St Mary’s Church of England Primary School, Hinckley.

Address | Station Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire. LE10 1AW

Date of inspection | 15 November 2019 | Status of school | Voluntary controlled primary

Diocese | Leicester | URN | 120134

Overall Judgement

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

School context

Hinckley St Mary’s is a primary school with 296 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The current headteacher has been in post for three years.

The school’s Christian vision

‘Dream, Believe, Achieve’
‘Dream with all your mind. Believe with all your heart. Achieve with all your might’

BECAUSE ‘WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE’, MATTHEW 19: 26

Key findings

- The newly established Christian vision is given high visibility and prominence and there is great awareness of its Biblical basis by the whole school community.
- All stakeholders speak passionately about how the Christian ethos influences their own lives and has a positive impact on their families.
- The school is in the relatively early stages of using its new Christian vision as a foundation for ensuring all pupils flourish and lacks a strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation by leaders at all levels.
- The provision to meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of the school family is extremely effective.
- Partnerships which enhance the Christian character of the school have been underused and therefore leaders and staff have limited opportunities to develop their understanding of Church school education.

Areas for development

- To increase and develop strategic monitoring by leaders at all levels to give clear direction to continuing St Mary’s journey as a Church school.
- To strengthen links with key partners in order to enable all members of the school community to consistently flourish.
- To use the school’s strength in using big questions with pupils to encourage them to challenge injustice and inequality and become involved in social action projects.
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**

Hinckley St Mary’s has been rejuvenated as a church school since the introduction of a new Christian vision last academic year. ‘Dream. Believe. Achieve,’ is firmly rooted in ‘with God all things are possible’ found in Matthew 19 verse 26. The vision statement and associated Christian values are highly visible both on the perimeter of the site in the centre of the town of Hinckley and inside the school building. The headteacher and governors clearly articulate the links between biblical theology and the journey for St Mary’s in developing a meaningful and relevant Christian vision for their school community. Christian distinctiveness is included in the school’s Raising Achievement Plan and is an agenda item at governor meetings but there is a lack of strategy by leaders in order to move the school forwards effectively as a church school. As policies are being reviewed the school’s vision is clearly visible on the front page. Governors are also adding a unique Bible verse pertinent to each policy, demonstrating an innovative commitment by leaders to continue to raise the profile of St Mary’s as a church school. Staff and leaders have accessed some diocesan training events and partnership working but have not given priority to attending what is offered. There have been understandable and complex reasons why this has happened but the school is now in a good place to ensure these partnerships are now given prominence and used effectively. All staff are clear in their explanation that the Christian ethos and associated values have a very positive impact on them as individuals. Parents say that the Christian vision is a lot more apparent in newsletters, on letter heads and the mosaic in the playground giving greater clarity and understanding about the Christian distinctiveness of St Mary’s. This explicitly biblical vision is giving their children ‘a clear moral compass for their lives.’ Everyone is enthused and invigorated by the new vision and clearly articulate how much the school has changed over the past year because of the focus on ‘with God all things are possible.’

Standards of attainment are generally increasing overall with the occasional dip but progress made by all pupils is in line with national expectations. The school supports pupils with varying abilities well and staff are deployed effectively to meet the needs of all learners. Learning areas are stimulating and most classrooms have a very creative and interactive focus area, based on the theme at that particular time, to inspire and engage pupils. One of the three main drivers for the curriculum is ‘Global Christians’ and the staff are using this to plan a unique and personal curriculum relevant to St Mary’s as a church school. Spiritual development is enhanced through the use of ‘big questions’ in RE and the wider curriculum. Pupils have been challenged with big questions about God during collective worship each Tuesday led by a member of the clergy. These are evidently memorable and have caused both pupils and staff to ask questions of themselves. Pupils and parents gave examples of how the Christian vision is being used to raise aspirations and that the associated values give them guidelines for their own lives. The school takes part in several charitable events including giving to the local food bank and supporting a ‘Feed the Hungry’ project in Burkina Faso through links with local churches. As yet, there have been few opportunities for pupils to challenge themselves to become involved in tackling injustice and inequality both locally and in a wider global context. Pupils are rewarded in a variety of ways for displaying the school values and these are celebrated widely including through newsletters to parents. Behaviour is good and this is attributed to the values being lived out by pupils. Two members of staff, including the headteacher, are currently attending Route to Resilience training which will enable the six Christian values to be linked to character traits.

A strength of the school is the provision and high priority given to meeting the wellbeing and mental health needs of the whole school family. A full time family support worker and the school’s special needs coordinator are very visible and available each morning to address immediate needs of pupils and their families. Their in depth knowledge and experience means that they are able to triage cases and signpost families very quickly to access the support required. Strong relationships have emerged and such provision is enabling all members of the school community to flourish and believe that ‘all things are possible’. The school is currently working towards a wellbeing award and a ‘change team’ has been established which includes representatives from all sections of the school community. Each member of this highly effective group spoke passionately about their role and provisions in place to meet the emotional and wellbeing needs of everyone in school. All are valued and respected irrespective of belief or background. The church cafe next door is intertwined in school culture and creates an additional space to promote calm and meet the many, varied needs of the school family.

Collective worship is currently taking place on a daily basis in St Mary’s church next door due to the school hall
undergoing refurbishment. This daily visit creates a special sense of worship and is highly appreciated by staff and pupils. Worship is planned using the Christian values and local clergy are helping on a weekly basis during the time the church is without a vicar. Foundation governors have provided invaluable support to enable the school to meet in the church in this way. Worship is invitational and inclusive, with pupils involved daily in welcoming all to take time to reflect and pray or think. It is now almost impossible to separate church and school and this additional unexpected link is benefiting St Mary’s on its Christian journey in an extremely positive way.

RE is exciting learners through the use of big questions and class floor books. The use of the Understanding Christianity resource is giving staff more confidence and knowledge to teach Christianity effectively. Pupils are asking questions which demonstrate deep thought and consideration. In a lesson about ‘The Fall’ one pupil asked, ‘Why did God give men free choice if he didn’t want them to sin?’ The coordinator has been given more curriculum time to increase monitoring and evaluation of the subject and has planned provision to ensure the school fulfils the Church of England’s Statement of Entitlement regarding the proportions of teaching Christianity and other world faiths.

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<tr>
<th>Headteacher</th>
<th>Rachel Ayres</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inspector’s name and number</td>
<td>Joy Hardy 944</td>
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