

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Woodford Halse Church of England Primary Academy

High Street, Woodford Halse, Daventry NN11 3RQ

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Satisfactory

Diocese

Peterborough

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Date of academy conversion

1 July 2014

Name of multi-academy trust

Innovate Multi Academy Trust

Date of inspection

9 November 2017

Date of last inspection

October 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Academy 141073

Headteacher

Edward Newton

Inspector's name and number

Janet Northing 792

School context

Woodford Halse is an average-sized primary school of 227 pupils including a nursery unit. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average. The number of pupils who have English as an additional language or who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below the national average. The school became part of Innovate Multi-Academy Trust (iMAT) on 1 July 2014. An Ofsted inspection in July 2017 judged that the school requires improvement. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Woodford Halse CE Primary Academy as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Since the last inspection leaders have lacked rigour in their evaluation of the impact of the school's effectiveness as a church school. Current school leaders have begun to put in place clear foci for development giving the school community a greater sense of purpose and direction.
- Links with St. Mary the Virgin Church contribute significantly to the distinctive Christian character of the school and collective worship, enriching the lives of pupils and their families.
- Collective worship is valued by members of the school community and contributes to the school's Christian ethos through biblical teaching and the celebration of Christian festivals.
- Religious education (RE) supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development by providing space for individual reflection and response to a range of faith perspectives.

Areas to improve

- With diocesan support, train all staff and governors in using and applying the SIAMS framework to inform and raise expectations of the impact of the school's distinctive Christian character on all areas of school life.
- Put in place a Christian vision rooted in distinctively Christian values to inspire the strategic direction and on-going improvement of the school as a church school.
- Secure the impact of this Christian vision through systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE.
- With support from the diocese, establish a theologically based understanding of spirituality that informs the policy and practice of the school.
- Improve the provision for prayer and reflection within collective worship and the school environment to deepen the spiritual life of pupils and the community as a whole.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory at meeting the needs of all learners

Pupils can name a number of values that they believe are evident in the life of the school including respect, honesty, helpfulness and kindness. Pupils talk constructively about several values as being a formative influence on their behaviour and respect for others. However, their significance as Christian values is underdeveloped so limiting the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Some pupils are able to refer to events in the Bible to exemplify these values in the life of Jesus Christ. For example, a pupil in Year 5 used the miracle of the 'Feeding of the five thousand' to demonstrate a Christian interpretation of kindness. However, the lack of clearly articulated core values with associated theological underpinning limits the daily life of the school as a distinctively Christian community. Behaviour is improving as a result of strategies to promote personal responsibility put in place by current leaders of the school. This is evident in the positive relationships pupils have with each other and with the staff. The school's caring ethos and pastoral support fosters a sense of wellbeing though, once more, the impact of the Christian character is limited. Similarly, the contribution of a Christian influence on academic achievement and attendance has become ineffective since the last inspection. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been well below national expectations in reading and maths for the last two years. Similarly, progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 has also fallen below national expectations for all pupils. As a result of input from current leaders a more accurate assessment of current standards of achievement is now in place. The school's attendance figures have also been below the national average for the last three years. Fixed term exclusions have been above national expectations for the past two years. Strategies to improve and promote good attendance are now in place with appropriate pastoral support offered to families. Pupils enjoy RE and recognise its importance in helping them to understand and respect a range of faith traditions. This is supported by visits to the Wellingborough Mandir and the mosque in Northampton, which provide some contextual appreciation of worship customs other than those found within Christianity. Pupils have some awareness that Christianity is a multi-cultural world religion through the school's link with a Christian charity in Uganda. RE also supports pupils' SMSC development by providing space for individual reflection and response. For example, in a Year 5 RE lesson focusing on peace, a candle provided a focus for reflection while pupils listened to a piece of music and responded by describing how it made them feel. However, this good practice is not evident across the curriculum as a whole and in other areas of school life. In addition, a focus for development from the last inspection linked to teaching and learning, and pupil attainment in RE has not been met. The lack of planned provision for spiritual development means that pupils have few experiences to reflect on ultimate questions of meaning, identity and purpose. In addition, the absence of a clear Christian vision underpinned by core Christian values currently limits the impact of RE to contribute effectively to the Christian character of the school. Pupils' experience and understanding of the role of the Christian church at local level is supported through links with St Mary the Virgin Church, Holy Cross Church in Daventry and the Methodist church in Northampton.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The pattern of collective worship, though limited in impact, is embedded and valued by the school community. Members of staff recognise the importance of collective worship in their own lives and appreciate the time for reflection. Pupils value the experience of coming together 'to celebrate and sing the Lord's Prayer.' However, the lack of core Christian values lying at the heart of the community limits the impact of collective worship on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils' charitable fundraising is commendable in its practical expression of support for others within the local and wider community. Some pupils are able to link their service to others as a response to worship. A Year 4 child exemplified this in stating that, 'God wants every person to live as well as we do because he cares for everyone.' Pupils understand the significance of Easter in terms of Jesus' death and resurrection. However, their expression of these events as theological concepts important to Christian belief is not well developed. Some pupils recognise the importance of Jesus Christ within collective worship. However, the inconsistent use of a candle or cross to symbolise God's presence in whole school worship limits the sense of the sacredness of these moments. Whilst reference is made to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, pupil's understanding of the doctrine's significance to the Christian faith is underdeveloped. Pupils' experience of prayer includes

the Lord's Prayer, Grace at lunchtime and writing their own prayers. However, there is no provision for spontaneous prayer and reflection outside of worship, which limits learners' capacity for spiritual awareness. The last inspection report highlights that the monitoring of collective worship should include some evaluation of its impact on pupils to inform future planning. However, no monitoring and evaluation of collective worship takes place, therefore opportunities for pupils to express their views are limited resulting in little on-going improvement. A further focus for development required the school to make and maintain a folder of prayers to be used as a resource to support younger pupils. No action has been taken. Pupils experience a range of leaders including staff, local clergy and lay people from the Anglican and Methodist traditions. In addition, all major Christian festivals are celebrated in St Mary the Virgin Church enriching pupils' experience within worship and supporting the school's Christian character. Pupils readily express a desire to be responsible for planning and leading acts of worship but these aspirations are currently unrealised.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is inadequate

The vision of the school is currently expressed in the strapline 'Achieving excellence for our children.' However, there is no promotion of this vision in a Christian context. This means that the impact of the school's Christian foundation on standards of pupil achievement has become ineffective. In addition, the Christian distinctiveness of the school's values is not clearly expressed which limits their impact on the leadership and communal life of the school. Since the last inspection, governors have found it difficult to hold leaders to account for the school's lack of effectiveness as a church school. The current structure of governance does not facilitate sound evaluation of the school's effectiveness as a church school.

Committees do not cover monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE. Nor are they a regular item on the agenda at meetings of the local governing body. A lack of awareness of the SIAMS evaluation framework has also hampered the strategic development of the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school. A failure to address the three areas for development identified at the last inspection has also impacted negatively on the school's progress as a church school. In addition, the school has not been part of the Diocesan Service Level Agreement for a number of years so limiting access to on-going guidance, support and development opportunities. iMAT is supportive of the development of the school as a church school. Accountability within the iMAT scheme of delegation rests with the leadership of each school limiting its involvement in monitoring the effectiveness of the school as a church school. However, scope for professional development is enhanced through the school's membership of iMAT which includes another church school. Restructuring of the leadership team within school is benefitting staff development for those with the potential to become leaders of church schools in the future.

A new headteacher joined the school in September 2017 and consequently, the school is currently going through a period of change and adjustment. He is fully aware of the need to put in place an explicit Christian vision for the school underpinned by clear Christian values. Effective strategies for improvement have begun to be put in place and expectations for all pupils are rising as a result. The school is once more part of the Diocesan Service Level Agreement so is accessing support and training. The RE subject leader is new to the role and is currently receiving professional development involving the 'Understanding Christianity' training with the diocese. Arrangements for collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. Parents speak positively about the school's welcoming and supportive atmosphere and of the important role that the school plays within the local community. Links with St Mary the Virgin are mutually beneficial. For example the church building is currently out of action and all services are being held on the school site in 'The Nest.'

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