



**VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY
ASSURANCE REVIEW**

**CREECH ST MICHAEL CHURCH
OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Name of School:	Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Jan McCarthy
Hub:	Somerset
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	13/01/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Good
Date of last QA Review	21/01/2019
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	27/04/2016



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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers, agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all Levels	Leading
School Improvement Strategies	Leading
Approach to recovery and remote learning	Not applicable
Area of Excellence	Not applicable
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Not applicable
Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate	Leading

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

1. Context and character of the school

Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School is a medium sized primary school on the outskirts of Taunton, Somerset. It is set in extensive, well-maintained grounds that offer ample opportunities for pupils to play and exercise. The school is regularly oversubscribed, with pupils joining the school from a number of villages and areas close to the town of Taunton. The percentage of disadvantaged pupils in the school is broadly in line with the national average, although this number fluctuates year on year.

An intake of around 38 pupils each year results in mixed age classes across the school, with a rolling curriculum programme tailored to ensure continuity in learning and progression for all pupils. As a local authority maintained school, leaders have established strong and diverse external links with other leaders and their schools, including a local academy trust and other regional networks.

'Together, We Love, Learn and Grow!' is a key driver in the development of experiences for all pupils. The broad range of enrichment opportunities reflects the school's Christian ethos. All pupils have equal access to events and activities, including residential stays and 'wild camping'. Strong links exist with the village community and the two local churches, with the school song written by pupils with the help of the Baptist church and a school governor.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- Leaders have created a nurturing, empowering culture which aligns with its Christian message of 'Go and bear fruit – fruit that will last'. All members of the school community engage fully with the strong Christian values which drive all that leaders do.
- The school's ethos stems from the very strong leadership and passion of the headteacher. Through her genuine care, relentless commitment and clarity of vision, she ensures that everyone feels valued, resulting in staff having trust and confidence in her leadership. Senior leaders replicate this approach, for example through acting as role models to young, aspiring leaders, as well as inspiring other staff.
- Strong and empowered middle leaders are crucial in shaping the 'rolling curriculum', both the formal curriculum and as part of the recovery plan. All staff are involved in the design and adaptation of the curriculum for the mixed age classes, resulting in consistency in its delivery. The 'rolling curriculum' ensures progression, providing a rich range of experiences and a focus on personal development. Leadership of the blended learning curriculum from two middle leaders has ensured its ongoing success.

- Pupils excel in the extensive programme of enrichment including music, creative arts and competitive sport. In a recent Maths Challenge, pupils were awarded third place in the county and pupils enjoy repeated success in writing competitions such as the boys excelling annually in a regional poetry competition. The involvement of all pupils is at the heart of the enrichment and the extensive outdoor play areas, such as log jumps, the 'Witch's Hat' and climbing ropes, allow pupils to be adventurous and sociable. 'I love that we can communicate as friends', said one pupil. Parents support the school and value the way in which leaders balance the development of academic work with that of the whole child. One parent described the approach as 'caring and nurturing, allowing children to thrive', as well as the 'wonderful stuff in music' such as instrument tuition and recitals at Wells Cathedral.
- Warm relationships at all levels and high levels of collaboration, care and communication ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. During the virtual tour, pupils were working with enjoyment and commitment in phonics, mathematics and guided reading, using devices. Leadership opportunities for pupils enable them to influence school life, such as applying for 'ambassador' positions, running assemblies and reading with younger pupils.
- Governors know the school's strengths and its next steps through their work in committees and visits to school. They subscribe fully to its values and are actively involved in school life.
- Vibrant displays reinforce the school's values at every turn through the 'fruits of the spirit in our school' exemplification, the celebration of pupils' writing and encouragement to achieve in sports through their motto 'to win modestly' – and they do so with much success.

2.2 Leadership at all Levels - Even better if...

...leaders resumed their strategy to develop further and implement the planned curriculum, as identified in the subject action plans.

3.1 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs- What went well

- A culture of collaboration has fostered a secure climate where staff are open about their desire and need to improve. Leaders play to staff strengths, for example with specialist teachers of English and mathematics in upper Key Stage 2. Sharing expertise is a key feature of continuing professional development (CPD). Modelling and coaching at all levels develops pedagogy and leadership skills, such as through 'buddying up' staff new to the profession with more experienced colleagues. Leaders are outward facing and they benefit from strong links with other schools, a local trust and community partnerships, which enhance their expertise.

- Through frequent tracking, a high level of communication and teamwork, leaders and teachers identify precisely both strengths and next steps. This analysis has led to leaders' formulation of sharp, appropriate improvement strategies, whilst being proactive and responsive to the changing circumstances in the current pandemic. Systematic monitoring of the school development plan and the recovery plan has ensured that improvement remains high on the agenda, with much achieved and an energy to achieve more.
- Senior leaders both steer and support staff in the drive for improvement. The focus on the development of whole school reading is leading to higher quality provision and impact; for example, the current Year 2 outcomes in the phonics check show significant improvement on pupils' performance in Year 1, with above average outcomes. This is due to leaders' adaptation of the provision, including the high quality delivery of Read Write Inc. and the new, exciting reading books which are breeding pupils' love of reading.
- Working together to reshape the curriculum has empowered and enthused staff. A focus on enabling pupils to acquire more knowledge and deepen their understanding has led to the development of bespoke knowledge organisers in the wider curriculum.
- There is a relentless focus on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with their peers and recent tracking indicates that gaps are narrowing. Opportunities are open to disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs through funded places, priority access and specialist arrangements.
- Robust, well-established assessment and tracking systems throughout the school ensure that all adults know precisely where pupils excel and where they need additional support. This drives teachers' planning and the strategic use of intervention. 'Responsive teaching', whereby teachers assess every lesson and plan for the next accordingly, tailors learning to the needs of all pupils. In both key stages, leaders have moderation expertise which secures assessment accuracy. Teachers are expected to share their assessments and this both quality assures teachers' practice, as well as developing their knowledge.

3.2 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs - Even better if...

- ...leaders continued with the well-chosen strategies in Key Stage 1 so that their full impact on progress in all areas is realised.
- ...leaders continued to encourage reflective practice in reading through the continued development of staff in Read Write Inc. approaches.
- ...teachers maximised the use of the bespoke knowledge organisers as an additional tool to embed pupils' knowledge so that pupils know and remember more.

4.1 Approach to recovery and remote learning - What went well

- A clear, well defined recovery plan drives the actions of all members of the school community; all staff commit to their role in the plan.
- A deep understanding of pupils before and upon their return to school has been a key factor in pupils' settled returns, both emotionally and academically. 'We knew exactly where we were very quickly', said one leader. This reflects leaders' preparedness and strong assessment practice by studying assessment data closely for gaps, leading to prompt planning. As a result, pupils' gains in learning are now evident across a range of measures, including in the decoding Salford test in Key Stage 1.
- Leaders place high priority on pupils' wellbeing. The SENCO and the emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) are available to parents and pupils at the school gate at the start of the day; the use of the Boxall profile enables swift action to be taken; and a teacher with speech and language expertise is addressing gaps in children's speech and language development. Other support includes Year 3 pupils refreshing their understanding of team building and mutual support through activities such as building a card tower together, and 'WorryTed' provides an outlet for pupils' concerns.
- All staff have embraced the use of technology to secure pupils' learning. The introduction of and training in G-Suite has enabled staff and pupils to be confident in its use. As a result, the blended learning system is working extremely well. Pupils' enthusiasm for this approach to learning is reflected in the 650+ emails received by one teacher in the first week of lockdown from pupils, keen to share their work and questions!
- Parental responses show great appreciation for the support offered to them through the blended learning approach. Comments have included appreciation of the speed and quality of feedback and encouragement from teachers to their pupils.

4.2 Approach to recovery and remote learning - Even better if...

...leaders built on staff enthusiasm for and commitment to the use of technology for learning by developing their confidence and skills in Google Classroom even further.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted for this review.



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6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

...leaders would like to link with 'leading' primary schools to explore a range of high quality provision and outcomes.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can also access the School Support Directory, the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.