

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

Holywell Church of England Primary School			
Address	Mill Way, Needingworth, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 4TF		
Date of inspection	03 March 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese	<b>Ely</b>	URN	110817

<b>Overall Judgement</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>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgement</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Holywell is a primary school with 202 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few 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 is below national averages. The school was part of a 3-school federation until April 2019. The new head teacher was appointed in September 2019.

### The school's Christian vision

Flowing, Strengthening, Deepening  
'Like a tree firmly planted by streams of living water' Psalms 1:3

### Key findings

- The recently refreshed school vision is well understood by pupils and staff who can demonstrate its impact upon them. It is not disseminated sufficiently widely for the community fully appreciate its impact.
- Strong leadership is ensuring that this caring and inclusive school is guided by core Christian values which are embedded and make a significant contribution to the daily lives of all.
- A range of strong partnerships support pupils and adults in their personal, academic and professional development.
- Invitational collective worship enables all to be involved and engaged. A communal prayer space is particularly effective in contributing to spiritual development, but opportunities for reflection outside are lacking.
- Religious education (RE) teaching offers opportunities for pupils to develop a personal response to the concepts of faith and belief because it provides a safe space to express thoughts and ideas. Assessment is not well enough developed to allow all pupils to have a secure understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve.

### Areas for development

- Ensure the school vision is communicated more widely in the local community to ensure all are clear about its importance in the life of the school.
- Develop a more rigorous assessment system so that everyone understands progress in RE.
- Build on the success of the prayer space to develop reflection opportunities outside which enable all to further develop a personal response to God throughout the day.

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

Embedded Christian values permeate daily life at Holywell because they are well known, understood and appreciated by all. The centrality of these values has been enhanced by the introduction of a weekly reward system and ensures an unyielding focus. Consequently, all can clearly see the impact on their daily lives. Leaders give strong direction through the recently refreshed vision. Pupils confidently explain the meaning of 'flowing, strengthening, deepening' and its relevance to them personally. The link to relevant biblical quotes enables pupils to clearly understand the theological basis for the vision and naming each class after a tree gives everyone a tangible reminder. Pupils are well supported by staff who live out the values and strive to realise the school's vision. Driven by the vision, the school offers a broad and rich curriculum. The provision of the opportunity to play a musical instrument contributes significantly to pupils' cultural development and residential visits allow them to challenge themselves and support one another to succeed. The vision is securely understood within the school community but is not yet making a significant impact in the wider community.

Daily worship contributes significantly to pupils' understanding of the school values. Worship is centred on the Bible and the messages that are contained within. It is thoughtfully planned to support the development of pupils' understanding of the link between the stories and school values. An excellent reflection opportunity is effectively used when pupil worship leaders ask for questions about the story and other pupils offer answers. This demonstrates how well the themes within the worship are being understood, giving staff the opportunity for regular evaluation. Reflection is also contributing to pupils' development and self-esteem. Preschool pupils also access worship on a regular basis which contributes powerfully to their ability to settle easily into school life when they start. Daily worship is supported in class and in other areas around the school through interactive displays and prayer areas. A prayer space for all sits symbolically at the centre of the school building to signify the importance of prayer. Governors run a regular lunchtime prayer space which is well-attended, greatly supporting pupils' spiritual development and resulting in pupils discussing 'hearing God and speaking to Him.' As yet, there are no opportunities for spiritual reflection outside although Forest School sessions for younger pupils do contribute to their spiritual growth.

Pupils achieve well, but the school is not complacent. Leaders quickly identified a need for a focus on progress to ensure all pupils' needs were being fully met and have ensured that ambitious targets are set. The introduction of a new assessment system for maths and English has enabled governors to monitor with confidence. This is not, as yet, in place for RE. However, the recently appointed RE leader has made a good start to revising the long-term plan so that it fully complies with the locally agreed syllabus for RE. She has been supported in this by the previous subject leader, demonstrating the commitment of the school to collaborative working. The partnership with the diocese has been a particular strength and the impact can be seen in the vibrant learning environment which champions Christian distinctiveness. Following diocesan training, the RE leader has successfully integrated Understanding Christianity materials into the whole school teaching plan. As a result, pupils are able to investigate and develop a personal response to complex questions. Pupils see how RE is helping them to develop an interest in a variety of world faiths and understand how this will support them in becoming tolerant and respectful members of society. However, opportunities to experience faith in action through, for example, a variety of visits and visitors are limited. Pupils are positive about RE and talk enthusiastically about what they experience but they are less clear about how well they are doing. A lack of consistency in written feedback for pupils is hampering their ability to accurately self-assess and move forward with their learning.

Pupil attitudes reflect the vision. They are 'firmly planted' in a community with Christian values at its heart and this has an impact on their daily lives. Behaviour is very good. Pupils demonstrate respect for one another, following the example staff set. This is particularly noticeable during less structured times of the day when pupils play in mixed age groups. An excellent pastoral system is supporting vulnerable pupils with transition to the next stage of education. 'Circle of Friends' is used successfully as a tool and results in increased confidence and higher self-esteem. Parent surveys show a high degree of satisfaction with and appreciation for the focus on Christian values.

Governors are highly committed to the Christian ethos, and they use their expertise well for the benefit of all. The hardworking chair of governors promotes a strong Christian direction. Although recently formed, the governing body has acted swiftly to support the school and act as a critical friend. They are regular visitors to school and, through their monitoring programme, have a really good knowledge of the school and play a

significant part in school development. They have ensured induction procedures effectively contribute to staff understanding of their role in promoting the values of a church school.

A mutually beneficial partnership with the local church enriches spiritual experiences for pupils and adults. Services support the school vision. For example, the well-blessing enables pupils to think about the school vision in a local context. The 'experience' days at church are well supported by the local church community who find answering questions a useful means of clarifying their own thoughts. This is also true for the adults who are regular contributors to worship within the school.

Pupils have a good grasp of service and they volunteer to take on duties at lunchtime to assist midday staff. They are active in the annual Lent challenge and their topic on waste motivated them to take action by writing to the parish council and visiting the local supermarket. As a result, pupils are well versed in the need to look after the world because it is God's creation and know they can be agents of change. Charitable giving is well supported, and pupils see how this relates to the school values, especially compassion.

Emotional wellbeing is particularly important at Holywell as they become a stand-alone primary school once again. Leaders have ensured that staff have felt supported and testify to the importance of the tremendous work done by the vicar during a time of structural change. Careful management of the process driven by strong Christian values has enabled the school to confidently embark on the next stage of its journey.

Headteacher	Paul Baddeley
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