

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Goring Church of England Aided Primary School			
Address	Wallingford Road, Goring-on-Thames, Reading, RG8 0BG		
Date of inspection	9 December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	123201

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	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Goring is a primary school with 206 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 below national averages. The school has experienced a recent drop in the number of pupils on roll, following a bulge year when it exceeded its published admissions number.

The school's Christian vision

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. (John 15:5)
We are all part of God's vine and are rooted in his rich soil. We are nurtured and supported so that we may grow and spread out into the world to love and to serve. Our associated values are 'Belong, Believe, Achieve'.

Key findings

- The school's strong and deeply Christian vision inspires all aspects of the school's work. Warm, compassionate relationships among pupils and adults ensure that everyone flourishes.
- Inspiring leadership by the headteacher, staff and governors ensure that the vision of love and service is lived out through the school's partnerships with other schools and the diocese.
- Pupils develop outstanding leadership skills. Through taking action to serve others, they develop high aspirations and are well prepared for the future.
- Collective worship is imaginative and engaging and is integral to the school's life and vision. Pupils play a central role in planning, leading and evaluating worship.
- Exemplary leadership by the religious education (RE) co-ordinator ensures that teaching is excellent and lessons are stimulating and challenging. As a result, pupils are inspired and motivated by RE.

Areas for development

- Extend teaching about the Eucharist, so that pupils throughout the school develop an understanding of its central significance to Christians.
- Develop the current innovative practice in using contemplation as a means of deepening spirituality.

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

Leaders at Goring Church of England Primary School have developed a Christian vision of exceptional clarity and depth. The imagery of the vine, rooted in God's love and spreading out into the world through service and doing 'fruitful things', inspires all aspects of the school's work. Through this vision, the school excels in its nurture and support of pupils and staff, in the way pupils become leaders who serve their community, and through its support of other schools so that they too grow and thrive. Supporting the vision are the key values of belonging, believing and achieving. The starting place for the vision is in nurture and support. This is seen in the way all pupils' academic and pastoral needs are met through careful intervention. Not only do staff support pupils, but pupils routinely support the younger children, looking after them in the playground and making sure they are happy and grow as fruit on the vine. As a result, all pupils, including the vulnerable, make good progress and flourish. One pupil commented, 'The vine spreads out, not up, so everyone is equal'. This view of other people being held together in God's love ensures that pupils develop a deeply respectful attitude to one another and embrace any who might be different from them. They particularly enjoy learning about a range of faiths in RE, recognising that this helps them to understand differences and celebrate similarities. As another pupil commented, 'We are everyone's brother and sister'.

Nurture and support extend to the staff, who are given excellent opportunities to develop professionally. Leaders build on staff strengths, such as knowledge of computing or business management, and help them to develop their expertise so that they in turn may serve the school. Leaders talk about this as feeding the soil so that the vine grows and bears fruit which all may share. Staff wellbeing is also prioritised, with the result that they feel valued and fulfilled. A significant strength of the school is the way it lives out its vision of support and service through working with other schools and the diocese. For example, leaders have recently helped another church school in developing its Christian vision and teachers frequently visit Goring to observe high quality teaching. Again, this is seen through the analogy of the vine spreading into the wider community and bearing rich fruit. One benefit of the close, mutually supportive link with the diocese is being one of a small group of schools working with the diocese to pilot the use of contemplation as an aid to spiritual growth. Although in its early days, this innovative approach is having a profound influence on developing both pupils' and adults' spirituality across the school. One pupil remarked that contemplation 'helps me to think about things I don't normally think about, like mending relationships'.

Governors refer back to the vision at every governors' meeting and use it as a reference point for their actions. For example, they made a key decision to serve their local community by welcoming additional children to the school during a bulge year. They have also targeted spending at support for the vulnerable as part of their mission to nurture and support those in need. Governors are assiduous in monitoring the impact of the vision on the life of the school, examining, for example, how the curriculum is inspired by the vision.

The school's leaders have identified the importance for their pupils in developing an understanding of the wider world and taking responsibility to make a difference as active citizens. Pupils talk about being 'inspired to help each other and not be selfish'. This emphasis on service as a key element of the vision ensures that pupils develop a remarkable degree of leadership. There is a wide range of pupil groups such as the eco group, peer mentors and mental health ambassadors, which instil in pupils the importance of helping and serving one another. Through these leadership groups and through the carefully planned curriculum, pupils are challenged to think about important questions of injustice and unfairness in society. As a result, they choose to take action. For example, they have reduced their use of plastic, supported charities such as Water Aid, and made bird boxes to improve the local environment. Pupils have high aspirations. This is because the school encourages them to think imaginatively about what they could do when they are older to continue to serve those around them. Parents remark that the young leaders nurtured at Goring frequently go on to serve their secondary schools in leadership roles, ensuring that the vine grows out into the community and the school's vision is lived out on a wider stage.

Collective worship lies at the heart of the school's life and provides a daily period of calm and fellowship for all members of the school community. One child said that when the candles are lit at the start of worship, he feels that, 'Jesus keeps us strong – he is beside me'. A key feature of worship is the imaginative way in which faith is brought to life. Staff use news reports in worship to consider moral issues and visitors talk about the groups and charities with which they are connected. Because pupils' knowledge of the Bible is strong, they are able to link

these real life stories to biblical teaching and to Christian values such as compassion and hope. This prompts them to take action, living out the school's vision to go out into the world to love and serve. This inspiring approach to worship also helps pupils to develop a mature understanding of prayer. Pupils talk about prayer as 'a need, not a want' and are able to pray spontaneously in response to the themes explored in worship. The 'Fruitful Moments' books in each class record some of their deep reflections and thoughts. One pupil had written, 'Good will always defeat the strongest of evil'. Pupils take a formative role in planning, leading and evaluating worship and this is a strength of the school. Members of the Worship Squad are eager to involve as many children as possible in their acts of worship, because they have learnt through their evaluation that this is what the other children enjoy. As a result, pupil-led worship is popular and effective. There are well developed links with local churches, ensuring that pupils gain a broad understanding of different traditions in worship. Pupils have a mature understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The impact of collective worship at Goring is far reaching. When older children return on work experience, they often describe collective worship as the one thing they will always remember about their primary school.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy RE. This is because lessons are imaginative and incorporate a range of ways of learning such as art, discussion and debate. Pupils particularly welcome the 'hard questions which make you think'. The outstanding RE co-ordinator explains these approaches as being inspired by the school's vision. In the same way that the vine is vigorous and grows deep, she wants pupils to develop their debating skills and critical thinking so that they will question things in later life rather than accepting easy answers. As a result, lessons provide a supportive environment in which pupils are confident to express their own ideas and beliefs. One parent commented, 'Faith may or may not come in its own time, but everyone has the opportunity to ask questions and explore their beliefs.' Pupils gain an excellent understanding of Christianity and a range of other faiths. The RE co-ordinator has developed robust systems for assessment which she has shared with neighbouring schools.

The Christian vision of Goring Church of England Primary School is having a profound effect on the lives of all members of the school community. As the vine grows ever further into the community, lives are being enriched and transformed through nurture, support, love and service.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

The RE leader lives out the school's Christian vision through her supportive and developmental monitoring of lessons. This ensures that all teaching is good and much of it better than good. Pupils' progress is at least in line with that in other subjects and in many cases exceeds it. This includes the school's vulnerable pupils.

Headteacher	Angela Wheatcroft
Inspector's name and number	Duncan Jones 813