

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

King Edward VI Church of England Voluntary Controlled School			
Address	Grove Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3BH		
Date of inspection	29/01/2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	URN	124856
Overall Judgement		Grade	Good
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	Good
School context			
King Edward VI is a secondary school of 1530 pupils and students. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below the national averages. The proportion who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The religious background of pupils is mainly Christian with few attending church outside of their involvement through school. A reorganisation in the local authority means the school now includes Years 7 and 8 and the sixth form is closing.			
The school's Christian vision			
King Edward VI Church of England School's vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, cultural and social development of children and young people. Our vision is rooted in our values of respect, aspiration and creativity.			
Key findings			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors secures good levels of academic attainment and progress for all, through a focus on being respectful, aspirational and creative across school life. • Although not all in the school community readily identify them as distinctively Christian, the vision and associated values are beginning to refresh the school's expression of itself as a Church of England school. Therefore, they are starting to guide more explicitly refinements in approaches and policies with positive effect. For example, the newly introduced behaviour policy now draws on Christian concepts such as justice and forgiveness. • The quality of mutually supportive relationships and the strong pastoral care reflect the school's inclusive Christian nature and its emphasis on respect and aspiration for all. • The attainment and progress in religious education (RE) across Key Stage 3 and examination option groups in Key Stage 4 and Post 16 is a strength. Pupils and students in these groups address issues of religious and spiritual concern very well, deepening their knowledge, understanding and skills in addressing Christianity and other world faiths appropriately. Please note: RE is referred to as Philosophy and Ethics within this school 			
Areas for development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the vision explicitly reflects the school's Christian foundation, sharing the vision and associated values so that they become familiar to all and are securely embedded in policy and expressed in practice. • Address the rigour with which non-examination RE in Key Stage 4 and Post 16 is formulated so that its positive impact on pupils' and students' academic and personal development is deepened and celebrated. • Increase the emphasis on and opportunities for silence, reflection and prayer in acts of collective worship, especially in tutor groups, so that pupils' and students' spiritual and religious understanding is enriched and consistently good opportunities for worship enhanced. 			

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

The school has gone through significant changes, including a new headteacher and new governing body membership. Through local reorganisation, it has successfully taken in Years 7 and 8 and is effectively managing the process of closing its sixth form. Through this period its Christian foundation has served as a stabilising factor. This means that morale remains high and pupils, students and staff are well cared for.

On arrival the headteacher led on revisiting the school's Christian vision and associated values in order to make them more active and explicit. This revision drew appropriately on developments in Church of England education nationally. Consequently, they have been refreshed recently. The vision takes a holistic view of educational and personal development within an inclusive Christian context. It is underpinned by a Christian understanding of education, based on Jesus' teaching of equality and care for all. As reflected, for example, in Jesus' saying that he came to give life in all its fullness (John 10.10). This underpinning is articulated well by the headteacher, governors, particularly foundation governors, and other senior leaders. However, the theological and biblical basis of the revised vision and its associated values is not apparent to all stakeholders.

The associated values of respect, aspiration and creativity are linked for many in a general way with Christian teaching. They are well known and successfully shape the high quality of caring relationships and the positive climate for learning. This means that attainment is high and improving when compared with local and national averages. At least good progress is made, with many making accelerated progress, from their various starting points, including those who have additional needs. This is a good reflection of the positive impact of the school's Christian underpinning. Governors are active, and, the foundation governors particularly, take a keen interest by monitoring and supporting the school's refreshed Christian vision and associated values. Through this they ensure the strong pastoral care and wellbeing of pupils, students and staff. The Christian vision has at its heart inclusivity. This underpins its focus on difference and diversity well. In turn it impacts on the strong sense of belonging and results in pupils and students developing in confidence. Thus, it enables them to develop well both academically and personally. The wellbeing of pupils and staff is given a high priority. It is evident in the strong relationships and effective pastoral support for both children and adults. This care addresses their emotional and personal development needs closely. Outside agencies are drawn on as necessary, including Bury Christian Youth who make a significant contribution to the school's Christian and pastoral life.

The school's Christian underpinning is increasingly informing more explicitly the work of leaders and governors. This means, for example, taking a decision to broaden the curriculum for pupils, especially in Key Stage 4. The headteacher provides good support for developing an inclusive Church school. Governors and the senior leadership team are supporting him in this. The importance of spiritual development for pupils' personal development is acknowledged. This means that, for example, open-ended questioning is built into the newly established teaching and learning policy, although how this is explicitly linked to the school's revised Christian vision is not clear. A range of experiences are provided for reflection on 'big questions' especially, but not exclusively, in RE, personal, health and social education (PHSE) and through the worship programme. Pupils and students respond positively. They are confident in giving their own views and opinions relating to moral and ethical issues and can disagree respectfully.

The school works well with parents/carers and the wider community, including with other schools. It draws on expertise from the diocesan education team through courses and visits from the team into school. Its link with the Cathedral is well established and has deepened recently. This supports its revised Christian vision, contributing to pupils' and students' spiritual, religious and cultural understanding appropriately. Through the curriculum and a wide range of extracurricular opportunities, visits and trips pupils' and students' experience of local, national and global communities is enhanced. This includes appreciating that Christianity is a world-wide faith.

Worship reinforces the school's Christian vision and associated values and stakeholders recognise how it is an important expression of its Christian foundation. It provides a focus for the spiritual and religious growth of all involved. The weekly act of worship in college groups is increasingly providing opportunities for reflection, silence and prayer. This is less successful and consistent in tutor group acts of worship, as was the case at the time of the previous denominational inspection. The programme draws appropriately on Christian teaching, beliefs and practices, including focusing on some biblical stories and the significance of Jesus for Christians. Worship in school is extended through regular worship opportunities at the Cathedral, particularly at festival times. Through these pupils and students have opportunities to deepen their understanding and appreciation of key Christian beliefs and concepts. Pupils, students and staff are generally well-engaged during worship. They help to lead, plan and evaluate it and know that if they have a concern they can request to lead an act of worship to highlight it. This happened recently when a Year 10 pupil raised the issue of 'period poverty'. Donations of products were collected, and an

article appeared in the local paper. Thus, the connection between worship and social action is securely linked. This is an example of how pupils and students know that they can be advocates for change and make a difference locally, nationally and indeed globally. Two Christian groups are provided for pupils and students. Christians At King Edwards (CAKE) and Xplore. These make a positive contribution to the spiritual and religious development of the pupils and students who attend.

Strong RE provides a wide range of learning opportunities across Key Stage 3 and for those following examination option courses in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The curriculum for these is broad and balanced and the progress made is very good. This means, for example, that attainment in GCSE Religious Studies is consistently above local and national averages. The department has a clear development plan for continued improvement. Pupils and students engage well with their learning, many finding RE stimulating and inspiring. They reflect on how the issues addressed affect them personally, irrespective of their own faith position. Marking and assessment is accurate in ensuring high levels of progress. This is because it is clear about what is done well and what is needed to improve further. Open-ended questioning prompts deep thinking as shown in some extended pieces of writing as well as in classroom discussion. Provision for these groups fully reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. For those who do not opt to take an externally accredited course, their entitlement to RE is delivered differently. In Key Stage 4 personal development opportunities are provided, linked to PHSE. In the sixth form it is provided through bespoke RE sessions and visiting speakers. This provides a range of discussion and reflection opportunities and contributes positively to the understanding of moral and social issues. However, it does not draw effectively or consistently on an appropriate range of religious belief, concepts and practices. Neither does it build sufficiently on the good Key Stage 3 experiences of pupils or match the quality provided in the examination option groups. Thus, this element of RE provision does not contribute successfully to the school's embedding of its revised vision and associated values.

Headteacher	Lee Walker
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)