

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Stone Church of England Combined School | | | |
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| Address | Oxford Road, Stone, Aylesbury, HP17 8PD | | |
| Date of inspection | 22 October 2019 | Status of school | VC Primary |
| Diocese | Oxford | URN | 110420 |

| Overall Judgement | Grade | Good |
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| 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

Stone is a combined primary school with 207 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 in line with national averages. Since the last denominational inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. All the current teaching staff have also been appointed since the last inspection.

The school's Christian vision

Through our Christian vision, 'Love one another as I have loved you' (John 13: 34-35) helping each other to reach for the stars', we want every child to achieve their full potential.

Key findings

- The school's cohesive and embedded Christian vision is integral to all aspects of school life. It positively influences decision making, policies and practice at all levels.
- The effective leadership of the headteacher ensures a strong emphasis is placed on the provision of tailored support and mental wellbeing strategies, in order to meet the needs of all pupils, enabling them to flourish.
- RE is given high priority, it is taught with skill and imagination and pupils make progress in line with or above other subjects. Philosophical discussions and exciting learning activities lead to deep conversations and debate which enrich pupils' understanding of major world religions.
- Pupils are kind, polite, caring and behave very well. They develop positive relationships because they are living out the vision, 'love one another as I have loved you'.
- Collective worship's centrality within school life and its inclusive teaching enable all present, irrespective of personal faith or belief, to find inspiration and value in thought provoking themes and concepts.

Areas for development

- Embed the school's understanding of spirituality, so that children are engaged in a range of spiritual experiences across the whole school curriculum, allowing them to deepen their own spiritual awareness.
- Increase pupils' encounters with different faiths in order to broaden their experience of diversity.
- Extend pupil involvement and independence in leading, planning and evaluating collective worship to improve practice.

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

Stone is a loving, caring and supportive community. All stakeholders have a deep commitment to inclusion and treat every pupil as a unique individual.

Rooted in a clear theological Christian narrative, the school's vision promotes positive, loving relationships and results in aspirational pupils. It is lived out passionately by all. Leaders and governors have established an effective church school evaluation process. Through regular monitoring visits, governors have a very clear idea of school performance, achievement and the way in which the vision is being lived out. All aspects of the school improvement plan, decision making, and policies are driven by the shared Christian vision. Leaders ensure that financial and human resources are used effectively so that all pupils can flourish and 'reach for their stars'. Leaders and staff engage in training opportunities, guidance and network meetings from the Diocese that wholly support the school's Christian distinctiveness.

The skills for life curriculum, driven by the Christian vision, supports everyone to love and help each other. This ensures that all are happy and prepared for life at Stone and beyond. This curriculum is enhanced by numerous opportunities for leadership, curricular and extracurricular activities. These opportunities develop pupils' confidence and aspirations. Leaders and staff work tirelessly to meet every child's needs. They articulate how the vision 'to reach for their stars' ensures that everyone works as a team to ensure that all pupils are meeting their full potential. One pupil said, 'every single teacher helps you to do your best'. Pupils are aspirational because they are 'reaching for their star'. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. The vision is complemented by six very well embedded Christian values: community, perseverance, honesty, compassion, respect and responsibility. Pupils talk confidently about how the vision and values influence their behaviour and choices, both at school and at home. They talk about the values as stepping stones to success. One pupil commented that the value of community meant 'everyone is welcome in our school'. Pupils can readily talk about Bible stories that link to their vision and values. At present, there isn't a common understanding of the concept of spirituality. This means that times when spirituality might be developed tend to be 'in the moment' rather than planned for. Consequently, planning does not foster a progressive understanding of how spirituality can be built on as the children mature.

Mental health and wellbeing are a very important part of school life at Stone. There are many effective strategies in place to look after everybody's wellbeing. For example, daily mindfulness activities take place in every class. Nurture groups offer children a calm, relaxing and safe space to discuss their feelings and reflect. Staff are offered flexible working patterns. Leaders, including governors, made the decision to pay for additional insurance to ensure teachers can access wellbeing counsellors and private GPs outside of working hours. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to become mental health heroes. A member of a local mental health charity talks to the children and helps train them in their role. Pupils were keen to articulate that this has made a positive difference in school because worries are dealt with, pupils have someone to talk to and everyone is taken care of on the playground.

Pupils are aware of global issues and they are knowledgeable about people who are in much less fortunate circumstances, both locally and internationally. One global appeal inspired pupils to also think about local children who won't be receiving gifts at Christmas. With the financial support of a member of the local community, all disadvantaged pupils receive a gift at Christmas. Pupils are articulate advocates of change and passionately challenge injustice and inequality. There are regular opportunities to engage in social action, most of which is pupil-identified. Each house in school chooses a charity to support for the school year. Fundraising for these charities encourages compassion, generosity and a need to act where there are inequalities in the world.

The Christian vision inspires strong relationships at all levels and a desire to live as Jesus did. Working in partnership with the community is also key to the vision. There are mutually beneficial partnerships with the church, for example the Open the Book team. The local vicar recently supported staff and pupils through a deeply tragic time. Following this time of sadness, a number of strategies were put in place to support the emotional needs of pupils and staff. The church is used for special services at festival times, such as harvest and Christmas. Parents attend these services in large numbers. Support from parents is strong and recently the wider community pulled together to help clear up when part of the school was flooded. Parents recognise that the school is very inclusive. They talk

positively of how the vision sets a foundation for life, in learning to help and care for one another and follow Jesus' words, 'love one another as I have loved you'.

Collective worship is a clear expression of the Christian vision at Stone as it celebrates aspiration, success, kindness and support for others. Bible stories, linked to the vision and values, are central to collective worship. Pupils are celebrated and rewarded for living out the values like Jesus did. Worship is inclusive, with those of different views and beliefs attending, as do all staff. There are opportunities for stillness and prayer and some pupils value the time for reflection. Pupils have an age appropriate understanding of the Christian belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and Eucharist. Worship leaders are included in some parts of collective worship and monitoring prayer, however pupils do not currently have opportunities to independently lead, plan and evaluate worship. Included within worship are elements of Anglican tradition, including observance of the special seasons of the Christian year.

RE is exceptionally well led by a specialist subject leader who teaches the lessons to the majority of the school. Lessons are inspiring due to their engaging and varied approach. As a result of this, pupils have a secure knowledge of Christianity and are able to discuss a range of religions. Stone has been involved with the biblical literacy trials initiative, which has impacted on the older pupils who have developed their ability to analyse and evaluate Bible texts. Discussion and debate are a key part of RE lessons. Pupils are tackling big questions and, as a result, evidence in discussions books shows very deep thinking taking place. Pupils readily accept contrasting beliefs and appreciate the need for respect, dignity and tolerance. Pupils of faith and their families enjoy sharing their knowledge and expertise in lessons. Pupils have not had many opportunities to visit places of worship of different faiths. The RE leader works with local schools and attends network meetings in order to keep an up to date knowledge of the subject and share best practice. Clear marking and regular assessment procedures ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and the most able, make good progress. There is a real sense within the school of enjoyment in RE lessons and this is enabling many to flourish academically in this subject.

Stone is a community where all are treated with dignity and respect. There are positive relationships at all levels because everyone is living out the vision to 'love one another as I have loved you.'

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| Headteacher | Deborah Morrison |
| Inspector's name and number | Kerry Geddis 955 |