

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Oakley Church of England Combined School

Address	Worminghall Road, Oakley, Aylesbury HP18 9QY		
Date of inspection	16 October 2019	Status of school	VC Primary
Diocese	Oxford	URN	110448

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

School context

Oakley is a primary school with 87 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very 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 (SEN/D) is above national averages. The headteacher was appointed in January 2019 and there have been other significant staff changes since the last SIAMS inspection.

The school's Christian vision

School leaders and governors have recently reviewed their vision statement to more accurately reflect their vision in action. This is to enable all children to flourish and grow, 'from little acorns to mighty oaks, founded in the love of God'. Proverbs 11:30 and 1 Corinthians 16:14.

Key findings

- The strong, Christian leadership of the headteacher demonstrates the core values, which unites the school as a loving, honest, respectful, caring community. The vision statement has recently been made final, but is not yet embedded.
- There is a strong sense of 'team' amongst the staff that has been harnessed by the headteacher to drive the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Building consistency is the current focus, through the agreed vision and core values.
- Improvement in behaviour has been achieved through an emphasis on forgiveness and restoration. Pupils articulate the difference the values and vision are making in their daily lives, helping them to treat others as they would like to be treated.
- Religious education (RE) is an important subject in the school. Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and cultures through enquiry and investigations. These approaches and the way pupils are assessed have only recently been introduced and have not had time to be embedded.
- Collective worship is regularly planned, led and reviewed by the pupil 'worship leaders'. These young pupils are growing as leaders, challenged by the headteacher to support the spiritual life of the school.
- Governors know the school and are aware of the importance of their role in supporting the headteacher in driving the Christian distinctiveness and spiritual life of the school.

Areas for development

- Build on the work that has been done with the agreed Christian vision to ensure it is understood by all and embedded in the daily life of the school.
- Embed the new approaches in RE by building time for sharing to ensure quality and consistency across the school in teaching and learning.

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 strong, Christian leadership of the headteacher is uniting this school family and community. She and her staff team share Christian love and commitment daily, nurturing individuals to be the best they can be. Relationships are strengthening through the headteacher's growing knowledge and outreach to the community she serves. Her open-door policy and daily welcome on the school gate, provides contact for individuals and families, particularly in times of need. She passionately believes that, everyone can flourish and grow when treated with love, honesty and respect. Consequently, the summer review of the vision made explicit its link with these existing core values. The vision of a strong oak tree provides a child friendly image that the school is working diligently to embed. It reinforces the school logo and celebrates its Christian roots as a school 'founded in the love of God'. As a result, there is a growing expectation that, 'everyone follows Jesus' example to treat others as we would want to be treated.' This is creating a school that welcomes all regardless of faith, background culture or need. Pupils speak warmly of the kindness shown by staff living out the shared values. 'Our values help us know how to behave. If we fall out our teachers help to sort it out.' Consequently, behaviour is good, being shaped by forgiveness and restoration. Pupil of the week awards are one of many positive rewards introduced to reinforce good choices. Pupils enjoy school and benefit from a curriculum that is broad and balanced, enriched by clubs, visits and visitors. Consequently, attendance is high. Leadership roles, such as house captains, school council and 'buddies' challenge individuals to grow as leaders. Firmly planted in the biblical guidance, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me', many pupils respond well. They are growing in maturity as a result. They enthusiastically support their young peers and people in the wider community, who are less fortunate than themselves. Each house in school focuses on a charity of choice raising funds to 'make a difference'. Through social action projects, they learn to live out the core values that are inspiring them. This enables them to grow as effective young citizens, wanting to build a world that meets the needs of all.

Parents are very positive about the way leaders adapt to meet the intricate needs of their children. They describe the school as 'very inclusive'. They appreciate the links with the Church and the nurturing care fostered by the core values. The vicar of St Mary's leads special services at Church to celebrate Easter, Christmas, Harvest and the Year 6 Leavers. He also comes into school to work with classes, sharing Anglican and faith traditions, supporting the school's spiritual life. Parents enjoy the services and attend in large numbers. Worship is an important part of school life in both settings. It provides a time each day for focusing on the vision and values. The school benefits from the support of a trainee vicar, who is a parent at school. In their recent 'hopes and dreams' week pupils and staff expressed their hopes for the future together as a community. Prayer, reflection and many inspiring activities created a sense of joy, culminating in a 'balloon event' in their hall. Pupil worship leaders, recently appointed, engage with the headteacher to plan, lead and evaluate worship weekly. They feel their role is very important and 'the children listen more when we lead. We inspire others to want to be like us.' This is wholeheartedly endorsed by pupils and staff who talk about the difference these young leaders are making in supporting worship.

Pupils are taught to respect all cultures and faiths through RE and curriculum projects. The school business manager went to Goa over the Summer, actively supporting a children's centre there. She has been sharing her experiences with the school family and is working to build links between both places. RE is an important subject that pupils enjoy. The school follows the Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus and has recently introduced 'Understanding Christianity' (UC) approaches. It is effectively supported by the Oxford diocesan scheme of work. Pupils are enthusiastic in learning about Christianity and other faiths through RE. They like sharing their opinions in responding to challenging questions such as, 'What is God like?' Teachers record the pupils' views and reflect on their written responses to assess the quality of their learning. The RE leader is currently exploring ways of sharing judgements, to ensure they are accurate. These shared experiences and world-wide links are important in broadening the understanding of the predominantly white, British pupils. Links with GOA, 'Understanding Christianity' and assessment approaches are not fully embedded. However, RE is effectively helping pupils to appreciate and respect the diversity of global religions and cultures.

Many pupils enter the school displaying a range of additional needs and learning below national expectations. The school utilises its limited budget creatively, to provide individual support. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely as an effective team to address needs. The headteacher facilitates targeted training to build skills, to ensure support is appropriate. Monitoring systems have been introduced to evaluate the difference the support makes. Staff also engage with vulnerable parents, developing a partnership to further strengthen the support provided.

Consequently, pupils and parents appreciate the ways the school team is enabling them to flourish and experience success. In addition, staff speak very positively about the time the headteacher provides for them to meet parents of pupils with additional needs. 'We are regularly asked to share concerns and worries to ensure our work-life balance is maintained.' Most pupils are keen to learn and display positive attitudes in lessons. As a result of the school's diligent, caring commitment progress is accelerating and gaps in achievement are being addressed.

The new chair of governors has been a governor for many years. As with staffing, there have been a significant number of changes to governance. Most know the school well. They strongly express their appreciation of the way the new headteacher has led the school, since her appointment. They are clear about their responsibilities and attend school in their monitoring capacity, writing reports to share their findings. They share the school team's Christian commitment to grow Oakley's distinctiveness, by driving the vision and values. Although Oakley CE, is a school that has been and is still on a difficult journey, current leaders are enabling the school to grow and flourish. It shines as a centre of Christian love to those it serves. Growing partnerships with other schools and the wider community demonstrates the school's nurture. Consequently, pupils and adults grow together to aspire and achieve.

Headteacher	Caroline Witton
Inspector's name and number	Marianne Phillips 586