

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Matching Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School			
Address	Little Laver Road, Matching Green, Harlow, Essex, CM17 0QB		
Date of inspection	28/03/2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese	Chelmsford	URN	115126

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
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 Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Matching Green is a primary school with 80 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities is above national average. The school has been through a turbulent period but is now stable with the headteacher being in post for just over two years.

The school's Christian vision

At Matching Green Primary School we all learn with our head, heart and hands so that we can experience 'life in all its fullness', (John 10:10).

Key findings

- The effective leadership of the headteacher and governors, and their shared Christian vision, sustains and emphasises the characteristics of the school as a distinctive Church school.
- Relationships are mutually respectful, and pupils' behaviour is excellent, mirroring very well the school's Christian and inclusive vision and its associated values of forgiveness, friendship, endurance, thankfulness and kindness.
- Prayer is highly valued by all within the school community with plentiful opportunities for both informal and formal prayer.
- Collective worship is inclusive and welcoming and, guided by the school's Christian vision, there is a focus on embracing difference and respect for others. However, pupils do not have opportunities to be fully involved in the evaluation of worship.
- A broad and engaging curriculum, including religious education (RE), ensures that all pupils have the opportunities to live and experience life in all its fullness. Consequently, all pupils feel special and unique.

Areas for development

- Strengthen the spiritual life of the school family to ensure a shared understanding of spirituality that consistently reflects the Christian vision.
- Increase opportunities for pupils of all ages to independently plan, lead and evaluate acts of collective worship so that they are involved more deeply in the school's experiences as a worshipping community.
- Develop provision within the RE curriculum to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding of a wider range of major world religions.

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

Rooted in a clear theological Christian narrative the school's vision, together with its associated values, appropriately promotes life in all its fullness. The Christian vision and values expressed at Matching Green accurately shapes the content of the school development plan, resulting in a broad and balanced curriculum enabling all to grow and flourish. Pupils are well nurtured on the journey ensuring that they flourish through their academic achievements. Where there have been dips in attainment, the school responds effectively and swiftly. Governors are closely involved in the vision's development and monitoring. Governors ensure that statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met and appropriately support both areas well. The school knows itself very well and knows the next steps in its journey. Policy and practice are fittingly developed through its Christian vision, with a clear focus on enabling all pupils to live life in all its fullness. Links between the school and parish are highly valued by all stakeholders, with a deep desire to ensure these links are developed further whenever possible. Matching Green works with other schools in the Epping Forest Partnership Trust, taking a productive lead on church school issues.

There are very strong bonds within the school. Parents speak with great warmth about the staff and the relationships within the school, which are rooted in, and attributed to, the school's vision. The school thrives on this closeness and how all the pupils know and work well together, irrespective of age, 'there is unity between the children'. The size of the school is important to the parents as it 'enables the staff to think of all the children all the time in a selfless way'. 'Constant caring support means that my child can express how they feel even though expressing feelings is hard for them.' This parent's comment exemplifies the exceptional pastoral care, including counselling where needed, enabling all to experience life in all its fullness. Pupil surveys have been carried out which lead to an accurate view of the pupils' wellbeing and emotional needs.

The Christian vision and associated values underpin relationships at all levels. Pupils are encouraged to live well together through engaging with the whole school community and time is given to ascertaining the pupil voice on a variety of areas of school life. Older pupils look after younger pupils at lunchtime and playtime. A caring, Christian culture ensures all are treated with dignity and respect, resulting in everyone feeling valued: 'All are welcome here'. Pupils are happy, hardworking and feel safe. As a result, attendance is good, and behaviour is excellent.

Matching Green supports a range of local and national charities. Pupils are encouraged to research and propose charity projects that they feel passionately about, with whole school pupil voice making the final choice. This enables the pupils to make considered and reasoned choices, which in turn inspires them to develop hope for others and look beyond themselves. Pupils have a clear sense of justice and fairness for both their peers and world issues, with pupils openly questioning recent events in the news. Pupils feel strongly that everyone within God's world is of equal importance and should be treated as such.

Staff actively promote the Christian vision in meeting pupils' needs. In this they are well supported, professionally and personally, for working in this Church school. Mental health, wellbeing and academic attainment are equally valued. The school is successfully implementing the spirit of the recent Church of England guidance on 'Mental Health and Wellbeing'. Systems are in place to identify and provide support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. The school embraces respect for all. Successful partnerships are forged with families recognising the impact on the wider family. Parents affirm that the school is a nurturing community where they are always made to feel welcome and to which they feel a clear sense of belonging.

Collective worship gives pupils time to think and reflect in inclusive and invitational ways, 'God's teachings help us to be better people and to be more forgiving'. The pupils value prayer and reflection, speaking with eagerness about the prayer space which enhances the school environment. 'Any one can go there to pray, to be quiet, whether they are Christian or not.' Planning of distinctively Christian worship is based around the vision and values, Jesus' teachings and biblical stories. This strengthens pupils' understanding of the vision's relevance to their own lives, irrespective of their personal or family faith background. There are opportunities for silence, prayer and reflection, enabling pupils to appreciate different aspects of Christian worship. Pupils are able to make secure biblical links between their experiences in worship and the school vision and associated values. Pupils articulate God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one and 'that Jesus is in the Trinity in flesh form on earth', showing an understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God. However, there is not a consistent

understanding of spirituality throughout the school and, as such, opportunities are missed. Pupils are involved in planning, delivery and evaluation of worship; however, this is underdeveloped.

RE is spoken about enthusiastically by all stakeholders and is given priority. The RE lead undertakes diocesan training and supports staff well by cascading this promptly. The 'Understanding Christianity' resource is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' deepening knowledge of the Bible and their ability to critically engage with the text and key Christian concepts and beliefs. Cross-curricular links are made, developing pupils' thinking and reasoning skills when reflecting on 'big' philosophical questions. The pupils are aware of Christianity as a worldwide faith and recognise the importance of other faiths in the UK and beyond. An appropriate range of major world faiths are studied, promoting the school's Christian vision and values in developing understanding and respect for diversity, difference, and living well together. However, pupils do not have many opportunities to develop this through welcoming visitors or taking part in visits to places of worship of different faiths. The school recognises this and has firm plans to address it. Effective assessment processes are in place and are being embedded. Governors monitor RE by liaising with the RE lead, carrying out monitoring visits and speaking with pupils. This means that they know, for example, how RE contributes positively to the school's Christian vision and its associated values.

Headteacher	Amy Wareham
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