

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chesterton Church of England Primary School

Vision

At Chesterton Church of England Primary School, we are a school community where each individual is valued, has the opportunity to grow, and contributes to the world around them.

Our vision, 'Building Firm Foundations for Life', has its origins in Jesus' story of the man who built his house upon the rock: 'The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock.' (Matthew 7:24-27)

Chesterton Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Notable Strengths

- Leaders live out the deeply embedded Christian vision. 'Building Firm Foundations for Life' is the bedrock of leaders' strategic and day-to-day decision making. As a result, pupils and adults are given a strong foundation from which to grow and flourish.
- The vision drives an inclusive and nurturing culture. Leaders know pupils and families well. This ensures that vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs receive effective, personalised support that enables them to participate and thrive.
- Relationships are characterised by compassion, openness and trust. This sustains a resilient community in which pupils and adults confidently share their joys and concerns.
- Strong leadership ensures religious education (RE) maintains a high profile in the life of the school. The carefully sequenced and challenging curriculum enables pupils to build knowledge, explore a range of religions and worldviews. This creates thoughtful, well-reasoned responses.
- Carefully planned collective worship creates a special time of the day for pupils and adults. It offers meaningful moments of reflection and joyful singing. These opportunities deepen the community's understanding of the vision and enrich spiritual development within worship.

Development Points

- Establish and embed a shared understanding of spirituality and ensure that deeper opportunities to develop this are planned across the curriculum. This is so that pupils can recognise, interpret and articulate their spiritual development with increasing insight.
- Enable pupils to identify injustice independently and initiate well-informed responses to issues affecting their communities and the wider world. This is so that they develop as champions who challenge injustice and uphold the rights of others.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

The deeply embedded Christian vision, 'Building Firm Foundations for Life', forms the bedrock of the strategic and everyday work of Chesterton Primary School. The vision is rooted in Jesus' teaching about the wise builder. This creates a shared understanding that secure foundations enable individuals to be valued, grow and contribute. Leaders, including governors, articulate this confidently and use it to shape decisions. The associated values of respect, compassion, resilience, hope, integrity and humility are lived out authentically in relationships. They are reinforced through worship, learning and behaviour management. Through their monitoring, leaders and governors know the vision is effective in equipping pupils and adults with the foundations, values and resilience needed to thrive. A range of enrichment opportunities enables pupils to discover their interests, develop confidence and persevere when facing unfamiliar challenges. Staff are similarly enabled to flourish through purposeful professional development and thoughtful support for wellbeing. Consequently, pupils and adults feel valued and develop the personal and social foundations through which they can thrive.

Vision and Curriculum

The vision shapes the curriculum. This has been designed to build the knowledge, skills and personal qualities pupils need to build 'firm foundations for life'. Enrichment, including sport, music, visits and creative activities, extends pupils' experiences and enables them to recognise their gifts. For example, a whole-school exhibition showcased pupils' artistic knowledge and skills, fostering individual pride in their achievements. Leaders reduce barriers for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils through well-targeted provision, including reading support, sensory activities, clubs and music tuition. As a result, these pupils participate fully and develop confidence and resilience. The school has a growing understanding of spirituality through the use of 'windows, mirrors and doors.' There are some planned opportunities for spiritual development in the curriculum. However, there is not a sufficiently shared understanding of what spirituality is or of how this develops progressively. Consequently, pupils do not interpret and articulate their spiritual experiences with sufficient depth.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is a treasured and distinctive part of daily life at Chesterton Primary School. It draws the community together around the Christian vision and develops a secure understanding of the school's six chosen values. A carefully structured programme ensures biblical teaching, prayer, reflection and joyful singing are balanced effectively. In this way, worship creates a space both for shared celebration and personal response. Themes, linked to the Christian calendar and wider events, help pupils to connect faith with their own lives and the world around them. Pupils readily recall biblical messages from worship and relate them to choices, relationships and times of difficulty. For example, when recently reflecting on the story of David and Saul, pupils explain how forgiveness offers an alternative to revenge. These values are evident during social times, where pupils of different ages engage warmly and respectfully with one another, demonstrating a culture of kindness and mutual care. Partnership with the local church enriches provision through regular leadership of worship and an annual prayer-space experience. As a result, pupils discover meaningful ways to pray and reflect in different settings, including the hall, church and school field. Worship is invitational and inclusive, enabling people of all faiths and none to participate with integrity. At present, a limited understanding of understanding of spirituality does not enable pupils and adults to express the significance of these experiences with sufficient depth.

Vision and School Culture

The school's Christian vision creates a deeply caring culture in which pupils and adults are known, respected and treated with dignity. Relationships are characterised by compassion, openness and trust. This provides members of the community with confidence to share both celebrations and concerns, strengthening their resilience during challenging times. Pupils understand that their behaviour choices affect others and that damaged relationships should be repaired. As a result, there is a culture of mutual respect, where positive relationships flourish. Leaders know pupils and families well, responding promptly when difficulties arise. Daily check-ins, nurture activities, sensory circuits, lunchtime provision and individual emotional support provide



effective help, according to need. This timely and wide-ranging support, together with reasonable adjustments, enables pupils to participate fully. In doing so, they develop a strong sense of belonging within the school community. Staff wellbeing is prioritised through supportive professional development and sensitivity to workload. Consequently, adults feel valued and sustained in their vocation. In turn, this enables them to provide nurturing, compassionate support, thus helping vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs to flourish and develop resilience.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Respect, compassion and integrity encourage pupils to take responsibility for their choices and contribute positively to the lives of others. Membership of the school council, eco-council and collective worship council, teaches pupils that their voices matter and that leadership brings responsibility. Through these roles, pupils contribute to worship, environmental initiatives, community events and governing body meetings. Consequently, they grow as responsible leaders who embody the school's values and play an active role in shaping the school community. Pupils are inspired to be generous and recognise the needs of others beyond themselves through supporting the local foodbank and national charities. The school's international partnership widens pupils' awareness of a community whose experience differs from their own. As a result, a link to a school in South Africa prompts positive action and fosters compassion. However, pupils do not consistently identify injustice for themselves, explain why it conflicts with the vision, or determine an appropriate response. This restricts their engagement beyond participation towards becoming informed agents of hope and change.

Religious Education

RE is enthusiastically and passionately led and holds a prominent place within the curriculum. The enquiry-led curriculum is aligned with the locally agreed syllabus and enables pupils to study Christianity alongside a range of religions and worldviews. The curriculum is appropriately balanced. This provides firm foundations for religious literacy and prepares pupils to live well in a religiously and culturally diverse society. Initial activities identify pupils' starting points whilst concluding tasks enable them to draw together and apply their learning. Pupils are beginning to explore theological, philosophical and sociological perspectives through the characters such as 'Theo, the theologian' and 'Sophie, the philosopher'. This supports their understanding of different viewpoints and deepens appreciation of diverse beliefs, helping pupils develop their own worldview. The experienced subject leader's work with the diocese and ongoing training bring current expertise into the school. This inspires professional development strengthens staff subject knowledge and understanding of disciplinary approaches. Leaders and governors maintain regular strategic oversight of RE, enabling them to evaluate its provision, profile and priority and to identify areas for further development.

Teaching and learning activities are engaging and appropriately challenging. This enables pupils, including those with additional needs, to achieve well. Pupils offer thoughtful, reasoned responses. They speak about Christianity as a living and diverse faith and show respect when encountering differing religious and non-religious worldviews. The recently revised whole-school assessment systems are not yet used swiftly enough to adapt provision and address gaps in pupils' learning. However, focused monitoring and training from the RE leader have strengthened consistency in teaching. Consequently, pupils retain important knowledge and build firm foundations for future learning.

Information

Address	Alchester Road, Chesterton, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 1UN		
Date	18 September 2026	URN	123101
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	196
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Rory Gratwohl		
Chair of Governors	Craig Morley		
Inspector	Rob Halls		