

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sutton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School			
Address	The Brook, Sutton, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2PU		
Date of inspection	03 October 2019	Status of school	VC Primary
Diocese	Ely	URN	110802

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 Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Sutton is a primary school with 285 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and 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 in line with national averages. The head teacher has been in post since September 2018 and there have been significant changes in staffing in the last 12 months. In March 2019 the school had its second Ofsted inspection within 12 months, judging it to require improvement.

The school's Christian vision

Growing Excellence for All: all our children nurture a respect for all God's children and love of our local and global neighbours, developing a sense of personal and collective responsibility to contribute towards the world God intended for us. Three core values underpin this; respect, responsibility and koinonia.

Key findings

Sutton is on a journey of change. It has chosen to focus on building stability and capacity within the school through its Christian vision to bring about rapid change and improvement. Leaders have made the decision not to rush this. Shoots demonstrating the positive impact of the vision are appearing and this is enabling everyone to begin to flourish in the fullness of life. The core values, explored daily in collective worship, drive the vision and have had a positive impact on relationships in the school. Sutton is not confident in standing proud in the local community as a church school. However it does have a strong link with the local church of St Andrew's. The brokered support by the diocese and local authority has enabled change to begin quickly. They have provided the school with confidence in dealing with challenge and developing the capacity to become a centre of excellence for all to grow in.

Areas for development

- Embed the school's Christian vision so pupils and adults can be ambassadors of it in the local community, helping it to be seen as a place where everyone flourishes.
- Embed the new behaviour policy and ensure that all parents understand that the school is acting on the Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Pupils to continue to explore moral issues that challenge injustice and inequality through curriculum opportunities that will enable them to be strong agents for social change.
- For governors to strategically plan their monitoring activities, extending how they evaluate the effectiveness of the school and assess the impact of changes being made.
- Develop the inclusion of pupil views on collective worship, enabling them to shape, plan, deliver and evaluate it on a regular basis.

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

Sutton has taken great care to form a Christian vision that staff, governors and pupils are comfortable with. This vision is understood by the pupils; there is daily exploration of three core values that underpin it and drive it forward in collective worship, RE lessons and within the wider curriculum. One pupil said, 'RE allows us to understand relationships in school better'. The headteacher 'Values Awards' are a good example of how the daily life of the school uses what it believes in to model and celebrate good relationships. Parents want to invest in Sutton flourishing fully once more. They recognise the nurturing and caring ethos the school has, and how their children live out being respectful and responsible as a result. They understand that the school is going through a significant period of change and appreciate the openness and honesty of the new headteacher. However, pupils and staff are not yet advocates and ambassadors of these positive changes in the local and wider community, therefore the vision has not flowed beyond the school gates.

The school's environment and wider curriculum support the vision it has grown, with peaceful places in each classroom providing places for children to reflect or pray safely. The individual child is celebrated through displays and photographs around the school. Parents speak highly of every child being understood by the staff. Pupils also know this; 'we are not straight lines we all have a wiggle'. Pupils are treated with dignity and respect no matter their needs. Difference and diversity are celebrated; everyone receives a warm welcome and, as a result, pupils are growing in confidence as unique in the eyes of God. However, there are small pockets of parental concern around how children behave and how some seem to be treated differently. In response to this the school has produced a new behaviour policy. High expectations are set by the school and many positive comments were shared, for example about how pupils walk to church. However, the policy is not sufficiently embedded for parents to be able to understand how its work is based on the Christian principles of forgiveness and reconciliation.

One place where relationships are very positive, and many recognise the marked change, is collective worship. Senior leaders have worked hard to bring about significant improvement and as a result pupils really enjoy daily worship. They describe it as a special time when the whole school community comes together. They share biblical teachings, drawing on the life of Jesus to exemplify how to live their own lives. There is a true sense that worship is transformational; one pupil said 'we celebrate and praise God in song, we learn something new – like how to be a superhero without super powers and then we leave thinking about the messages we are given and what we can do with them.' It has become a calm and well organised part of the day, appreciated by all for the confidence it is bringing back to pupils who found worship a noisy and frightening place. One pupil said, 'I used to be frightened by the noise and would never speak; now it is really calm and I join in lots.' Spirituality is nurtured through prayer, reflection and the use of relevant Bible texts that create a fulfilling atmosphere. Pupils feel ready for the next step in worship. They want their voice to be heard in how they would like it organised, to have the chance to deliver it more often and also be part of leaders' evaluation if its impact.

The high turnover in staff has had a negative impact on pupils' learning and standards in the last year have declined compared to national benchmarks. Staffing is now stable and as a result the school has a firm foundation to improve rapidly. The curriculum is wide ranging and pupils are engaged most of the time. Where some struggle additional help is provided sensitively; this has reduced disruption. The curriculum has been reshaped to enthuse pupils by including big questions. Moral issues have started to be included in this planning and as a result pupils are beginning to become advocates of social change within global contexts. As this only began in September its impact is currently limited. Governors undertake monitoring and have a clear view of the school's performance and daily life; however it is not always sharply focused on evaluating impact of new developments nor linked to the existing operational plans of the school.

RE has elements that are strong due to embedding the Understanding Christianity project. This has allowed pupils to take a deeper view of Christianity; one pupil said 'RE allows us to understand other people's beliefs and that there is no right answer.' However, teaching of other world views is less robust; whilst coverage is evident from creative displays around the school, pupils lack a deeper knowledge and there is little evidence in books. The new RE lead monitors RE in the context of the National Statement of Entitlement for RE, they have a vision

for this subject but it is not yet embedded. They have undertaken some training to develop the subject across the school and within the wider curriculum but have not yet had time to embed this.

Sutton has an established and fruitful partnership with St Andrews as its local church. It regularly attends it for whole school services that provide a natural rhythm to the school year. Children speak enthusiastically about harvest, Christingle and the annual leavers' service. The church and school share many groups including a children's choir that is valued by the whole school community. Staff commit time outside of school to such activities, ensuring pupils appreciate the Anglican heritage this relationship provides. This is an important aspect of Sutton's life and further supports the school's vision for all it serves to flourish in all of life's fullness.

Headteacher	Emily Gore Rowe
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