

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Oakington C of E Primary School			
Address	Water Lane, Cambridge CB24 3AL		
Date of inspection	5 February 2020	Status of school	Academy inspected as voluntary aided. Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust
Diocese	Ely	URN	147110

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?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Oakington is a primary school of 130 pupils. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with national averages. In July 2018 Ofsted judged the school to be inadequate. In May 2019 the school joined the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT) and a new headteacher was appointed. There have been some staffing challenges, including the ongoing absence of the senior teacher. The Church supports the school through a children and families outreach worker.

The school's Christian vision

We strive for excellence, encouraging all children to reach their full potential and make accelerated progress through high expectations, ensuring we know each child as an individual. We endeavour to provide safe, stimulating learning environments, promoting collaboration whilst being immersed in a broad dynamic curriculum and inclusive Christian ethos. *"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..." – Romans 12:4-6*

Key findings

- Progress under the new leadership and management team has been rapid. All indications are that improvements are secure and sustainable. There is clear capacity for further improvement.
- Religious education (RE) has been transformed because it has been placed at the heart of the curriculum. Teachers have received good support and training, especially in teaching Christianity. Leadership is passionate and effective.
- Pupils and adults are encouraged and affirmed by the Christian vision. It is relevant, meaningful and the cornerstone of a happy community where everyone is valued.
- Christian values have a tangible impact on pupils and adults but opportunities to explore these in collective worship are under-utilised.

Areas for development

- Allocate time and resources to collective worship so that its quality of delivery and impact reflect the high standards seen in other areas of the curriculum.
- Explore ways forward in re-establishing a trusting and mutually beneficial partnership with the parish church.
- Celebrate the school's Christian distinctiveness by ensuring that the website, policies and paperwork reflect actual practice. Reinforce this by including the impact of the vision as an explicit aspect of all monitoring.

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 new vision statement reflects the Christian values and ethos of the school, which were already securely embedded. Care has been taken to ensure that pupils and adults have a sound understanding of why the vision is important and how it is relevant to them. There is consistent reinforcement of the vision and values in and out of the classroom. Relationships, learning and responsibilities reflect the Bible verse. Pupils and adults not only celebrate each other's gifts and talents but also understand that everyone has a responsibility to support and serve. Parents praise the strength of the school's values which, they say, lead to exemplary behaviour and a happy learning environment. They do not, however, identify the values as Christian.

Leadership strongly reflects the vision. The inspiring and enabling headteacher enjoys the confidence of his team. He delegates appropriately, giving staff the tools to develop their skills and to exercise leadership. This has had a positive impact on staff wellbeing and self-belief. The work of the RE coordinator has put the subject securely at the heart of the curriculum and, under her leadership, RE has been transformed. As yet there has been no capacity to focus on collective worship, although a consistent structure is in place and there are good resources. The coordinator for special educational needs ensures that everything possible is done to enable those requiring extra support to fulfil their potential. The governors are a new team. They lead the school as a Church school and utilise their skills effectively, operating as 'one body, many members.' They have established a robust structure for monitoring and evaluation. So far this has not included a focus on the impact of the vision and values across the curriculum. Circumstances have restricted the capacity of the Church to provide leadership, although a relationship has been maintained. Input from the outreach worker and the churchwardens is valued and their role is growing. Pupils are given leadership roles which they undertake with enthusiasm. They can discuss their responsibilities maturely, comparing prefects to teachers and the school council to governors. They say that they are trusted and listened to, but 'we could offer more.' They make decisions, but are 'not as much involved in planning as we would like.'

Pupils are proud of their school. They can explain the vision and its impact. Even the youngest can talk about how 'we are all individual and equal.' Pupils say that the values are explored in lessons, especially RE, but not so much in collective worship. They do enjoy worship but say that they would like more time to 'think a bit about what we hear.' As referred to in the vision, the learning environment is 'safe and stimulating'. Pupils say it is 'good to make mistakes because you can learn from them.' The curriculum is broad, and pupils find it interesting. Time to reflect is built in and pupils have a growing awareness of their spiritual self. There are reflection areas in classrooms which are used by some pupils for quiet thought and prayer. Most groups make good progress, and this is regularly monitored. Interventions are quickly put in place and their impact is carefully assessed. There are currently a few areas in Key Stage 1 where progress is slow. In some classes the most able pupils are not always stretched, but robust monitoring from leaders identifies issues quickly and action is taken. RE is a popular subject because there are 'new and fun things to do'. Pupils say that it 'ties in with everything else', and they say lessons frequently refer to values. They are encouraged to follow a range of interests through extra-curricular activities and all achievement is celebrated. Pupils are kind and respectful in their relationships and this extends to their charitable endeavours. The school council is involved in choosing which charities to support and pupils understand the concepts of compassion and generosity. Currently they react to suggestions from adults rather than bringing forward ideas for themselves. Their understanding of what it means to be an advocate for change is not strongly developed.

The vision speaks of 'collaboration' and, under the leadership of the headteacher and with the support of DEMAT, a range of partnerships have supported the school in its drive for improvement. Peer support and relevant training equip staff for their roles, building confidence and self-esteem. The trust has provided leadership support within a Christian context, enabling academic standards to improve without compromising the ethos. The resultant stability of the staff and governance team indicates good capacity to continue to develop Christian distinctiveness. Already, engagement with other Church schools provides opportunities for the sharing of good practice and the headteacher is proactive in seeking advice. Parents are beginning to be seen as partners in their children's learning. They have benefitted from workshops and communication between home and school is very good. They praise the way that the headteacher listens and responds to feedback but feel that they have more to offer and are

'ready to take on a bigger role.' The partnership with the parish church has not been without its difficulties, resulting in a breakdown of trust. Significant efforts have been made to rebuild the relationship. Some parents continue to find this difficult. The outreach worker has become the link between Church and school and is a very familiar figure to pupils and their families.

The 'inclusive Christian ethos' can be seen in relationships at all levels. Pupils respect each other as individuals and adults are exemplary role models. There is little diversity amongst the school community. By forging a partnership with a Christian school in Ghana, pupils' horizons are being broadened. They are being introduced to the idea of global citizenship and their place in the wider Christian family. Pupils gain some understanding of world-wide Christianity through RE, where they are also introduced to a range of faiths and beliefs. Understanding of cultural and religious diversity in Britain is not well developed.

Although some aspects of worship require improvement, it is invitational and makes a contribution to spiritual development. Most pupils do not associate worship with the vision, and they do not describe it as inspirational. However, there is a sense of Christian purpose in worship which does enable pupils to engage with the message. It develops their biblical literacy and teaches them about the school's values but to a lesser extent than RE. When the school worships together, in school or at Church, there is a tangible sense of belonging.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Teaching and learning have shown significant improvement over the past year. Monitoring is thorough and indicates that teaching is consistently good, and sometimes better, across all groups. Teacher assessments and book scrutinies indicate that pupils at least meet expectations and often do better. Work is differentiated appropriately for less able pupils, allowing them to make good progress. Challenge for the most able pupils cannot be consistently seen across all groups.

Headteacher	Nathan Clark
Inspector's name and number	Gill Hipwell 480