

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

<b>Alvechurch Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Middle School</b>			
<b>Address</b>	Tanyard Lane, Alvechurch, Birmingham B48 7LN		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	7 February 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Multi Academy Trust, inspected as a VC
<b>Diocese</b>	Worcester	<b>URN</b>	143507

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

### School context

Alvechurch is a middle school with 429 students on roll. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and 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 school converted to an academy in April 2017 and has four main feeder schools. It was newly built in 2008 as part of a local PFI project. The headteacher has been in post for five years.

### The school's Christian vision

Alvechurch Middle school prides itself in being community that lives, loves and learns together. Every individual is valued as being unique and wonderfully made. They have individual gifts and talents that are celebrated and cherished so that every child and adult is supported to be the best that they can be.

### Key findings

- Alvechurch has a leadership team that inspires all staff to 'go the extra mile' so that even the most vulnerable pupils make good progress and are well-equipped for their future lives.
- This is a school where the pupils are very well known indeed. They are seen as unique individuals with unique talents and gifts. As a result, the curriculum and ethos of the school inspires them with exciting and relevant learning that enables them all to flourish.
- The school's vision of every individual being valued has a very positive impact on the whole community through its work in mental health and wellbeing. This results in supportive relationships which are attributed by all to the school's Christian values.
- Collective worship plays a key part in pupils' understanding of the school's Christian values and their relevance in pupils' daily lives.
- Religious Education (RE) is taught well and as a result, pupils learn how to treat other people, whatever their background, with dignity and respect.

### Areas for development

- Further develop and implement a distinctive Christian vision, grounded in a clear theology and rooted in a Christian narrative. Ensure that the school's policies and practices explicitly reference this vision.
- Explore the use of prayer throughout the school so that it more clearly supports pupils' spiritual development.
- Review the routine content of collective worship so that the Anglican traditions of the school are better understood by all stakeholders and pupils are able to make positive contributions on a daily basis.

## 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 school's vision sees the unique value of every child at its heart. Senior leaders have begun to work on ensuring the vision is rooted in biblical teaching but this is not fully understood by governors and other stakeholders. It has a set of core values which enable all within the school to treat each other with dignity and respect. This is a strong theme throughout the school and pupils speak knowledgeably about why this is important. Pupils readily acknowledge how these core values reflect the life of Jesus and how they are relevant to them in their daily lives. They see the values as the 'glue of our community'. A pupil in Year 8 explained, 'Staff and pupils use the Christian values to help us reach our potential because everyone is treated as an individual.' Some stakeholders see these values as good moral values rather than having any link with the Christian faith. The school's desire to treat each child as a unique individual and to enable them to explore their individual gifts and talents has led to the development of a highly effective curriculum. Every child is encouraged to take an active role in sports, art or music through extra-curricular groups. Vulnerable pupils are directed into taking part in imaginative initiatives such as the Junior Accredited Scheme for Schools (JASS). This has raised aspirations for these pupils and expanded their horizons so that their progress has improved over the last four years. In this way the school meets the academic and spiritual needs of all learners.

Governors are passionate about the work of the school and have become much more involved in monitoring the work of the school as a church school. This is not yet systematic enough to ensure progressive improvement. They have ensured that the areas for development from the last inspection have been addressed.

The school provides well thought out programmes of support for all pupils, including the most vulnerable and those with SEND. Pupils see this as central to the school's ethos. 'We are all treated equally. We all get the level of support that we need,' explained a Year 7 pupil. This is why pupils achieve well academically at Alvechurch and are well prepared for the next steps in their education, performing better than other pupils nationally at GCSE. The school encourages all pupils to take on leadership roles within the school. Pupils see this as part of their service to the school and such is the wealth of the roles available, all are able to give of their skills. The school has invested many resources to ensure that pupils and staff are able to discuss their own mental health without fear of stigma or discrimination. The work of the Wellbeing lead has extended into the community and parents really appreciate the level of support that the school is able to give both pupils and families. All staff are trained as mental health first aiders. This, together with the crucial work of the anti-bullying ambassadors and the pupil wellbeing champions, means that pupils and staff are confident to express their views and concerns. Consequently, they feel listened to and pupils discuss how the school's Christian values help them to make positive choices about how they live and learn. Pupils behave well due to a well thought out behaviour policy that sets high expectations together with a clear path to a 'fresh start' through forgiveness and reconciliation. In this way all pupils are given the skills they need to disagree well and to live with contradictory opinions.

The school takes a great pride in its numerous charitable enterprises. Pupils see these as a way of helping others and are beginning to understand how their actions might address injustice across the world. When discussing the shoe boxes that are sent away each Christmas time a Year 7 pupil explained that they do this to 'give others the things that we have'. Pupils see this as a practical outworking of the school's Christian values, referring to the story of the Good Samaritan.

The school actively encourages all pupils to reflect on 'Big Questions'. There are reflective quotes outside every classroom and there is always something to think about displayed in the lunch hall. There are inviting spaces, such as The Cloud and Finn's Garden, which children use for reflection and quiet conversation.

RE is given a high priority within the school. The RE lead is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and attends diocesan training. This means that she is able to offer advice and support when needed so ensuring standards are high and lessons are challenging. RE planning is detailed and supported using a robust assessment system. The implementation of *Understanding Christianity* has already begun to have an impact through further deepening pupils' knowledge. Pupils are universally enthusiastic about RE. One pupil remarked, 'the reason I like RE is that I learn things I didn't know before about God'. Pupils learn to question and deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on others. In this way, RE very much expresses the school's Christian values of dignity and respect for all people, whatever their background or belief.

Collective worship is planned around the Christian values of the school, bible stories, major faith festivals and secular events. Local churches support the school well and this has enabled pupils to understand their place locally, nationally and globally. At present there is no focus table in worship which means that children have only a rudimentary knowledge of the Anglican foundation of the school. Worship is inspirational, with a thoughtful use of a variety of media. Pupils of faith and those without feel comfortable within this time, seeing it as a place

where the whole school learn about the school's values. The newly formed worship committee regularly evaluates these times and ensures that the class worship boards are kept up to date with comments from their peers. In this way the Christian values are understood to be rooted in the biblical teachings of Jesus and seen as making a difference to the life of the school and to individuals. Prayer is seen as an integral part of worship, but is not as yet seen as an important part of school life.

This is a school with a demonstrable culture of aspiring to be the best that you can be. The school's vision and Christian values help pupils to make positive choices about how they live and behave so that they flourish in a climate of dignity and respect for all.

Headteacher	David Snell
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