



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wistanstow Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Wistanstow, Craven Arms, SY7 8DQ
School vision	
<p>Growing and Learning Together: A school community where all pupils are valued, celebrated, safe and happy, where all are included and supported to achieve their potential in a caring Christian environment that inspires a continued love of learning and fittingly prepares them for their next steps in life. (Matthew 13: 3-9)</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeds of the vision, inspired by the Parable of the Sower, have fallen on fertile ground and are being richly cultivated. As a result, pupils and staff are given many opportunities to flourish. • Christian values are interwoven strongly through collective worship and beyond. Pupils and staff relate to them in practical ways. They strive to face issues with a heart of love. As a result, the whole community is connected and strengthened spiritually. • Leaders make courageous decisions so all are valued. Everyone, no matter their circumstances, is treated as a child of God and is nurtured to thrive. • The school recognises that everyone has a sense of vulnerability at some point in their lives. As a result, staff create an open, inclusive and compassionate ethos where there is caring professional support. • Through its relationships with the Edge Schools' Federation and diocese, the school consistently aims to enhance lives beyond its boundary. Leaders are evolving a school rooted historically in its village community but which seeks to look outwards for its future. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure monitoring and evaluation by all leaders of the outworking of the vision precisely focuses on driving forward decisions made. This will enhance the provision of a fertile ground for flourishing. • Through the evolution of the curriculum, weave more planned opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually. These moments of reflection will help the whole community know what it is to live life in all its fullness. • Promote difference and diversity in teaching and learning through deliberate resourcing choices and wider enrichment opportunities. This will enable pupils to further connect with and understand lives across global communities. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The school is situated within a rural, farming landscape. Along with its partners in the Edge Schools' Federation, the Parable of the Sower provides an apt foundation for its Christian vision. This is</p>	

increasingly woven through how decisions are made. School leaders, staff and pupils recognise how they all contribute to creating a fertile ground for flourishing. Where there are challenges, the school strives to find the best conditions where all can grow and learn together. For example, if financial instability or personal trauma hinder growth, then actions are swiftly made to overcome these difficulties. As a result of joining the federation, seeds have been more widely sown so that strong connections are made. Relationships with and across the diocese show encouraging shoots which have brought strength and sustainability. They allow the school to remain firmly rooted in its historical village context yet look outwards for its future.

Taking inspiration from the gospels, the school's annual cycle of six values (justice, trust, service, generosity, truthfulness and courage) are embedded skilfully across its ethos. Biblical stories and philosophical quotes inspire pupils and staff to think deeply and act responsively to them. Leaders make courageous decisions to do things differently to keep small rural schools open. For example, a flexi-schooling approach invites home-educated pupils to join the school community on a part-time basis. This nurtures wider friendships and safeguards their connection with other professionals. Teachers know that through their service, they are the 'extra nutrient' to enable pupils to grow. Intrinsically, pupils recognise they make the school, not bricks and mortar. They know their actions help each other to 'treat one another well'.

The school's vision and values are rooted deeply to enable children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or who are vulnerable, to thrive. For example, a range of enrichment opportunities such as designing an electric racing car, residential trips and after-school sports clubs are open to all. Emotional literacy support is effectively provided so that pupils needing help are able to continue confidently on their journey. Parents praise the school's loving approach to enable difficult discussions to be had. This results in complex issues being resolved compassionately. Building caring relationships with families also improves attendance. To overcome the rocky ground of economic constraints, the federation shares staff expertise, specialist resources and professional development opportunities. This strengthens the school's ethos of entitlement for all.

Governors, united across the federation, know the school well. Recognising the significance of the school's inclusive ethos, leaders at all levels face challenges with Christian grace and professionalism. They work with a tangible sense of 'God-with-us', of not stepping back when there are difficulties. In transforming the school, governors are beginning to see the results of their actions. However, they recognise that further monitoring and evaluation is needed to reinforce how well the vision drives forward new initiatives.

Pupils are highly engaged with how the school's vision and values help them to behave well. They know that they need to be 'a good example'. This culture is beginning to have an impact more widely. Staff and pupils want others to have the right soil on which to grow and flourish. To enable this to happen, different classes are understanding what it is like to be agents of change. For example, older pupils have written to Shropshire Council to persuade them not to close the local recycling centre. The school is also a collection and referral point for the local food bank. Pupils explain that what they do 'feeds the soil' so that 'you can grow even more'. The vision has a positive impact amongst staff. They proudly talk about the school having a Christian ethos from which they can 'see the fruits'.

Reflecting the Parable of the Sower, the vision clearly aims for a place where seeds of learning can fall and be unhindered in their development. Leaders are in the process of evolving the curriculum to be more reflective of the schools' contexts across the federation. Improved staff wellbeing and more coherent pathways to develop skills and knowledge are the driving force for change. Subjects such as history and art are linked to how spirituality can be personally enhanced through teaching and learning. However, some pupils find it challenging to express how spirituality can affect them.

Because leaders observe lessons and talk to pupils and staff, they know that more planned opportunities for spiritual reflection need to happen. They understand that a shared understanding of spirituality will also support the school community to live life more fully.

Collective worship is at the heart of the school's desire to transform the lives of its pupils and staff. There is a quiet expectancy from adults and pupils alike to understand how it will do this. Leaders ensure values are intrinsically woven together through worship and invite all the community to respond. This results in pupils and staff describing how their actions are relevant to being made in God's image, for example. They talk positively about how the rhythm of the church year punctuates their lives. This helps develop connections with the neighbouring church. They are enriched spiritually through coming together as one. Together with reflection areas in each classroom, collective worship inspires pupils to be motivated to 'have a moment with God'.

Religious education (RE) has a high priority in the school. This means that staff are diligent in planning and resources are up-to-date. At the beginning of lessons, knowledge and concepts are reviewed in an interactive manner. This engages pupils and helps them remember more. Due to mixed-age classes, staff realise the importance of bringing in religions and world views not studied in that particular year. Nevertheless, some pupils are less confident in explaining ideas from faiths other than Christianity. The breadth of understanding difference and diversity is not yet fully enhanced through the wider curriculum. Leaders recognise where support is most needed and work with the diocese to develop staff expertise. This has inspired staff to ask challenging questions with the effect of inspiring pupils to think more deeply .

There is a determination from all members of the school community to ensure that no seed falls where it will be left. All staff and pupils are nurtured to thrive.

The inspection findings indicate that Wistanstow Church of England VC Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	21 May 2024	URN	123517
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	61
Diocese	Hereford		
MAT/Federation	The Edge Schools' Federation		
Head of School	Sue Phillips		
Chair	Simon James		
Inspector	Robert Hollis	No.	2232