

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

<b>The Dove Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School</b>			
<b>Address</b>	Ashbourne Road, Rocester, Uttoxeter ST14 5NW		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	27 June 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary Controlled First School
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lichfield</b>	<b>URN</b>	143528

<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 Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

The Dove is a first school with 94 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 in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The Dove became a Church of England school in September 2016 and moved to new buildings shared with Ryecroft Church of England Middle School. Both headteacher and vicar have taken up post within the last year.

### The school's Christian vision

*'The person who trusts in the Lord will be blessed, like a strong tree planted by water. That tree always produces fruit'. (Jeremiah 17:7-8)* We aspire to be a safe, caring, nurturing community, providing firm foundations rooted in the Christian faith, inspiring all to grow and flourish.

### Key findings

- The dedicated leadership of the new headteacher has ensured that the school's church status is now supported by a Christian vision and related values. These are beginning to impact on school life, but are not yet embedded across the life of the school in a way which drives change as the school is undergoing a period of significant change.
- Relationships displayed by staff and pupils result in mutual respect and good behaviour. These are clearly linked to the school's new Christian values. Every child, particularly the more vulnerable, is known and cared for as a unique individual. However, not all are enabled or challenged to achieve their full academic potential.
- Collective worship engages pupils and enhances their understanding of living well together and Christian beliefs and values. Pupils are beginning to take a role in planning and leading.
- Strong, supportive links with the local church, much enriched by the arrival of the new vicar, widen the worship experiences of pupils and support their spiritual development.
- Religious education (RE) lessons interest pupils and allows them to explore many different faiths.

### Areas for development

- Ensure that the school's vision, values and distinctive Christian character are explicitly shared and proclaimed by all leaders and the whole staff team in all areas of school life, including documentation.
- Governors develop and implement a rigorous and systematic strategy of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of church school distinctiveness.
- Provide varied and meaningful opportunities for prayer and reflection for all within the school community, allowing pupils to develop their spiritual confidence.
- Develop teaching in RE in order to explore the concepts and beliefs at the heart of the faiths and worldviews studied with appropriate depth and challenge and so improve learning.

## **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 Dove is a happy, caring community where pupils are well supported by staff. However, its status of Church of England school is still in a developmental stage although the recent change of leadership has accelerated progress in this important area. The new Christian vision, shared with staff and parents and proclaimed on the school website, is summarised in the motto 'roots to grow, wings to fly'. The spiritual fruits of kindness, perseverance, respect, honesty, self-control and forgiveness were chosen as school values to reflect the needs of the school, in particular its more vulnerable pupils. They are displayed prominently throughout the building and known well by pupils and parents. Pupils behave well and have a positive attitude to learning. They relate their behaviour to the values of perseverance and self-control, explaining that these reflect the way Jesus wanted his followers to live. Pupils link Jesus' forgiveness to his death on the cross and know they should also forgive each other. They confirm that they are given a fresh start when they misbehave at school, explaining that it is better to make up and move on rather than hold grudges. Praise postcards celebrate those demonstrating the values. Although both vision and values are related to Bible teaching, understanding of these explicit links is limited. The school's distinctive Christian character is evolving, but its impact is still at an embryonic stage. Policies such as those for behaviour and anti-bullying, and other relevant documentation, are still being updated to relate to the new vision. School development plans and reports to governors include a focus area for Christian distinctiveness. The governing body is supportive but have not yet established a rigorous process to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness as a church school.

Pupils enjoy interacting with each other as they learn from the school's broad curriculum. The school is recognised in the community for its care for pupils with special needs or disabilities. A number of pupils have joined the school to access this support, and parents connect this provision to the school's desire to help all flourish. However, the school acknowledges that there are still inconsistencies within its teaching approach and a lack of challenge in some of the work offered to pupils. As a result, progress, particularly for the more able, is less than expected. Available data confirms that, while improving, some data is still below national averages and pupils are not yet enabled to reach their full potential and so flourish in their academic journey.

Pupil questionnaires and school council members confirm that pupils believe that their views are listened to. Pupils appreciate opportunities to take responsibility and older pupils support younger ones well. They know that, despite differences, all are important, valued and included as unique individuals. Most enjoy school and attendance figures have risen recently. Exclusions are extremely rare. Bullying is infrequent and dealt with swiftly. Pupils are encouraged to live well together. One explains that 'you don't have to agree, but you must respect each other's views'. Extra-curricular activities are used to enrich pupils' experience. Oasis Club offers support for more vulnerable pupils while visits from inspirational local people encourage pupils to 'dream big dreams' and have increased aspirations for themselves. However, moves to extend this hope to the wider community is only beginning to have impact. Pupils joined an area initiative to consider questions about hunger in Africa and pack food parcels for Feed the Hungry, and relate this to Jesus helping people. However, although the school council selected the charity for the Lent appeal, pupils' experience and understanding is strongly focussed on their immediate locality. The curriculum does not provide adequate engagement with the wider world in which they live, and 'big questions' about life. Pupils facing mental health or welfare issues are listened to and monitored by staff, one of whom has received specific training in these areas. Staff are very supportive of one another, feeling happier and more valued since recent changes.

Worship is an important part of every school day, offering opportunities to embed values and links them to Bible teaching. The partnership with the local church is strong and developing. The vicar and Churches Together children's worker lead worship regularly. Pupils enjoy the vicar's use of puppets and opportunities for drama. Pupils and parents strongly value the Harvest, Christmas and Easter services in the parish church in which pupils take an active part. The recently formed worship group has begun to lead school worship. Worship has a clear structure and includes prayer, reflection, and sometimes song. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer. They also have some understanding of the importance of Jesus and the Trinity for Christians. Newly established reflective areas and class reflection books allow pupils to respond to the challenge of living out the values. Pupils lead prayer within

collective worship and explain that they can talk to God about anything. Prayer also forms part of governor meetings. As yet pupils or staff have few opportunities for pray outside worship time, and pupils do not expect the school to offer prayer about individual concerns. Enriching developments have not been in place long enough to have a significant impact on pupils' spiritual growth. The headteacher's passion to develop her vision, coupled with the small size of the school, means that she plans school worship and takes responsibility for RE as well as special needs provision and many other aspects of school life. Governors, Diocesan advisers and the church team support her well, but, as yet, there is not a shared team drive to ensure that the Christian vision reaches all areas of school life.

Pupils are developing their knowledge of the stories they have explored in worship and RE. However, they cannot link these to the bigger Biblical narrative. They talk confidently about RE work about the Jewish seder meal, but do not know the story of Moses or its link to Jesus' last supper. Despite leading a well-prepared worship about the Good Samaritan, pupils cannot explain that this was one of Jesus' parables. Pupils enjoy RE and are able to discuss facts that they have learnt. However, lessons lack depth and fail to explore the concepts which lie at the heart of each faith. There is little celebration of pupils' work through display or marking. The impact of the recently adopted 'Understanding Christianity' resource is beginning to be seen in pupils' understanding of the Easter story, but strategies to assess and monitor pupil progress have yet to be formulated.

The Dove is beginning a new stage of its journey and is committed to embedding its Christian vision to ensure that its pupils can, as its scripture proclaims, 'be blessed, like a strong tree planted by water. That tree always produces fruit.' Although the full impact of this hope is still to be seen, these fruits will develop in the work and lives of the school community as the vision is lived out.

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