



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

The Oxford Academy	
Address	Sandy Lane West, Littlemore, Oxford, OX4 6JZ
School vision	
<p>‘Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for God is with you.’ 1 Chronicles 28:20</p> <p>The vision for our school is ‘Enabling All To Flourish’. We live our vision through our commitments: ‘Commitment to Others, Commitment to Learning’ and through our three school values: Courage, Curiosity and Compassion. We value all in our school community and believe that by being strong and courageous and doing the work, we can all flourish collectively and individually. Our vision of enabling all students to flourish encapsulates academic excellence as well as spiritual, social and personal development.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s Christian vision is absolutely central to the life of the school, directly addressing the school’s needs. As a result, the school is transforming the life chances of students. • The Oxford Academy is improving rapidly as a Church school. Leaders work tirelessly and effectively to promote the flourishing of all members of the school community. • The chaplaincy is an important focal point for the Christian life of the school. It provides a wealth of opportunities for students to develop spiritually, whatever the starting point of their journey. • Students, particularly those who are vulnerable are cared for and given appropriate, expert support. This has an important impact on the outcomes they achieve. • School leaders, supported by the River Learning Trust, give the highest priority to the mental health and wellbeing of adults and students. This results in a community where people know that they are valued. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders have not ensured that the provision, profile, and priority of religious education (RE) in Key Stage 4 result in an effective curriculum. Therefore, leaders should take steps to ensure that RE in Key Stage 4 is of the highest possible quality and standing as part of the whole school curriculum. • Ensure that the biblical underpinning of the school’s vision and values is consistently referred to during times of collective worship. This is so that students better appreciate the school’s Church of England foundation. • Fully embed the Christian values of curiosity, courage and compassion in the everyday life of the school. This is in order that students increasingly live out these character traits in and out of school. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The Christian vision of The Oxford Academy addresses the pressing needs of its community, which faces significant challenges. The vision’s emphasis on being strong and courageous challenges members of the community to take responsibility for their lives. Its focus on commitment to others engenders a strong sense of community. Its assurance that ‘God is with you’ generates a deep sense of hope that fires the work of adults in the school. This infuses their work so that their hope is shared with students. The vision, the commitments to others and</p>	

learning, and the values of courage, curiosity and compassion, are highlighted through impactful displays. They are also reinforced tirelessly by adults. This is having a transformative effect on the culture of the school. Students feel safe at school and are increasingly aspirational in their studies and personal development.

Leaders implement the school vision by taking decisions that best support the academic, spiritual and personal development of students. As a result, The Oxford Academy is improving rapidly as a Church school. The school is strongly supported by the trust, whose vision is in alignment with the school's own one. Living out its own vision, the trust actively supports the wellbeing of adults and offers enriched curricular opportunities for learners.

The school's curriculum effectively reflects its vision. It is carefully crafted to promote aspiration and enable students, including the most vulnerable, to thrive. It does so by paying particular attention to developing literacy and offering students opportunities to enjoy cultural experiences. The visit of the young carers group to Blenheim Palace is an example of this. Leaders, including governors, mindful of the school's context, deploy their resources to translate the school's vision into reality. Breakfasts are provided for all students. Generous resources are directed towards the wellbeing of students. Those who are experiencing difficulties and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), receive targeted additional support. As a result, there are many instances of students flourishing academically and socially, despite adverse circumstances and achieving beyond their previous expectations.

The chaplaincy and the chapel are central to the outworking of the school's Christian vision. The chapel is a place of welcome, reflection and worship for staff and students. Together with the artwork throughout the school, the chapel successfully embodies leaders' commitment that the school should be a Christian community. It is the meeting place for the Christian Union and staff Eucharists. It is open throughout the day, when it is used by those who wish to pray and those seeking a quiet sanctuary. It also hosts groups for vulnerable students. The chaplaincy is a beacon of the school's Christian life. It is highly effective in promoting the spiritual development and wellbeing of adults and students.

Collective worship follows a calendar that enables students to explore the meaning and implications of the school's vision, values and commitments. The closing prayer invites students and staff to be still and reflect. Additional opportunities for spiritual reflection occur in form time collective worship sessions. In these, students discuss and reflect on ways in which they can live out particular school values. However, biblical narratives are insufficiently explored to ensure that students appreciate the deep Christian roots of the school's values and commitments.

Opportunities for spiritual development are widespread at The Oxford Academy. There is a Youth Alpha course, a Christian Union and a prayer space for Muslim students. During Lent, prayer and reflection stations are set up in the school library. The spiritual reflection that this activity promotes is valued by many who access it. This includes Year 7 students during RE lessons. Spirituality is explicitly explored through the taught curriculum beyond RE. This is particularly apparent in the English curriculum, where the careful choice and treatment of texts promote spiritual enquiry.

Leaders' hard work and determination are creating a culture where students treat each other well. Responding to the school's vision, leaders employ a network of skilled professionals, who support students experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties. Through the interventions of the wellbeing team, students are enabled to remain at school and access education. Adults value the strong support that they are given to promote their own mental wellbeing. This includes dedicated professional development time, active support from wellbeing champions and the kindness of school leaders. As a result, adults are motivated and equipped to promote the flourishing of students.

The school's vision emphasises the responsibility that all members of the school community have for themselves and each other. It is modelled by staff and taught at every opportunity throughout the school day. Consequently, students are developing a growing awareness of their own potential and of the richness of the school community. Increasing numbers, prompted by the school's Christian values, are taking opportunities to develop and exercise leadership skills. The school has a supportive partnership with the Rotary Club and the Institute of Leadership and Management. This is enabling Sixth Form students to mobilise teams within the school to provide effective support for local charities. Other students live out their commitment to others as mentors and sports leaders.

The school also has valuable partnerships with local churches and Christian organisations. These offer support with RE, collective worship and with extra-curricular Christian groups, all of which promote students' spiritual development. Year 7 students work with the local parish priest designing a service to celebrate their first year at the school. This initiative shows how the partnership with the local parish is enriching students' spirituality. The recent Iftar at the end of Ramadan was celebrated at school with Muslim parents preparing the celebration meal. This interfaith activity exemplifies the strong, respectful relationships the school is forging with its community.

School leaders are working vigorously to ensure the provision of high quality RE for all students. However, the Key Stage 4 curriculum is not effective for the majority of learners. This is because they do not have the opportunity to study RE as a discrete academic subject. A small group of Year 10 students is following a GCSE course in religious studies. RE provision for other Key Stage 4 students is limited, included within the PHSE curriculum. The RE curriculum at Key Stage 3 is well structured. It follows a comprehensive programme of study, covering a range of religions and worldviews, with an appropriate emphasis on Christianity. The core RE curriculum in the Sixth Form is effective. Recent staff appointments demonstrate leaders' commitment to strengthening RE provision.

At Key Stage 3 and at GCSE, RE teaching is strong. Teachers' clear focus on reviewing previous learning at the start of each lesson ensures that learning is purposeful. Assessment in lessons and regular testing help students to make progress in line with their other subjects. Students in the GCSE group approach the subject with real enthusiasm. Where dedicated RE is taught, students value the opportunities RE lessons give to learn about other people's perspectives. Students see RE and PHSE classrooms as safe spaces, where they can explore their own views and learn from those of others.

The inspection findings indicate that The Oxford Academy has strengths, but that there are also issues that leaders need to address as a matter of urgency. These issues relate to RE and are listed in the areas for development.

Information			
Inspection date	18 June 2024 - 19 June 2024	URN	148354
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	1157
Diocese	Oxford		
MAT/Federation	River Learning Trust		
Headteacher	Nora Ward		
Chair	Tony Brett		
Inspector	Andrew Wilcock	No.	2112