

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

## Guilden Sutton Church of England Primary School

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| Address            | Arrowcroft Road, Guilden Sutton, Chester CH3 7ES |                  |                      |
| Date of inspection | 14 November 2019                                 | Status of school | Voluntary controlled |
| Diocese            | Chester  | URN              | 111273               |

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| <b>Overall Judgement</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>Grade</b> | <b>Excellent</b> |
| <b>Additional Judgement</b> | The impact of collective worship   | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Excellent</b> |

### School context

Guilden Sutton Church of England Primary School is a primary school with 215 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 below the national average.

The headteacher has been in post for 14 years and the school received a judgment of Outstanding from Ofsted in 2017.

### The school's Christian vision

'And what does God ask of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' Micah 6:8

Through the teachings of Jesus all can flourish spiritually, emotionally and academically throughout life, living out love and justice for all.

### Key findings

- Outstanding leadership over time has ensured that the school's Christian vision underpins and permeates all aspects of school life. The wellbeing of all is paramount and everyone's talents are recognised and developed.
- A rich curriculum and productive partnerships empower and inspire pupils and adults to develop as leaders and seekers of social justice.
- The school is recognised by the diocese as a centre of excellent practice and leaders look for innovative ways to further improve.
- Collective worship provides a rich and varied spiritual experience valued by all members of the school community.
- Highly effective Religious Education (RE) teaching enables pupils to develop a good understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths and the ability to reflect upon and discuss their own beliefs.

### Areas for development

- Utilise the existing strong relationship with the local church to further develop the school's role at the heart of the community.
- Embed the newly revised bespoke RE curriculum in order for pupils to further develop their skills of enquiry, analysis and interpretation.

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 long serving headteacher, together with her team, has been very successful in ensuring that the school's vision is fully embedded in policy and practice. She effectively models the words from Micah, which underpin the school's vision: 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' Love and justice for all are at the heart of all relationships both within the school and with the outside world. This has led to an ethos where all, pupils and adults alike, feel trusted and supported to be the best they can possibly be. Staff speak warmly of the headteacher's ability to recognise their potential and to give them opportunities for professional development. They commented, 'being here is just heaven'; 'it is like a therapy unit'. Innovative practice such as annual staff training weekends and vision days ensure that all staff have ownership of the vision. They feel part of a team where all are valued and listened to. Governors are equally committed and supportive, being fully involved in the evaluation and development of Guilden Sutton as a church school.

The trusting relationships, team working and aspiration modelled by staff have a very positive effect on pupils. They feel safe, cared for and loved as unique individuals. The school's innovative wellbeing practices have previously been recognised in a report by Her Majesty's Inspectors. The appointment of an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant amongst other initiatives has continued to strengthen these. The supportive ethos, together with a broad and stimulating curriculum and excellent teaching, enables all groups of pupils to flourish academically. Attainment, progress and attendance are all generally higher than the national average. In keeping with its vision of love and justice for all, the school regularly admits pupils who have experienced difficulties at other schools. The school is successful in identifying and meeting their individual needs so that they too can flourish. A parent of one such child commented, 'He has grown in confidence and resilience as well as learning that he is talented and unique and deserves to be accepted for who he is.' Pupils appreciate that staff always listen to their ideas and encourage them to be independent and to take the lead. A recent visitor to the school described them as 'well behaved, curious and enthusiastic.' Pupil leadership is a strength of the school with many opportunities for them to take responsibility. Parents particularly value the buddy system, which helps younger children settle and feel confident about school. Participation in the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders Award empowers Year 5 pupils to take action. They have undertaken projects both in the local community and globally through a link with a school in Zambia. They are aspirational for themselves and for the world.

The school's vision of justice for all has resulted in a strong culture of social action. Pupils are proactive about responding where they see a need, raising funds through cake sales and competitions. They independently run a weekly Fair Trade stall, including ordering and managing the stock. Year 6 pupils plan and prepare fund raising events for Children in Need based on their own business plans. The ethos group plan to raise awareness about environmental issues this year with palm oil and plastic pollution just two of their concerns. The rich and innovative curriculum enables pupils to have a mature understanding of current issues. A current project on refugees, for example, uses high quality texts to develop literacy skills whilst challenging pupils' thinking on global issues. Parents also commented on how homework linked to this topic had led to discussions at home. Families were also involved in a previous whole school project on a street in Chester. Pupils investigated the wide variety of ethnicities represented in the shops and restaurants. The impact of the curriculum driven by the school's vision of love and justice for all is that pupils have a questioning and reflective attitude to learning. A parent commented that they also 'have a strong sense of right and wrong and will stick up for each other.' In addition they demonstrate a respectful understanding of difference and diversity. This is strengthened through an annual interfaith week run in partnership with the local Harmony Interfaith Group.

One member of staff describes collective worship as the 'foundation' of the school. All members of the school community value the opportunity to worship together. Worship is varied and led by staff, pupils, visitors, an Open the Book team and the local vicar. Pupils regularly plan worship, including Time to be Still, a weekly meditative worship with music, silence and prayer. They also plan and lead worship for special occasions. Governors and staff commented on being moved to tears by the recent Year 6 Remembrance Day service. Children's voice books enable pupils to evaluate worship regularly. Links with St John the Baptist Church are strong. The recently appointed vicar has devised an innovative programme to ensure that pupils have a good

understanding of the Anglican tradition, including the Eucharist. Pupils value the opportunity to visit the reflective areas present in all classrooms to think and to write prayers. As result collective worship makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

Statutory obligations are met for both collective worship and RE.

Teaching in RE is lively and varied. This results in pupils developing a good understanding of both Christianity and other major world faiths. Highly effective succession planning has ensured that the new RE lead is well prepared for her role. She has recently introduced a new curriculum, bespoke to Guilden Sutton. This effectively covers the content of the locally agreed syllabus whilst including elements of the diocesan syllabus and Understanding Christianity. Pupils are encouraged to relate teaching in RE to their own lives and beliefs and are able to do so in a thoughtful manner. Systems of assessment are well embedded. The school is recognised by the diocese as a centre of innovative practice. As such it has been used to pilot and evaluate teaching materials for use more widely. The potential of staff to develop as church school leaders is also recognised. The headteacher is sought after to mentor and advise others.

Love and justice are woven seamlessly through all aspects of school life. This results in pupils who have a strong desire to challenge injustice through social action. Consequently, all members of the school community are flourishing.

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| Headteacher                 | Kathy Crowe          |
| Inspector's name and number | Carolyn Whiteway 933 |