

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Denys Church of England Infant School

Address	Laud Close, Ibstock, Leicestershire. LE67 6NL		
Date of inspection	25 September 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Infant
Diocese	Leicester	URN	120138

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

Ibstock St Denys is an infant school with 244 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 in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The Willow class is a unit in school for 15 pupils with communication and interaction difficulties. The current headteacher has been in post for seven years.

The school's Christian vision

'EACH ONE OF US IS DIFFERENT. EACH ONE OF US IS SPECIAL'

Our school motto is at the heart of all we do. Christian values underpin the direction of the school and how it serves its community. Every member of the school plays a part in helping pupils to be successful, achieve their best and feel proud of themselves.

"Be kind to anyone who needs your help.

Not just your friends not just the people you know, but anyone." Luke 10

Key findings

- The care and concern shown to each individual and strongly instilled by the headteacher, is at the heart of this school community. It reflects the overarching vision statement that everyone in the school family is special, although not all pupils were able to articulate this.
- The uniqueness of every child is celebrated. Pupils from the Willow class are included in all aspects of school life. Everyone has access to collective worship whatever their needs or abilities.
- RE provision is strength of this school. It is well planned by knowledgeable leaders and links seamlessly to support the Christian character of the school.
- Governors are endeavouring to uphold the Christian vision without clergy support, despite many of them being inexperienced and relatively new to the role.
- Partnership opportunities to develop the Christian character of the school are not utilised sufficiently.

Areas for development

- To celebrate and embed the recently established Christian vision for the school to raise greater awareness of its impact throughout the whole school community.
- To increasingly equip the relatively new governing body with deepening knowledge in order to promote and develop their church school.
- To consolidate current and develop wider partnerships which further enhance the Christian character of the school.
- To develop young leaders in collective worship and in promoting social 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 long established, overarching mission statement of 'Each one of us is different, Each one of us is special' is the heartbeat of this thriving school community. Uniqueness and individuality is celebrated, welcoming everyone especially those pupils with learning difficulties. This school is in the top 20% of schools nationally for the number of pupils with special needs and all are nurtured by adults who 'go the extra mile' to ensure they have access to the spiritual provision available to others in the main body of the school. The headteacher has ensured that each pupil is recognised as an individual reflecting the school's vision and worked alongside the local authority to create a purpose built base for the Willow class. Governors speak with clarity about the biblical basis for the new vision statement and how it reflects the unique Christian ethos of their school, although it has yet to have its profile raised. The Christian Character committee is evolving in its effectiveness to monitor and evaluate the school in implementing the new vision statement but it lacks a strategic approach. New governors speak with passion and enthusiasm about the Christian foundation of Ibstock St. Denys and are keen to develop their current understanding as leaders of a Church school.

Pupils speak readily about how the 'St Denys Bees' encourage them to aspire to be the best person they can be and how these character traits are celebrated. Rates of progress are in line with national expectations with leaders clearly focused on where improvements need to be made. Comprehensive coverage and classroom displays raise the profile of the current Christian value, causing these very young pupils to voice self awareness and biblical knowledge with clarity. Pupils are encouraged to think beyond themselves with one Year 2 pupil speaking passionately about the exploitation of our world by toxic waste and relating this to the story of Creation. They relish the opportunity to be able to challenge social injustice and support others through charitable initiatives. 'Big Question' displays are evident and school leaders recognise that developing meaningful global partnerships contributes to these young people making positive choices about how they live and behave. The School Council is well led and includes pupils from all classes. This group speaks with maturity and excitement about its role in school contributing to their zeal to be advocates for change.

Staff feel valued and credit this to the Christian ethos in school. Leaders take time to enquire about individual staff and consequently they feel there is a genuine care and concern for them. One member of staff spoke of how working at the school had changed them in a positive way and consequently how this had had an impact on their family. Staff have access to external wellbeing support if needed. Parents of faith and none, articulate the sense of welcome and warmth felt and say they are aware of so many families being supported in individual and innovative ways. They welcome the 'If you have a moment...' section of the school newsletter causing parents to remember local, national and global situations and comment that this has sometimes prompted them to pray for these issues. Pupils behave well and have good relationships with adults. Pupils state that there is no bullying in their school and know who to go to if they need help. A specially trained teaching assistant runs nurture groups for all year groups to support pupils with emotional needs. The sense of care and support for pupils in the Willow class was palpable. These pupils are cherished and valued as God's children, clearly reflecting the school's overarching vision statement.

Collective worship has a high priority in this school. As pupils enter, there is a real sense of stillness and anticipation. Pupils contribute well and with clear understanding. Opportunities are given for pupils to encounter the teachings of Jesus and consequently responded with how they can trust God in their own lives. Pupils share their worship experiences at home sometimes causing them to act and in one case challenging their family to be more fair and generous. Pupils from the Willow class who are unable to access the main collective worship in school have appropriate, alternative worship provision at the same time, as does a child in another part of the school who has a 'small group gathering' within the classroom. This innovative and unique provision is offering all members of the school family the opportunity to grow spiritually. Prayer is a very natural feature of this school. Staff speak of an awareness of being prayed for and pupils gave examples of how they used prayer in their own lives. The local church is in a period without a vicar but a foundation governor is ensuring that the link between the school and St Denys congregation remains strong. Messy Church takes place monthly in school and is avidly supported by school families.

RE is strength of the school. Very young pupils were able to readily talk about the Old and New Testaments and Gospel using their Understanding Christianity frieze on display in the hall. The Church of England Statement for Entitlement is met. One of the key features of RE in this school is the way in which it complements and aligns with the school's vision and values enabling pupils to clearly understand and make links in their own lives. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have the opportunity to visit places of worship and the subject coordinator realises that parents would also benefit from 'Meeting the Faith' experiences alongside their children. A strategic and comprehensive action plan is in place. Pupils are able to articulate different points of view and spontaneously entered into a deep discussion about whether it was God who created the world or not. The headteacher is the chair of the local area group that determines the RE syllabus (SACRE) and her knowledge about current matters relating to collective worship and RE enhances provision at Ibstock St Denys. The work in pupils RE books is of high quality and illustrated a mature depth of understanding by the majority of pupils. The engagement and interest demonstrated in even the youngest pupils during their RE lessons was phenomenal, demonstrating the importance and profile given to the subject of RE at Ibstock St Denys.

Headteacher	Tina Newton
Inspector's name and number	Joy Hardy 944