

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wadham Church of England Community School			
Address	Mount Pleasant, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7NT		
Date of inspection	14 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled secondary
Diocese	Bath and Wells	URN	123893

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 Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Requires Improvement

School context

Wadham is a secondary school with 456 students on roll. The majority of students are of White British heritage. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The current headteacher has been in post for one year and was previously the deputy headteacher of the school.

The school's Christian vision

Our vision is to enable our students to fulfil their potential and flourish in all areas of their lives. Our values are shaped by our Christian foundation and are the basis of our vision to instil hope, achieve excellence and to promote well-being within our community. 'Life in all its fullness' John 10:10.

Key findings

- The vision, recently introduced by the strong, Christian leadership of the new headteacher, is underpinned by the agreed core values. Together these provide a foundation that gives purpose to the decisions that are made to enable all students and staff to flourish. The values are well established. However, the vision is not yet widely embedded.
- Through the innovative curriculum projects in religion and philosophy (R+P) and the alternative timetable days, students are able to explore diversity, world religions and the values, which underpin daily life. However, although this is deepening student understanding of faith and culture the difference this is making in their thinking is in its early stages.
- Highlighting the importance of daily worship to ensure it effectively reinforces the vision and values of the school has been part of school development planning. The plans have been finalised, but not fully implemented.
- Providing care and concern for the individual, as a unique child of God, is a key feature of the school. This nurturing is underpinned by its Christian distinctiveness and foundation. This has been strengthened with the formation of student anti-bullying and mental health ambassadors and the provision through the Bridge Centre.
- The drive to live out the vision and core values is reflected in the many changes that have been introduced by the headteacher. This has created a strong sense of 'team' committed to the community they serve.

Areas for development

- Embed the vision, so that all groups, particularly the students can clearly understand the difference this is making in the way they are able to aspire and succeed,
- Expand the projects offered through the curriculum so that students continue to deepen their understanding of faith, culture and diversity.
- Fully implement the plans for worship so that it is effective in reinforcing the school's vision and values daily.

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 strong, Christian leadership of the headteacher is uniting the school staff as an effective team. He has implemented many changes to drive the recently agreed vision, to enable all staff and students to flourish. The vision is underpinned by the established, core values, which were also strengthened, by making the value of hope central. Although the vision and value changes have been shared there has been insufficient time for them to be firmly embedded and understood by all. However, there is now a Christian foundation that is giving purpose and direction for the decisions that are made. There is a real sense of community with the Wadham family coming together to provide care and nurture for the individual as a unique child of God. Focus on the development of the whole person has had an impact on relationships and organisation of staff. An inclusion team, led by one of the deputy headteachers, meets weekly to discuss the progress of the most vulnerable. This is one example of the rigorous systems that have been created, driven by the vision, to ensure students can, 'Enjoy life in all its fullness, John 10:10'. Anti-bullying and mental health ambassadors have also been drawn, from the student population, to extend the outreach. In addition, the Bridge Centre has been opened to offer a 'safe place' for 1:1 support. These holistic approaches, underpinned by the Christian values of hope, forgiveness and reconciliation are building relationships that are strong and caring. Students and staff are being guided by Jesus' teaching, to treat others as we would want to be treated.

The 'listen, respect and do' attitude is a feature of the role of the chaplain. Since starting at the school a year ago she has transformed a classroom into a chapel space. This offers comfort and welcome for staff and students who are in need. She describes what she does as, 'My little touches to tell people they are cared for'. A prayer pot invites individuals to ask and receive spiritual and emotional comfort. During the examination periods and times of increased stress the chaplain has used prayer stations to inspire and sustain hope. She has also introduced notice boards with seasonal scripture and symbols such as the peace dove, which was positively appreciated during Remembrance. This focus on prayer is making a difference, building trust and transparency within the school family, grounded in the school's Christian ethos. As a result, students' attendance is improving and positive attitudes to learning are growing. In addition, school leaders reinforce the importance of students sharing their views and opinions to address need and to influence school life. Students raised issues concerning the use of plastic in the canteen, which resulted in sustainable alternatives being found. Consequently, students say, 'This school helps us to grow as a person. The values wheel and the vision is all about building success. We say prayers and our chaplain is there to provide a caring place to reflect.'

Students are positive about worship and 'would like to engage with these experiences, daily'. In response, the headteacher and the staff have highlighted the importance of worship, through the school development meetings. Plans have been finalised, but not fully implemented. As a result, currently, its effectiveness as a vehicle for reinforcing the vision and values of the school is limited. Links with the Church are strong and local clergy are invited to lead worship in school. These services have often focused on social need such as knife crime and homelessness. This led to sixth form students going on a visit to London, where they saw first hand the scale of homelessness. This inspired them to take action through researching a local charity supporting those sleeping on the streets. They set up a collection point in school to gather items and money to distribute, to make a difference, living out their values.

Religion and Philosophy is offered as a combined subject, which all students study to GCSE level. It has a high status and the successful attainment of students reflects how effectively it is led and taught. Students enter the school with skills below national expectations. By the time they leave accelerated progress through effective, targeted support, brings them in line or above others nationally. The subject leader organises curriculum projects, which are highly creative. He also uses strategies such as 'the alternative timetable days' to enable students to explore diversity, world religions and life values. Big question challenges require students to think deeply, reflect and respond deepening their understanding of this aspect of their learning. This is building respect and tolerance of others in school and in the wider world. Visits to mosques and visitors from other faiths and cultures are also successful in broadening their perspective. However, this is only just beginning to make a difference to student attitudes.

Wadham is an inclusive school that is well respected and popular within the community it serves. Parents speak highly of the difference the new headteacher is making, through his strong leadership and focus on the values. They say, 'The values have raised expectations and nurturing approaches support all students, whatever their needs.' The school also benefits from the active and knowledgeable support provided through the governing body. All governors have now been given link roles and new committees have been established. A new foundation governor has been appointed to support the headteacher in driving the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Partnerships with outside agencies and involvement in Schools Health and Resilience Education Projects (SHARE) are growing. As a result, Wadham is breaking down barriers and enabling young people to grow as resilient young citizens. The vision and values are inspiring them to make a difference in the world in which they live.

Headteacher	Matthew Gardner
Inspector's name and number	Marianne Phillips 586