

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Orchards Church of England Primary Academy</b>			
<b>Address</b>	Cherry Road Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 3NP		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	15 October 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Academy inspected as VC. Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust
<b>Diocese</b>	Ely	<b>URN</b>	143836

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Orchards is a primary academy with 436 pupils on roll. The school has a low level of religious diversity, cultural diversity is high and many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school has had a period of considerable turbulence in terms of leadership and staffing. It joined the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust in February 2018. The headteacher and deputy have been in post since September 2018, the majority of teachers since September 2019.

### The school's Christian vision

**Jesus told his followers that, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock." Matthew 7:24**

At Orchards we focus on the building blocks for life of mental wellbeing, reading, writing and maths which will give our children the best possible start in life.

### Key findings

- The intense focus on the new vision and values is beginning to impact positively on all aspects of school life. Staff live out the values in a caring, inclusive community. Exceptional family support and church links support this. The new governing body is developing monitoring of distinctiveness.
- Spiritual development is supported by collective worship and the new curriculum. There is an improving understanding of personal spiritual development.
- Religious education (RE) is now an academic subject, assessed and monitored with rigour. Pupils' understanding of Christianity is developing but their knowledge of other world faiths is limited.
- Worship is inclusive and inspirational and at the heart of the school. It is not yet fully led by pupils. Worship through song is joyful and a strength. Prayer has a high profile.
- Pupils are developing a clearer understanding of the links between the vision, values, worship and how they impact on their behaviour.

### Areas for development

- To consistently implement formal monitoring and evaluation of distinctiveness by the whole governing body, including a mechanism for liaising with pupils, so that pupil voice is strengthened and the impact on improvement is more clearly evident.
- To provide further opportunities for pupils to lead worship so they deepen their understanding of Christian worship, including understanding of the Trinity and its place in Anglican liturgy.
- Develop pupil awareness and understanding of global issues such as religious belief, inequality and injustice, so as to inform their awareness of world faiths and empathy for others.

## **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**

A period of significant turbulence resulted in a loss of community confidence in the school. It is not yet good, however there are strong indicators of progress towards good. The vision based on the parable from Matthew, is translated into the image of building onto solid bricks with pupils, families, the church and the wider community. This vision is the drive for school improvement. The four overarching values of ambition, respect, responsibility, and perseverance are linked to a Bible story. Pupils are not familiar with the biblical root to the vision and the four overarching values. They do not understand how these relate to the Christian values explored through worship, which do however, successfully frame expectations for behaviour. Nevertheless, the school provides a very nurturing and inclusive environment, which meets the needs of all pupils. This includes its significant proportion of pupils with high levels of need and those with English as an additional language. The school has been ably and effectively supported by an established, experienced chair of governors. A new, relatively inexperienced, local governing body is in place. It has developed a robust cycle of monitoring and evaluation. However, as that process is in early stages the school is not yet good. It is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of the need to present clear values to the whole community. Governors feel the school should be a model for the community; of 'life as it should be lived'. Identified priorities are more explicitly linking the values to the biblical roots of the vision and continuing to build respect using biblical teachings. A committed specialist team support very needy pupils in a dedicated space. Progress is good from starting points and attainment is improving. Many classroom support staff have been in post a long time, playing a significant role in providing stability throughout the turbulence of recent years. They are highly supportive of the new vision and values, providing challenge as well as care and support. They live out the values in their daily contact with pupils and appreciate the changes the developing awareness of the values is making to pupils.

Pride in the school is developing alongside its standing in the community. Parents appreciate that school is now there for them. They value the headteacher and senior leadership team being approachable and visible and that they now have a definite voice in school. Kindness is the value they speak of as most evident. They appreciate opportunities to share in worship and are positive about the renewed focus on prayer and worship through song. A significant partner in the work with the local community is the local church and the family support worker funded by the Mothers' Union. Parental re-engagement with the school has been instigated and supported through regular coffee mornings and Bible classes. Several parents spoke proudly of now being confirmed. The school keeps their children safe and is developing their sense of social justice, evidenced through raising recycling awareness in the community. Parents speak of the developing spiritual awareness of their children through the prayer corners, supporting them to be calm and saying prayers at home. Many parents engage with an initiative that rewards them for volunteering within school and the community. A strength of the school is its provision for the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and adults in the community. One parent spoke of the school having 'hope for my child'.

Pupils are positive about the new focus on values in school. They are polite and helpful, speaking of respect and kindness being important in their school. Their awareness of global issues is under-developed but awareness of vulnerable parts of the world is growing. Their choices of social action are currently focused on local needs, for example the older pupils taking responsibility for recycling in school and then widening the initiative to the local community centre. Pupils volunteer to litter pick both in school and the community. School council and young interpreters are also effective in sharing pupil voice. Pupils show respect for difference and diversity, supported by the new curriculum including personal, social health education. The curriculum is developing clear links between RE, spiritual, moral and social development and worship.

Collective worship is engaging and inclusive with a high degree of pupil participation. Worship is seen by all as the heart of the school, being central to creating a renewed sense of a spiritual community. It plays a strong part in developing pupil understanding of how values influence their lives. Worship follows the gather, engage, and respond format and pupils readily use liturgical greetings. Talking partners are used effectively to encourage deeper thinking, well supported by all adults present. This was clearly demonstrated by a discussion on the meaning of charity. The joyful experience of song contributes to spiritual development. Pupils feel they would be sad without worship; they 'wouldn't pray or know how to behave'. Worship is 'how we show we respect God'. They are beginning to lead worship, with support, and have opportunities to provide feedback. Worship is enhanced by members of local churches leading worship in school. Pupils have a developing understanding of the Anglican calendar, including festivals. Pupil knowledge and understanding of the Trinity is not yet well established,

especially at Key Stage 2. Younger pupils link the three candles to the Trinity. They explain God is the Father, Jesus helps us to pray and the Holy Spirit helps us know what's inside people is important. Prayer and reflection spaces have a high profile and are valued by all pupils. However, younger pupils have an especially personal relationship with prayer. Young pupils show awareness of respect, 'bow your head, put your hands together, I am going to say a prayer'. Pupils choose to write prayers in their own time and feel that prayer helps you be a better person.

RE is delivered as an academic subject, beginning to develop deeper thinking and supporting respect for difference and diversity. Pupils value and enjoy RE. The school uses 'Understanding Christianity' and its impact on pupils' understanding of Christian concepts is beginning to be seen in pupil books. Big questions based on the Creation and Psalm 8 are deepening pupil capacity to reflect and share their thoughts and opinions. Pupils' understanding and knowledge of world faiths is limited as is their awareness of Christianity as world-wide faith.

Stability across the school is having a positive impact on Christian distinctiveness. This is due to the rapid establishment of a cohesive staff team who model the values, and to a clear priority on embedding the values.

Headteacher	Clare Claxton
Inspector's name and number	Pat George 845