

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Codicote Church of England Primary School

Address	Meadow Way, Codicote, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8YL		
Date of inspection	3 October 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	St Albans	URN	117392

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Codicote Church of England Primary School is a primary school with 267 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 is part of a planned expansion programme resulting in two year groups of two form entry. Approximately one third of families identify as Christian. The headteacher has been in post over 14 years.

The school's Christian vision

"Everyone shall know success"

Psalm 20:4 May he grant you your heart's desire and fulfil all your plans!

Our vision – drives the life and work of the school, inspiring us all to be the best versions of ourselves we can. Our school provides a secure, enabling, enriching, nurturing education, where everyone is valued, and supported to achieve their potential, so that we reflect the core principles and values within the Christian faith and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Key findings

- An inspirational headteacher, supported by her highly committed team, is unwavering in focusing on the Christian vision that everyone should know success. Consequently, high standards are achieved for all pupils whatever their starting points.
- Exceptionally harmonious relationships exist across the school community, where staff and pupils live out the Christian values of love, forgiveness and trust.
- Reflecting the school's Christian vision, policies and practice are successful in creating a culture where all flourish and are comfortable as the person God made them to be.
- Pupils take the lead as advocates for change when they are presented with injustice and inequality. However, opportunities for pupils to lead in developing worship are missed.
- Extremely strong partnerships between the school, local church and diocese contribute very effectively to the continued development of this exemplary church school.

Areas for development

- Ensure pupils take the lead in planning and leading acts of collective worship on a regular basis, to enhance their spiritual development.
- Provide first hand experiences of different faiths in religious education, for example through visits or visitors, broadening pupils' cultural experience and understanding.

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

Codicote's long established Christian vision that 'everyone' should know success' ensures all pupils flourish and fulfill their God-given potential. This includes some children with exceptional learning or health needs or physical disabilities. The vision shapes policies and the school development plan, underpinned by a verse from Psalm 20 that God may grant everyone their 'heart's desire' and fulfill their plans. All members of the school community live out the associated Christian values of love, forgiveness and trust in their relationships, ensuring the school's original foundation is maintained. The inspirational headteacher has built an extremely effective and stable staff team, spotting potential and growing future church school leaders through high quality professional development. She is highly valued by the diocese, local authority and colleagues as a trusted source of support, mentoring and staff development. The school is known in the diocese as a centre of excellence. Governors have a rigorous programme of school self-evaluation that includes effectiveness as a church school and leads to improvements. These are clearly outlined in the school development plan.

The school's staff and leaders are highly effective in applying their Christian vision to an enriched curriculum in a nurturing environment. Special 'wow' days ensure a creative approach to meeting the academic and spiritual needs of learners. The school building contains artwork and writing as a vibrant reflection of these days, such as one on creation. Reflection areas in classrooms are well used, supporting pupils' spiritual development and enabling them to flourish. Support for vulnerable learners is a high priority and staff work unstintingly to include these pupils in all aspects of the wider curriculum, including residential visits. Outcomes in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are very high, reflecting how staff go the extra mile in their teaching in and beyond the school day. The school's vision that God would grant their hearts' desires is seen in the high aspirations for pupils and their hope for the future. Pupils demonstrate resilience in their learning when things are difficult and perseverance to overcome barriers to learning.

The vision inspires pupils to engage in social action projects. These include Year 2 raising money for Water Aid because they learned about children in African countries having to walk miles to collect water. Pupils are courageous advocates for change. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote letters to try to have a posthumous medal awarded to a soldier, denied the honour because of his colour. Leaders ensure that pupils have many opportunities to ask big questions and think globally about life, understanding disadvantage and deprivation. The depth of pupils' concern for such issues is demonstrated by a pupil who arranged to send their outgrown football shirts to Nepal.

The school is very effective in ensuring pupils flourish through high quality RE. This reflects the school's Christian vision by ensuring it is a safe space to reflect on pupils' own convictions. Effective curriculum planning ensures that RE reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement and exceeds statutory obligations. Successive RE subject leaders have ensured that pupils gain understanding of core theological concepts in Christianity and engage critically with text. For example, they learned in a creative way how the Bible is made up, finding verses that illustrate the school's values. They display high levels of respect when discussing different religions and worldviews, confidently showing their knowledge and understanding.

Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils are exemplary as all embrace the Christian values of love, forgiveness and trust. This extends to relationships with parents and families. Parents affirm the many ways that the staff go 'above and beyond' to support them and their children, as the school 'puts Christian values into practice'. This extends to highly sensitive support for both seriously ill children and those who have a very sick parent. Pupils' love of school is reflected in their outstanding behaviour and attendance, meaning exclusions are extremely rare. The impact of the Christian vision on such policies and on the sense of belonging in school is palpable. The deep care shown by pupils to each other is demonstrated daily in school. In one example, a child instigated a walking race for sports day to ensure their peer with a disability was equally able to participate. The school's Christian vision focused on the needs of individuals ensures that policy and practice protect the dignity of all members of the school community. This, coupled with the focus on the Christian value of love, shows how all God's children are valued. Therefore, bullying rarely happens but forgiveness and reconciliation are practised by all when needed. The school has an appropriate policy for relationships and sex education in line with their vision for a 'nurturing education, where everyone is valued'.

Collective worship offers opportunities for all to grow spiritually through the use of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection. However, introductions to prayer are sometimes insufficiently invitational but personal reflection times

ensure worship is inclusive of all. Worship is an expression of the school's vision to reflect the core principles and values found in Christian teaching. Pupils enjoy participating in telling Bible stories and singing Christian songs with vigour. They have an age-appropriate understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Special services in school and in church support their appreciation of faith in today's world and the different ways Christians worship. All teachers and their classes enjoy leading worship but pupils have few opportunities to instigate planning and take full responsibility for leading an act of worship. Pupils evaluate worship through class discussions and school council debates. Their desire for greater pupil involvement is part of the current development plan, reflecting effective leadership despite a recent staff change. The strong partnership with St Giles' Church and its vicar, supports regular worship in school and church. Pupils are enthusiastic about these positive experiences, such as Harvest Festival and Easter, many recording their thoughts afterwards sensitively in writing.

This exceptional Church school makes a very positive difference to the lives of pupils, teachers and parents alike. As one parent said they felt 'incredibly blessed to be here'. A teacher said working at the school has been a 'life-changing experience', restoring her love for teaching as a result of the support and care shown.

Headteacher	Liz Pollard
Inspector's name and number	Liz Youngman 465