

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Offley Endowed Primary School and Nursery

Address School Lane, Offley, Hitchin, United Kingdom, SG5 3AT

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

'With God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26) At Offley Endowed Primary School and Nursery we strive to provide a healthy, safe, caring and challenging learning environment where everyone is valued and each member of our school is able to 'Be All You Can Be'.

Key findings

- Character and spiritual development, defined by the well-embedded vision to 'be all you can be', have a high priority in the school. This contributes to the overall well-being and flourishing of pupils and staff and is a key strength of the school.
- The belief that with 'God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26), leads to bold choices about the curriculum and extra-curricular provision. This ensures that all pupils, including the vulnerable make good progress from their starting points.
- Governors share the vision and link it clearly to the school's values, but do not rigorously monitor its wider impact. This limits their understanding of the development of the school as a Church school.
- The vision is implicit in collective worship as the underlying values are explored and celebrated. Effective monitoring identifies that pupils enjoy worship. Leaders are also aware that pupils participate rather than lead.
- Religious Education (RE) provides pupils with a variety of enjoyable experiences, and they learn accurately about a appropriate range of religious worldviews. The sequencing of the curriculum does not help them to build a deeply theological or coherent picture of the faiths encountered.

Areas for development

- Enhance the range of monitoring opportunities and training, so that governors gain a wider understanding of the impact of the vision.

- Create opportunities for a wide range of pupils to be involved in the planning and leading of collective worship to enhance their understanding of this activity.
- Review the RE curriculum to give pupils a more systematic and coherent experience of religions and worldviews so that their knowledge is deepened and extended.

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

Pupils and adults alike are flourishing at Offley Endowed Primary School. The belief that 'with God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26), inspires pupils to be themselves and try their best in everything. Leaders strive to overcome challenges in line with the distinctive Christian vision. For example, the rising number of vulnerable pupils leads to creative thinking about the curriculum. The establishment of a bold four-year rolling programme in many subjects reflects the school's vision to challenge and support all pupils. This creates opportunities for collaborative approaches to planning which enhance professional development.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities contribute effectively to pupils becoming 'all they can be'. Leaders have a list of twenty experiences to enable every pupil to discover their talents before they leave. Music, as well as sport, is a strategic part of this provision. All pupils learn an instrument and sing in the choir, performing in public, often to raise money for charity. During such challenging activities, they encourage one another to remember that 'with God all things are possible'. Courage to try new things and overcome challenges gives pupils aspiration for the next stage of learning.

Alongside perseverance and resilience, 'be all you can be' encourages pupils to show a deep respect for difference. Leaders recognise that pupils in a village community need opportunities to increase their awareness of diversity. They choose resources and plan the curriculum carefully to achieve this aim, for example by adding more women and people from diverse backgrounds. Visitors are also chosen to inspire and challenge. One highlight is the visit of a disabled Christian speaker. His demonstration of the belief that with 'God all things are possible' helps pupils to believe they can overcome the challenges they face.

This belief that each person is valued for who they are permeates relationships in the school community. Pupils are deeply appreciative of the respect with which staff treat them. New pupils are integrated quickly and identify this as a feature of the school. The learning environment is therefore calm and purposeful, with few behaviour incidents logged. Peer mediation equips pupils with skills of forgiveness and reconciliation helping them to resolve many disagreements without the adult intervention. Allowing others to be the best they can be leads to good mental wellbeing for all. Pupils recognise how these positive choices link to the example of Jesus' treatment of people.

Staff freely share new ideas because they know that they will be accepted and explored. This 'can do' approach allows them to 'be all they can be'. Therefore they can do their jobs effectively and this is good for their mental wellbeing. As a result, staff turnover is low. Collaboration and professional openness mean that when there are new staff, they quickly feel part of 'Team Offley'. The positive impact of belief in a God of possibilities on day-to-day provision is a pocket of excellence within the school.

A sense of the possible drives some aspects of strategy, such as the setting of ambitious targets. However, the development of the Christian character is more closely linked by governors to church visits and collective worship. Partnerships with a wide range of local churches and organisations regularly bring visitors into school to support with wellbeing and resilience. Governors' monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies is limited. They rightly see that more training is required, especially for new members of the board.

Collective worship embodies the vision of everything being possible with God. Staff talk readily of being inspired by seeing the children develop and grow during worship. Younger pupils are inspired to be the 'best


they can be' by the older members of the school. This is particularly marked in celebration assemblies where pupils gain 'Faith in Action' certificates for living out the school's values. Pupils talk about how collective worship brings them a sense that God is with them and enables them to achieve and overcome challenges. However they also recognise that although not everyone believes in God, they each have a place in the worship life of the school. They are invited, rather than compelled, to join in with prayer and singing, but everyone does. They also enjoy learning about the teachings of Jesus and joining in with re-enacting stories from the Bible. Regular visits to local churches as well as visits from a range of local clergy enhance pupils' experiences of worship. Together these experiences enable them to recognise how God helps them in their daily lives.

Leaders ensure that collective worship helps pupils see links between school vision, values and world events. A weekly collective worship focused on current affairs connects pupils to the world beyond Offley. Pupils often respond sensitively in prayer to the needs they encounter, writing new prayers each term. They believe that they can make a difference in the world, by raising money to help animals for example.

Monitoring shows that pupils enjoy and benefit from collective worship. However, they are usually participants rather than leaders. The worship committee is involved in some limited aspects of planning and monitoring. They have responsibility to oversee the contents of the worship resources in each classroom. They are also able to instigate minor changes. For example, harvest gifts are now distributed by the school, rather than by the church. This enables pupils to feel that they are making a positive difference to their community and is enabling others to be the best they can be. Fundraising has a high priority for pupils but there are limited opportunities to make a wider difference to the world.

Regular RE lessons enable pupils to recognise the importance of learning about and appreciating the beliefs of others. They understand religious belief as a way that people can choose to be fully themselves and find their own beliefs. They give thoughtful responses to the challenging questions they research. The curriculum covers a wide range of religious traditions and worldviews. This includes some cultural expressions of faith, such as ceremonial foods. Pupils understand that religions, including Christianity, have an impact on people's lives for example in the way they dress. They have a good understanding of the global nature of Christianity. They encounter theological concepts and religious texts, but the curriculum is not always structured to fully develop these ideas.

Offley Endowed Primary School and Nursery offers pupils, parents and staff a safe and nurturing place to learn and grow. The emphasis on mental health and well-being is restoring the community after the pandemic. It is a good school and is enabling all to flourish.

	The effectiveness of RE is	Good
	<p>A new scheme of work offers a broad and engaging curriculum. All pupils respond well to the revised RE curriculum and learn keenly. The school effectively uses assessment and tracking material to keep them informed of how well pupils are doing. This enable teachers to target support where it is needed. Vulnerable groups are therefore able to make good progress from their starting points. The most able are encouraged to develop and extend their thinking, flourishing as a consequence.</p>	

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	01 July 2022	URN	117445
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2015		
School status	VA	NOR	134
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation			
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	St Albans		
Headteacher	Paul Edwards		

Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged	In Line with National Average		
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Above National Average		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Anne Andrews	No.	0973