

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great Ponton Church of England Primary School

Address	Mill Lane, Great Ponton, Grantham, Lincolnshire. NG33 5DT		
Date of inspection	13 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	Lincoln	URN	120602

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

School context

Great Ponton is a primary school with 64 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 the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has seven foundation governor vacancies.

The school's Christian vision

As an inclusive community, we aim to enable all voices to be heard. We see everyone as valued and valuable in the eyes of God. We work towards creating a society of justice and hope. We encourage all to shine the light of Christ in the local and wider community.

Key findings

- The Christian vision is lived out at all levels of the school where releasing the God-given potential of each member is foremost.
- Hugely positive relationships are built upon genuine trust. They are enabling all to be valued and heard.
- The school has made progress since the last inspection in articulating its values and vision. However, governors and middle leaders are not using the SIAMS evaluation schedule sufficiently to support school improvement at a rigorous pace.
- Religious education (RE) and collective worship contribute well to the school's inclusive, ethical approach in equipping pupils with a moral compass as they evaluate the possibilities and opportunities of life. However, the arts and active approaches are insufficiently used to maximise engagement and impact.

Areas for development

- Ensure that all governors and staff are regularly trained to use the SIAMS evaluation schedule to shape school improvement and develop a wider understanding of Christian distinctiveness.
- Extend the use of the arts and active approaches, including visits and visitors, to engage pupils even more fully in RE and collective worship and to deepen their spiritual experience.
- Develop creative ways to extend the whole school approach to spirituality and courageous advocacy in respect of the local environment, global environmental issues and to God as Creator.

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

Arising from its Christian vision, this school excels in giving pupils opportunity and a voice in exploring the big questions of life, including faith. Through the school's open approach, pupils develop as critical thinkers. They are offered a vision of Christianity and encouraged to think for themselves and ask questions about it. The Christian values of wisdom, hope, dignity, respect, peace and friendship strongly influence relationships and the school's approach. In line with the vision, pupils actively consider the 'why' and biblical precedent behind the values, evaluating if they apply to their lives.

Relationships within school are strong because everyone is valued as a child of God. The school works hard through learning strategies, trusting relationships and Christian care to promote strong mental health and wellbeing. In a spirit of openness and respect, pupils are able to probe the wisdom and hope set before them and to extend friendship. The giving of voice and the valuing of individuals is evident in the staff team. Consequently, all staff are committed to innovation and transformation for the benefit of the pupils and local community.

Dignity and respect are integral to the school's work. When things do go wrong in behavioural choices, the restorative justice approach is increasingly helping pupils to understand the choices made by self and others. Pupils are encouraged to move forwards with compassion and forgiveness. The school has a strength in supporting pupils with emotional needs. It actively seeks to support such pupils. The investment in training the pastoral mentor and creating a multi-sensory room exemplify the school's care.

The school has worked hard in recent years to transform the learning experience. Everyone at the school is committed to removing barriers to learning and creating hope for success. Placing the Christian vision, RE and spirituality at the heart of the curriculum has resulted in a Christian ethics-based approach that inspires pupils. This is shown in the three-year upward trend in progress and attainment at the school. However, these are not consistently in line with national expectations, especially in writing. Whilst the new curriculum has significantly improved engagement, enjoyment and achievement, opportunities to deepen learning and for pupils to express their voice through the arts is under-developed.

The school cultivates a strong sense of responsibility and compassion in supporting numerous charities, for example, Grantham Foodbank and Pouches for Koalas. The questioning minds and Christian ethical approach across the curriculum is extending pupils' charitable work to actively seeking social justice. This is a direct outcome of the school's Christian vision. Pupils increasingly question the ethics of situations, respect differing perceptions and act as courageous advocates, giving voice to social concerns. Pupils' work with the civic council regarding a proposed chicken farm locally exemplifies this. The newly refreshed displays of can-do statements and courageous advocacy involvement, reinforces for pupils the impact they can make. The displays remind pupils that they can bring the light of Christ to bear on situations and prosper hope.

Spiritual growth is good overall because the school knows its pupils well and values each of them unconditionally. Pupils' eyes are opened to awe, wonder and mystery even in challenging times. Whilst pupils develop well spiritually through quality provision, the school's use of the beautiful local environment is underdeveloped. This limits pupils' appreciation of God as Creator and of spiritual writings concerning the environment. Similarly, in courageous advocacy work, environmental issues are generally insufficiently considered.

Repeatedly, pupils state they are 'fascinated' by RE. This is because it inspires them to find out about the world and to contribute their own perspectives. RE is enabling pupils to respond to world views with thoughtfulness and respect. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of various world faiths alongside Christianity. The

'Understanding Christianity' resource has raised standards. Its use is resulting in pupils that can question and explore ideas and mystery with confidence. Occasional visits are made to enhance learning, for example, to Lincoln Cathedral. However, the use of active approaches such as visits and visitors is not as extensive as it might be to widen pupils' learning. Similarly, the development of RE through the arts is insufficiently prevalent, limiting pupils' opportunity to deepen learning. RE contributes well to the school's vision of inclusion.

Worship has improved since the last inspection and has a much higher profile. Its position at the start of the day invites the light of Christ to illuminate the day ahead. Worship invites all pupils to grow spiritually through reflection, music and stillness. Pupils write their own prayers. These are often read in school worship or during the school day, making prayer relevant and important. Pupils learn about Christian traditions and festivals, Bible stories and Christian prayers, extending Christian knowledge. Well planned themes excite pupils to be the best they can be in an ethical way, for example, through reflection upon inspirational people including Nelson Mandela and Ellen MacArthur. Increasingly worship makes a good contribution to pupils' ethical and charitable thought. An outcome of celebrating Christingle is the support of the Children's Society charity, for example. A range of people lead worship so that pupils experience different styles and traditions. However, the use of the arts and active approaches are underused as ways to deepen the spiritual experience. Periodic visits to the church, for example, for Easter, strengthens pupils' appreciation of Anglican worship. However, using the church for worship and lessons is fairly limited. Pupils have a role in planning and evaluating worship through the school council. Their voice shapes provision.

Conscientious governors are fully committed to the vision and prospering the pupils' best interests. Through monitoring, governors ensure previous strengths are maintained, that development points are responded to and the school moves forward. However, the pace and rigour of development as a Church school is not always as swift as it could be. This is because governors and middle leaders are not trained regularly enough to use the SIAMS school evaluation schedule to shape their work. This is exacerbated by the significant amount of foundation governor vacancies which reduces capacity and pace. Leaders use a range of positive relationships to benchmark the school's provision and to realise greater possibilities for staff and pupils. Engaging with the Grace Church Schools Network has a hugely positive impact upon school development, including as a church school. The governors weave the community into realising its vision through effective church links and productive parent relationships.

Great Ponton Church School is a centre of hope in the lives of the people it serves. It encourages all who have contact with this school to shine the light of Christ in their local and wider communities.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Pupils make good progress in RE because they are enabled to ask and answer questions of depth and meaning. Pupils, including those with additional needs (SEND), are challenged to answer 'big questions' which is enabling them to make links between different faiths. In the best examples, RE books show that standards are generally good; sometimes better. Monitoring is accurate, rightly assessing teaching as good. The subject coordinator leads with enthusiasm and skill.

Headteacher	Keith Leader
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips (598)