

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ducklington Primary School			
Address	Aston Road, Ducklington, Nr Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 7US		
Date of inspection	20 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	123107

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

Ducklington is a primary school with 229 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 averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school has recently opened a school-led nursery within the school premises.

The school's Christian vision Dare, Discover, Do

Our aspiration is that every individual reaches their full potential in a happy, safe and stimulating environment. This vision is achieved through the Christian values of mutual respect, friendship, perseverance and responsibility. We do this through our 'Dare, Discover, Do,' approach encouraging all individuals to be brave. (Luke 5:2-11)

Key findings

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has challenged staff to 'Dare, Discover, Do,' so that pupils and adults flourish. This is firmly rooted within biblical teaching and has a real impact on achievement within school.
- The newly developed concept of 'Dare, Discover, Do,' supports a vibrant, exciting curriculum that raises aspiration for all. Its effectiveness is not monitored closely enough by governors.
- This is a highly inclusive and caring school where adults and pupils flourish because of how the Christian values are lived out every day. It is very supportive of the mental health and wellbeing of all stakeholders, spending time and money to support those who are vulnerable.
- Collective worship is a strength of the school. Pupils plan and lead worship every week, confidently setting the values within a Christian context. This ensures everyone can see how the values are important to their daily lives.
- Religious education (RE) is well led. Lessons are vibrant and interesting because RE expresses the school vision. Pupils and staff have a good understanding of a variety of faiths, including Christianity.

Areas for development

- Address the terms of reference for the governing body so that the school's Christian vision is understood by all governors to be driving the strategic development of the school. Ensure that this is reflected in the monitoring of all aspects of the school's work.
- Explore how the school's understanding of spirituality can secure increasingly deeper ways for pupils to understand and articulate their own spiritual journey as they mature.
- Review the school's visits and visitors so that pupils have broader experiences which help them to understand the diversity of both the Christian faith and the world they live in.

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

Ducklington is a school where the vision and values are at the heart of every aspect of the school's work. Recognising that some pupils struggled to give of their best, leaders have summed up the vision in 'Dare, Discover, Do'. This is understood by pupils to be rooted in the story of Jesus challenging his disciples to try once more and so reap a harvest of fish. Pupils of all ages can explain how this analogy is relevant to their own lives. 'It inspires you to try new things,' explained a Year 5 pupil. Pupils are now highly aspirational about their work and proud of their daily achievements. This is because teachers constantly challenge pupils to 'dare to do more'. This is a relatively new strategy in school and its impact is very clear in all aspects of the school's work. Governors can identify many examples of where they have seen the vision making a difference in the learning of pupils. This is not routinely recorded during governor visits across the curriculum. Governors are beginning to explore how this new approach shapes the direction of the school, although this is not fully established. This is because the terms of reference for both the governing body and committees are not explicit enough. They do not make clear governors' responsibilities to monitor the effectiveness and distinctiveness of the school's Christian vision. Their 'aspiration for every individual to reach their full potential in a happy safe environment' has long driven the school's work. The new school-led nurse is one example of this. It is the culmination of a desire to give the youngest children in the community the very best start to their education.

The school is skilled at ensuring pupils, including those who are vulnerable, make good progress from their starting points. There is clear-sighted and honest appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses by all leaders. Where expectations fall short of these high standards, the school is successfully using 'Dare, Discover, Do,' to challenge staff and pupils. Vulnerable pupils feel safe at Ducklington because they trust the staff to care for them in all aspects of their life at school. This is because all staff know the pupils very well. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy their learning and they feel valued in school. The mental health and wellbeing of pupils is at the heart of the school's work. A recent 'Green' day promoted some deep discussions, both in school and at home, around the importance of good mental health. Parents too are supported in many imaginative ways. They have timely access to the headteacher and the school's nurture assistant. Parents readily acknowledge how the school's vision and associated Christian values play a major role in shaping their children's lives in and out of school. Staff feel supported by each other and by leaders at all levels. They appreciate the way they are challenged to 'do more' in a way that supports their own work-life balance. In this way the school's Christian vision enables pupils and adults to flourish.

Christian values are celebrated throughout the school, with creative displays demonstrating pupils' learning. Pupils have a very good understanding of how each value is reflected in the teachings of Jesus. This is because they have a central role in independently planning and leading collective worship. They are confident in using Bible stories to discover more about how the values are relevant to their lives. This is because they are trained from an early age, with the support of clear expectations, to use stories, prayer and questioning to get to the heart of biblical teaching. Pupils really enjoy this role and can't wait for their turn. Evaluation of collective worship by all stakeholders is not focused enough to bring about continuous improvement. Pupils of all ages have an age-appropriate understanding of the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Pupils are very involved in raising awareness of global issues and funds for a variety of good causes. This is because they are so involved in leading collective worship that they are empowered to make a difference. This goes beyond a sense of compassion, understanding how the school's Christian vision requires them to challenge injustice. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. This is universally attributed to the way that the school's Christian values are taught and upheld by all members of the community. Forgiveness, as one of the school's Christian values, is practised every day. Pupils make a very clear link between this and the need to treat everyone with dignity and respect. 'We must treat everyone equally,' explained a Year 3 pupil, 'because if we didn't, we wouldn't be following our values'. Pupils' understanding of diversity is weak because they have not enough concrete experiences which show them the breadth of diversity within the world around them. They have an insufficient understanding of Christianity as a diverse faith.

Leaders and staff work hard to ensure pupils are given many experiences across the curriculum to help them develop spiritually. This is not planned for coherently across the school because staff do not share a common

understanding of how these experiences might deepen as pupils move through the school. Prayer forms a central role within collective worship and throughout the school day. Pupils have a good understanding of the variety and importance of prayer. 'It's a good time to calm down and listen to your feelings and listen to God'. The informal prayer life of the school is limited because there are few places within the school where pupils are encouraged to write prayers of their own. Classroom reflection areas are not used by pupils as places for prayer and reflection.

RE is well-led so that pupils are given a good grounding in a range of faiths and beliefs. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons because they are interesting and made relevant to their own lives. Pupils make clear links between the school's Christian values and different aspects of a range of religions. This is because pupils 'Dare, Discover, Do,' and are encouraged to reflect on how their understanding has grown through their lessons. The curriculum is imaginative and is celebrated in the class Reflection Journals. These demonstrate how each class has grown in their learning as they have explored each topic. Insightful assessment gives staff and leaders a good understanding of how pupils are making progress. This is because staff take time to speak with pupils individually and value their contributions to debates and discussions.

Ducklington is a good church school because it is aspirational for its pupils and families. This aspiration is now firmly rooted in a Christian vision that challenges leaders, pupils and adults.

Headteacher	Sarah Nisbett
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