

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Western Downland Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Vision

Our vision is to foster self-assured articulate and aspiring learners with the resourcefulness to remain hopeful, resilient and adaptable even in a changing and unpredictable world.

It is the aim of the whole school team to help each child become a successful learner and well-rounded individual who is ready to take the next step in their learning journey. 'The roots to grow and the wings to fly'.

"And the leaves on the tree are for the healing of the nations" Revelation 22:2

Strengths

- Leaders have developed a Christian vision which permeates the whole school and directs its actions. It is highly successful in allowing children to develop 'roots to grow and wings to fly'.
- The school has a very strong welcoming ethos where children and adults treat one another well. Children show a high level of respect because they are listened to respectfully. Vulnerable children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given special care.
- The curriculum is highly creative and has been carefully tailored to ensure it reflects the vision. The school has successfully made intentional links between its values and the subject content in the curriculum. This ensures children enjoy a wide breadth of experience.
- The worship life of the school is vibrant. It enables children and adults to flourish spiritually. Worship encourages reflection and children respond with enthusiasm.
- The leadership of religious education (RE) is very strong. Monitoring and evaluation are thorough. Children are enthused by the lessons and feel confident expressing their own views.

Development Points

- Agree a shared understanding and language of spirituality so that opportunities for its development can be planned throughout the curriculum. This is in order to develop children's personal spirituality even further.
- Extend staff awareness of the ideas and concepts in non-Christian faiths. This is to help build their confidence and deepen children's knowledge of these religions.
- Ensure that children gain a greater insight into of the nature of global Christianity. This is so they appreciate that it embraces a wide variety of beliefs and practices.



Inspection Findings

Highly committed leaders and governors have kept the school's vision under constant review. They have ensured it matches the needs of the community. It is underpinned by the teachings of Jesus and is strongly supported by the values of love, fellowship and righteousness. These in turn are linked to biblical teaching. The positive impact of the vision is very evident in the work of the school. Children talk about how the vision helps their learning. Governors use the vision to set the strategic direction of the school. For example, to allow children with SEND to develop 'roots to grow', governors seek additional funding. They have a rigorous monitoring and evaluation cycle which does not hesitate to make changes for the better.

The highly creative curriculum has been totally remodelled around the vision in the last two years. In designing it, leaders have ensured it is inclusive and nurturing. It allows children many experiences and opportunities. The curriculum is broad, challenging and encourages children to think deeply and reflect. Strong links are made to RE across many subjects. For example, in history the growth of Christianity in Britain in Anglo-Saxon times and the Islamic Golden Age are studied. In geography the benefits and disadvantages of trade are considered. Significant figures who have been 'resilient and adaptable' are a focus. Children who are vulnerable or those who have SEND are often given a personalised curriculum. This is because staff believe it is vitally important that these children should be given 'roots to grow'. They flourish well. The high-quality outdoor learning develops children's spirituality. Many see this as a place where they can reflect and say prayers. However, across the school there is no agreed understanding of the full meaning of spirituality. Nor does it appear in the planned curriculum.

Collective worship is a joyous and spiritual time of the day, both at the infant and junior school. It is inclusive, inspiring and invitational. Children participate eagerly both in singing and answering questions. They refer to it as a 'special time of the day'. A simple form of opening liturgical sentence is well known and responded to with conviction. The lighting of three candles reminds children of the Trinity. In 'well-done worship' children who have been nominated for displaying a particular value are given a specially made leaf. This they hang on the collage tree. This reinforces the behaviours and attitudes which are prevalent and connects with the vision. Prayer is central to worship. Worship leaders from Year 6 and Year 2 steer the school in this. The vicar is a regular contributor to collective worship and members of the local churches come frequently to provide 'Open the Book' worship. The mixture of stories and drama in this excites the children and increases their familiarity with the Bible. There is good partnership working with these churches. Reflection time in worship is valued. It is followed up in class reflection books. Even in the nursery, children reflect on the wonders of nature and God's creation. Staff also consider it an uplifting time. Collective worship at Western Downland is central to personal spiritual development.

The emphasis on the vision and values ensures that Western Downland is a welcoming and happy school. Consequently, attendance is high. Children are listened to and are confident that if they bring a matter to a teacher, it will be dealt with quickly. They are treated with respect and in return show respect to the staff. Children resolve disagreements quickly as they have been taught to listen to the views of others. They recognise that they are valued in the community for the unique talents which they bring. Children care for each other and newcomers are accepted readily. They show tolerance and willingly take on responsibilities to help each other. Peer mentors from Year 6 run a lunchtime club to help those who feel less confident. Children from the junior school site go to help those on the infant site. Wellbeing and good mental health are a priority. The school has extensive partnerships with agencies which provide support. Staff are well cared for and appreciate that they are consulted before considerable changes are made. They are encouraged and provided with extensive professional development. The needs of early career teachers are given special attention. Leaders review staff exit surveys carefully and act on issues raised. Adults within the school say there is always someone there to



help them. Their personal needs are considered. Parents and carers speak highly of school. They say it not only cares for their children but them also.

Although the school predominantly serves four villages and is on two sites, there is a sense of being a community. An eco-group works on environmental projects outside school such as litter picking. Children recognise the importance of their participation in a local 'fairtrade' event. They have a developing sense of justice and fairness and their responsibility to the world. They identify famine, war, homelessness and unfairness as injustice. The link with a school in South Africa is seen by them as a way of helping disadvantaged children. Recently, the children have formed an equalities group to develop the work on injustice. At their suggestion, this group is currently focusing on investigating inequality against women.

RE is highly valued in the school. It is given a suitable amount of time on the curriculum. Links with many other subjects reinforce its importance. The subject leader is very knowledgeable. She systematically monitors, evaluates and modifies the content of the RE curriculum. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus but has supplemented this with additional resources. Extra support and different materials are used to ensure it is accessible. Planning is meticulous. The curriculum content is very appropriate with a variety of faiths, and non-religious world views being taught. Staff display very good knowledge when teaching about Christianity. However, they are less confident in their teaching of faiths other than Christianity. Children revisit topics and this helps them to remember what they have learned. While children appreciate that Christianity is a worldwide faith, they have less understanding that Christians worship in different ways and do not always share the same beliefs. The school has good relationships with the diocese. Teachers and leaders are helped by the training and support given in RE by the diocesan team.

Lessons in RE are interesting and well-paced, with a wide variety of activities. Children are confident in explaining their own beliefs and in recognising some questions are very difficult to answer. There is effective progression of knowledge and skills through the phases of learning. Assessment in RE is very thorough, with learning being checked both during and at the end of units of study. It is used to inform future teaching.

Information

Address	Rockbourne, Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 3NA		
Date	09 October 2024	URN	116387
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	173
Diocese	Salisbury		
Headteacher	Alice Tubbs		
Chair of Governors	Duncan Bailey		
Inspector	Marcia Headon		