate an interest in learning about the beliefs of other people as well as those of Christian faith. The subject leader is now attending the local RE hub of church schools which has been supportive and beneficial for her professional development.



The effectiveness of RE is Requires Improvement

Progress in RE by all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is below local expectations.

Governors and other school leaders have not reviewed the standards in RE on an annual basis. Monitoring and evaluating RE as a core subject has not had a high profile within the Church school's self-evaluation process. This has led to a lack of relevant professional development at the appropriate time for the subject leader and other school leaders. Systems for assessing the new Christianity resource have not had time to embed. As a result, ways of tracking pupils' progress are insecure.

Executive Headteacher

Luke Maddison

Inspector's name and number

Daphne Spitzer No37