

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Swell Church of England Primary School			
Address	Lower Swell, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 1LH		
Date of inspection	14 January 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	Gloucester	URN	115652

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

Swell is a primary school with 33 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 above national averages. The school joined the North Cotswold Schools Federation with Cold Aston and Longborough Church Schools in September 2016. The executive headteacher is currently working in support of St. James' and Ebrington Church of England School.

The school's Christian vision

Rooted in our Christian understanding of life in its fullness, North Cotswold Schools Federation are safe, aspirational learning communities where all are **nurtured** and **cherished** to **shine** and **flourish** as lights in the world.

The vision is underpinned by John 10:10 'I have come that they might have life, life in all in its fullness'. All are inspired to fulfil their aspirations through the school's associated twelve Christian values.

Key findings

- The inspirational executive headteacher and her leadership team have created a vibrant Christian learning community, which lives out its vision, enabling every member to flourish.
- Religious education strongly reflects the school's vision by developing a love of learning about people of other faiths as well as Christianity and thus of 'life in all its fullness'.
- The school's vision is very effective in developing aspiration and enabling pupils to make positive choices about their behaviour.
- Whilst global issues are explored within the curriculum, this does not enable pupils to feel motivated to engage in social action in order to challenge injustice and inequality.

Areas for development

- Raise the profile of global issues of inequality and injustice across the curriculum so that pupils are inspired to act and social action projects embed themselves in the life of the school.
- Actively involve pupils in the planning and leadership of worship on a regular basis so that they take a greater role in its development.
- Provide progressively deeper opportunities, across the curriculum, to explore spiritual and ethical issues.

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 vision for Swell, as part of the North Cotswold Schools Federation, is having a powerful impact on the whole school community. It is strongly driven by the executive headteacher and her leadership team including governors. The words are deeply rooted in the family of federated schools and current thinking in church school education. The vision is fully understood by pupils as well as all adults. Leaders have addressed issues from the last inspection in ways that have enabled the school to make substantial progress. As a result, the impact of collective worship, spiritual development and Christian values on the school community has been increased. The productive partnership with the other federated schools has been mutually beneficial. The school is continuously striving to improve. High quality professional development is a priority and the links with the diocese are very effective. The leadership is challenging whilst being collaborative and supportive, enabling staff to flourish. Collective worship and religious education (RE) are given a prominent role in school development planning and contribute effectively to the vision. Governors have established a rigorous Church School self-evaluation process. It enables them to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Initiatives such as the formation of the church and community committee provide a strong voice for clergy as well as parents. It led the process of developing the school's vision thus ensuring it is rooted in biblical teaching.

The school's creative curriculum is a vibrant expression of its Christian vision. As a result, pupils have a sound understanding of their school's vision and its meaning at a personal level. They are inspired by the vision to nourish and cherish themselves and each other so that they shine and succeed in their learning. Attainment and progress for pupils is close to national averages thus ensuring that all flourish, including those who are disadvantaged. A wide variety of effective strategies is taken by school leaders and staff to overcome barriers to learning. Exciting visits and visitors are shared with all other pupils in the federation which enhances the development of meaningful relationships. The creative curriculum provides a wide range of experiences and opportunities which enable pupils to become confident and enthusiastic learners. Pupils care strongly about the way the planet's resources are being exploited and are inspired to reduce and reuse plastic. The curriculum encourages pupils to think at a national and global level. The school's initiatives include Christian Aid's Global Neighbours project. However, this work has not yet had a lasting impact as pupils do not easily articulate an understanding of deprivation and disadvantage. As a result, opportunities to raise ethical issues of injustice and inspire pupils to engage in social action projects are underdeveloped.

Staff have a shared understanding of spiritual development which is integral to the whole curriculum. However, there is not a structured plan in place to develop spiritual and ethical awareness progressively across the whole curriculum. The use of 'big questions' linked to the curriculum enables pupils to explore their own and others' views in a safe and supportive setting. As a result, pupils are able to develop and justify their viewpoints with confidence and disagree politely. Promoting aspiration and self-belief are central to the school's Christian vision. Pupils talk of the way the value of perseverance helps them to learn. Swell's Christian vision of a nurturing community is lived out in its exceptionally supportive, open and cohesive culture. This is because the mental health and well-being of the whole school community is seen as a priority. Opportunities to promote an understanding of diversity and difference within the curriculum are very effective in developing pupils' accepting attitudes. Visits to places of worship enable pupils to develop an informed and respectful understanding of a range of faiths. The vision ensures that pupils understand the need to cherish themselves and others so that they can form healthy relationships. The inclusive culture, promoted by the vision, ensures staff and pupils are treated with dignity and respect. All know that their personal well-being is important to leaders and others. Relationships between pupils are strong because they have a good understanding of the values of friendship and forgiveness.

Collective worship is central to daily life. Worship strongly reflects the vision and values by rooting them in biblical teaching. The story of David and Goliath is understood to be clearly linked to the value of courage. This has been supported by the leadership of the church's Open the Book team, which contributes very effectively to worship. Times of prayer and reflection during the day promote spiritual development very well. Pupils enjoy worship and find it relevant because they actively participate, for example in the singing and drama. They respond positively when asked to give feedback on worship by leaders and by older pupils. Worship promotes an understanding of Anglican tradition such as the major Christian festivals. These are now celebrated by the three

federated schools together as one large community, which enhances their impact. Effective teaching in worship and RE has enabled older children to have a good understanding of the Trinity. Planning for worship is exceptional as is the way it is monitored and evaluated by leaders. It is undertaken by the federation RE subject leader as well as Swell school leaders and clergy. The vicar contributes very effectively to the impact of worship. His substantial role includes regularly working with the pupils' worship council. However, whilst pupils' roles are important, they are mainly supportive. Opportunities for them to plan and lead themselves are limited.

Religious education is recognised as an inspiring and exciting core subject. It strongly reflects the school's vision by enabling pupils to shine and flourish. The curriculum is planned exceptionally well, using an effective balance in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Teaching is motivating and challenging, enabling pupils to reflect deeply about their own beliefs and those of others. Consequently, RE makes a substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual growth. Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity as a living and diverse faith. Monitoring and evaluation of RE and worship by governors is thorough and challenging. Rigorous assessment strategies clearly identify strengths and areas for development enabling pupils to enjoy RE and make progress. The subject leader ensures that her professional development is up to date. This enables her to increase her own expertise for the benefit of all pupils and staff within the federation and diocese. As a result, the leadership of RE is exceptionally strong. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

Executive Headteacher	Alexandra Symondson
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Spitzer No 37