

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

### Redbrook Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

<b>Address</b>	Redbrook, Monmouth, NP25 4LY		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	23 May 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary Controlled
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>URN</b>	115657

<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

Redbrook is a primary school with 29 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 below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school is part of the Wye Forest Federation and the executive headteacher has been in post since September 2017.

#### The school's Christian vision

*'Striving to be the best we can be'*

Our Federation is a safe place where we embrace and enjoy challenge, take ownership of our own learning, collaborate and support each other, whilst striving to be the best we can be. It is rooted in John 10:10 "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

#### Key findings

- The school's vision, *'Striving to be the best we can be'*, is firmly rooted in a Christian narrative so that all are enabled to 'live life in all its fullness'.
- The inspirational executive headteacher and her hard-working staff are determined to improve the school so that all achieve well. They have recognised where provision is not good enough and have put robust plans in place. These are already bearing fruit so that standards are rising.
- The small community ensures strong, close relationships between pupils and staff. This means that all are known well and cared for as individuals. There is a close partnership between the church and school.
- Collective worship is an effective way in which pupils learn about how the school's values are rooted in biblical teaching. They readily articulate how the values shape their lives, now and in the future. Governors do not monitor the impact of collective worship with sufficient rigour.
- Religious education (RE) has not yet had enough focus within the school. Monitoring is weak and assessment is not robust enough to inform planning. The curriculum does not provide enough challenge for pupils or enable them to reflect on their own spiritual development.

#### Areas for development

- Ensure governors develop robust on-going monitoring procedures so that there are continual, identifiable improvements to collective worship, RE and the effectiveness of the school as a church school.
- Further develop the curriculum so that all pupils are enabled to articulate their own spiritual journey. Ensure that their understanding of diversity and differences enables them to become courageous advocates, locally, nationally and globally.
- Provide a high quality RE curriculum, rigorously assessed, that enables pupils to deepen their understanding of major world faiths. Ensure that they are challenged to ask 'big questions' so that they can critically reflect on their own and other's beliefs.

## **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**

Redbrook is a very small primary school. This is both its biggest strength and its greatest challenge. The new executive headteacher and the staff at Redbrook are passionate about the school and its future. They are striving tirelessly to ensure that the school is the best that it can possibly be. Concerned by the low academic aspirations of the pupils, they have reviewed the vision and values with all stakeholders. This is having an immediate impact on standards because the pupils understand that they need to work hard to succeed. This includes a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Some of these pupils are now making rapid progress. Younger pupils say that you 'shouldn't stop until you're proud', reflecting the school's vision of 'striving to be the best you can be'. The vision is clearly underpinned by a Christian narrative. Pupils speak of how it, together with the values that spring from it, are based on the life of Jesus. They readily give examples from the Bible where different characters have shown courage, compassion, resilience and respect.

Governors understand the vision and speak of it reflecting John 10:10, where Jesus speaks of having 'life in all its fullness'. At present the vision does not lead policy and practice. This is partly because it is so new, but largely because they do not see the vision as the driving force of the school. Most governors have had training around what it means to lead a church school, which was an action point from the last inspection. As yet, governors do not monitor key aspects of the Christian distinctiveness of the school with sufficient rigour to inform improvement plans.

Academic standards in the school are rising, due to the excellent work of teachers and the executive headteacher. However, they readily acknowledge that the legacy of underachievement and low expectations is still an issue. The school has recently introduced a stimulating, enquiry-based curriculum which has engaged pupils so that they are excited about their learning. At the heart of its design is a desire to broaden the pupils' experiences so that they see themselves as capable of anything. Underpinned at all points by the vision, the curriculum is not only shaped by the values but helps pupils to live them as well. Younger pupils take pride in telling how, in their role as scientists, they are looking after a pair of stick insects. 'We need to show them respect and compassion,' explained a child in year 2. 'They are very resilient you know!'. Older pupils were asked to consider which values a child with disabilities was showing when reading their class book. This new curriculum is still in its early stages. There is a clear intention within this curriculum for pupils to engage in the wider community, becoming courageous advocates for change. At present pupils only have very limited experiences of raising funds for charity. Pupils recognise for themselves that they should be more proactive in this area.

The school has not developed a common understanding of spiritual development. Pupils are not routinely enabled to think more deeply or to be critical in their thinking. The school is aware of this and is growing its commitment to forest schools so that pupils are able to use these times to explore how these experiences can be part of their journey in worship. However, this action point from the last inspection has not been fully met.

Pupils generally behave well and all stakeholders recognise that behaviour has improved markedly in the last year. Pupils now feel safe and know that poor attitudes are not acceptable and will be addressed. This is because the new behaviour policy is sharply focused on forgiveness, reconciliation and restitution. All are expected to follow the mantra of 'Respect, Ready and Safe' and understand how the school's vision supports good learning behaviours. Staff know every child extremely well and are able to support their emotional well-being with compassion and understanding. Consequently, pupils feel listened to and supported when times are hard.

Pupils' understanding of the wider world is limited because they have not had enough experiences of other communities, nationally and globally. Governors are complacent about this and so have not taken robust action.

Collective worship is enjoyed by all. There are good links with the local church. Pupils have a good understanding of how the vision and values make a difference to their lives and learning. This is because the school's vision and values underpin the planning for collective worship. It focuses well on how the life and teachings of Jesus are relevant today. Consequently, those with faith and with no faith can see the relevance of the school's values in their daily lives. Worship time includes some aspects of church liturgy and pupils understand why a candle is lit at the beginning of this time. 'It helps us to focus our thoughts', explained a child in Year 3. Reflection and prayer are used regularly so that pupils have a growing understanding of different ways to pray. For example, the use of yoga meditational poses, is one way that helps pupils to focus on how the values can help them when learning is difficult. So much do pupils appreciate the benefits of these times that they have asked for a small space outside where they can take time to reflect and pray. At present, pupils are not involved in planning and leading collective worship. However, they have plenty of ideas about this so that their views are incorporated into future plans.

Pupils enjoy their RE lessons. They are learning about different faiths, although until recently teaching of RE has been haphazard. The school has begun to use the *Understanding Christianity* resource alongside the locally agreed

syllabus. This is not yet effective in enabling pupils to develop critical thinking skills. Lessons are more focused on recounting and describing rather than encouraging debate. RE does not reflect the school's vision and values because teachers are not making links between the learning and pupils' daily lives. For example, pupils were not asked to consider how Jesus portrayed courage and resilience during Easter week. The new RE lead has not yet undertaken any monitoring activities at Redbrook and meaningful assessment is in its infancy.

This is a church school on the cusp of great things. It has developed a strong vision with values that clearly support that vision. Staff are highly committed to 'make the school a success, despite the challenges it faces'. With strong leadership across the federation and the active involvement of parents, it has the capacity to provide an exciting future for the pupils of Redbrook.

Executive Headteacher	Sarah Helm
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