

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Park Street Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address	Lower Park Street, Cambridge, CB5 8AR		
Date of inspection	4 July 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	Ely	URN	110837

Overall Judgement	Grade	Requires Improvement
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Requires Improvement
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Ineffective

School context

Park Street is a primary school with 117 pupils on roll. The school has a high level of religious and cultural diversity and a number of 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 (SEND) is above national averages. The school has had four headteachers over the past year, many being interim appointments. A substantive headteacher, with Church school experience, has been appointed for September 2019. The religious education (RE) leader left the school in December 2018. The school is supported by Church Schools of Cambridge, a charitable trust, who are part-funding a heritage education officer for Great St Mary's Church who is working with the school on planning visits to support RE teaching.

The school's Christian vision

The school seeks to be a safe harbour and a friendly welcome to all who work and visit within it; it strives to be neighbourly in all it does within the wider community; it seeks to be a good steward of the gifts of Creation with which it has been blessed and, most importantly, it educates all who learn so that all may gain fullness of life.

Key findings

- Governors and the interim head teacher have taken steps to raise the school's Christian distinctiveness, but it is too early to be able to judge the impact.
- The school's vision and values are established, but their Christian roots are not fully understood or embedded. As a result, their impact on shaping the work of the school is limited.
- Warm relationships between staff and pupils demonstrate the school values and promote dignity and respect.
- Leadership has not implemented a robust system of monitoring teaching and learning in RE, resulting in inconsistent practice.
- Pupils do not take a leading role in planning, delivering or evaluating collective worship (CW) and its impact on them is limited.

Areas for development

- Ensure that RE lessons enable pupils to engage in deeper thinking and develop a personal response by providing a dynamic programme of study which is well-planned, taught and led.
- Embed a strategic plan which ensures the centrality of Christian distinctiveness is truly shared and understood in order to affirm the school's status and acknowledge its contribution to personal growth.
- Ensure that a robust monitoring, evaluating and planning system for both RE and collective worship is in place. Involve all stakeholders so that the impact of these two elements on the school community can be clearly recognised and understood.

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

Park Street has endured a turbulent period which has resulted in its distinctiveness as a Church school being somewhat side-lined. As a result, staff, parents and pupils are unclear as to the impact of its Christian character. There is a culture within the school of mutual support which has been powerfully demonstrated over the past year. Staff, pupils, and governors describe a strong and resilient family feel, and parents agree. Parents are happy that their children are being taught good values for life. However, this is not consistently attributed to the school's distinctiveness as a church school.

Recently appointed foundation governors, who bring a range of skills, have identified that the school's vision needs theological underpinning. However, they have been working somewhat in isolation given the short tenures and absence of church school experience amongst the interim headteachers. As a result, and despite staff training, the work they have done is not impacting significantly at school level. Indeed, the school website does not celebrate the fact that Park Street is a Church of England primary school. Pupils have been involved in identifying core values, awarding star of the week based on these. Values have recently been linked to biblical texts but, as pupils have not been involved in these discussions, they are not generally aware of this.

A mutually beneficial partnership exists between school and church, with regular worship input from clergy. Pupils hear Bible stories which they share at home. Messages contained in these stories are sometimes referred to by pupils when discussing their own behaviour. When worship is followed up in class its impact can be seen; for example, a recent worship around friendship 'made us think about making sure our bucket of kindness is full up.' Attending major Christian festivals at church gives pupils an insight into the church calendar and Anglican traditions. Worship is inclusive and invitational; pupils with no faith or a personal faith feel comfortable attending, 'During reflection time, I say a prayer to my God because I'm Hindu.' Pupils play a limited part, but worship does provide opportunities to reflect on God's world and their place within it. Whilst some pupils have a good understanding of Christian values, there is no provision for monitoring the extent to which worship impacts on their daily lives. Staff, for example, are not all able to talk confidently about how worship contributes to the life of the school. Lack of staff training around church school matters has hindered development and has led to collective worship, as distinct from assembly, only recently being reintroduced. Planning by the current interim headteacher gives an overview, but inexperienced staff have not been given enough support to deliver high quality worship. Prayer has also been reintroduced and each class has an area dedicated to prayer, but there is no real sense that prayer is, as yet, contributing significantly to pupils' spiritual development.

Christian values can be seen in some of the work of the school. Forgiveness underpins the behaviour policy and is clearly understood by pupils. Behaviour is an area that is improving, and relationships are strong. Staff have developed strategies to ensure safe and happy breaktimes. A buddy system contributes significantly to wellbeing, as all say they feel safe and secure. It also offers older pupils' opportunities to develop leadership skills but, because they are not given other significant responsibilities, pupils are an underused resource. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and are making progress through well planned, closely monitored interventions. Parents and pupils feel well supported by school staff in times of difficulty. However, stakeholder views are not sought in a regular or formal manner, so it is difficult for the school to show where they have made a difference.

The impact of governor training can be seen in the way the active foundation committee has been reviewing policies, in self-evaluation and in visits to school. However, the self-evaluation document has no corresponding

action plan. The lack of robust monitoring and evaluation procedures limits the capacity for improvements to be secure and sustainable. Views of stakeholders are collected informally and infrequently. However, regular communication is developing the partnership between school and parents. The weekly school newsletter from the headteacher has been universally welcomed.

Pupils have a well-developed sense of respect which they understand is helped by the diversity of the school population. Pupils know the importance of understanding different viewpoints and how this will help them as they go out into the world. Not enough use is made of the richness of this cultural and religious diversity to positively impact on the curriculum or enable pupils to become courageous advocates, although it is evident, through discussion, that pupils have the necessary skills. The school council is one area where pupils display leadership skills. Charitable giving develops pupils' awareness of social responsibility and gives them some understanding of justice and inequality.

Although it reflects the Church of England's statement of entitlement, the RE policy is not aligned with general practice. The lack of a subject leader has had a negative impact on both the quality and status of the subject. Pupils do not flourish because they are not enthused by RE; the majority of lessons lack challenge and are repetitive. Those who teach RE also fail to flourish because they do not receive adequate support and training. Therefore, RE does not make a significant contribution to the breadth of opportunities, high aspirations and love of learning which are expressed in the wider vision. It does, however, have a role in celebrating diversity: pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of major worldwide religions.



The effectiveness of RE

Due to staff changes, regular RE teaching has only recently been reintroduced. The lively teaching seen with the youngest pupils showed an excellently planned sequence of lessons resulting in good outcomes for pupils. However, good practice is not consistent so overall effectiveness of RE is poor. The previous inspection report noted weaknesses in assessment and monitoring and lack of guidance for pupils on how to improve. These weaknesses remain. There is little evidence of differentiation. Marking is not consistent or rigorous. Despite a recently introduced tracking system little assessment has taken place, so gaps in pupil learning and teacher knowledge are not being identified. There is no reliable data for progress or standards. A named governor for RE does visit the school regularly but there are no written monitoring records, so any evidence of impact or areas of concern are not formally reported.

Headteacher	Barney Brown
Inspector's name and number	Linda Russell 893