



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cheveley Church of England Primary School	Park Road, Cheveley, Newmarket. CB8 9BF
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Ely
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection	17 October 2016
Date of last inspection	15 December 2011
School's unique reference number	110785
Headteacher	Diane Kingdon
Inspector's name and number	Stephen Green 809

School context

Cheveley is situated just south of Newmarket and includes pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds. The proportion with special needs, with English as a second language or receiving Pupil Premium funding reflect national levels. The school is oversubscribed, with 147 pupils on the roll. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed, along with two new assistant heads, a new chair of governors and a new RE (religious education) co-ordinator. The parish has appointed a new incumbent. The village church is a short walk from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cheveley as a Church of England school are good

- Pupils have a well-developed spirituality and are confident to share their thoughts, views and prayers.
- Pupils' behaviour and motivation are generally of a very high standard, and these are widely attributed to the Christian character and values of the school.
- The school is committed to understanding each child as an individual, and to ensure they make the best progress possible.
- The school's new management structure provides stability and sustainability, and offers opportunities for staff to develop as future leaders of church schools. School leaders make full and effective use of school support networks, including the diocese.
- The governing body and the well-informed foundation governors offer considerable support and strategic leadership for school staff.

Areas to improve

- Broaden the range of people leading collective worship (CW), as part of a commitment to improve pupils' understanding of the similarities and differences between the Anglican church and other Christian denominations.
- Give pupils opportunities to monitor, plan and lead collective worship themselves, in order to improve their sense of ownership of worship and to broaden the range of people leading it.
- Develop the outside garden area so that it provides members of the school community with a place for peace and quiet reflection.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

The school's values are distinctively Christian, and are focused upon in rotation. These are displayed prominently around the school and as a focal point in the hall for collective worship. The values are made clear to visitors and have a strong influence upon the ethos of the school. The school's Christian foundation is mentioned on the website and in the recently revised mission statement. However, although the schools' Christian faith is made clear in most indoor areas, it is not as obvious as it could be in newsletters or outside the school. Pupils have a good understanding of spirituality and there are collections of their prayers displayed around the school and used in their class and whole-school worship. The school has identified the need for an area to encourage quiet reflection, and has begun to plan a garden area with members of the local community for this purpose. One parent spoke about the importance the school places upon pupils thinking and questioning things, "rather than just accepting them as they are," and others gave examples of the children incorporating their school learning and values into their wider lives. Several parents drew attention to the school's "welcoming, caring and infectious atmosphere."

There is a strong sense of pupils being valued as individuals in the school, and much good work is being done to support those with special needs or who present unacceptable behaviour. As one parent and governor said, "It is very clear to me as a parent that this is a truly Christian school where every child is valued." In a recent parent survey 87% agreed that their expectations of a church school are being met, and none disagreed. The parent of one pupil with special needs praised the school's family atmosphere, and said how pleased she was when an older pupil who had befriended her six-year-old came across and spoke to them in a local shop. Parents and governors said that there is seldom an instance of bullying at the school, and ascribed this to the buddy system that the school has set up and the school's Christian values having a strong positive impact upon pupils' lives. However, none of the parents spoken to could say which value the school was currently focusing upon. Termly RE focus days are popular with pupils and help to deepen understanding of the school's Christian values, and to further develop pupils' spirituality. The school has good relationships with its parents, and the supportive and friendly atmosphere amongst the staff has an influence upon the way pupils relate to them and to each other.

The relationship between the parish church and the school is close, and pupils have a good understanding of Christian traditions and Anglican practice. Pupils have regular opportunities to visit the church, and opportunities to visit other Anglican places of worship, such as Ely Cathedral. The priest in charge has demonstrated baptism and marriage services for pupils to watch, but not yet a Eucharist, although he has offered to do so. However, there are few opportunities for them to visit places of worship used by other faiths and denominations, and the school has not been able to arrange for leaders of other faiths and denominations to visit them.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

CW is widely valued by members of the school community and has a strong impact upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) which was highly praised in the last OFSTED inspection. Pupils visit the parish church twice a term and the priest in charge leads CW in school. An act of worship in the church was seen during the inspection, and pupils enthusiastically took many roles leading singing, reading stories and reading prayers. They were confident and respectful and enjoyed the experience. Regular CW is led by a variety of school staff and has been monitored by foundation governors. However, neither pupils nor parents have a regular role in monitoring CW or in its planning. Parents appreciate the opportunities they are given to join pupils in CW, and do so at least weekly, as well as in the church when celebrating major Christian festivals.

Pupils have a good understanding of Christian traditions, the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ, and their understanding of the Holy Trinity is very impressive. They are less well-informed about other denominations and cultures within the Christian faith, and this is an important area for development that the school has recognised in its self-evaluation and plans for development. Pupils have many opportunities to take their worship further, some identified in planning and delivered in lessons, and some through activities such as Godly Play and the Quiet Club, both of which are run by a volunteer. They have a good understanding of Christian festivals and are confident and respectful in the church. Pupils regularly engage in charitable work as an extension of their work on Christian values in school. Some of this has a local focus (e.g. Harvest Festival) and some seeks to support people further afield (e.g. sponsoring a Kenyan child).

Pupils have a well-developed spirituality, enjoying the many opportunities the school gives them to reflect upon their learning, and have a strong understanding of the place and purpose of prayer. Prayers have been written at various times, and are collected in 'Thank you' and 'Sorry' boxes in classrooms, are collated in books on display and in class prayer gardens, and are shared during CW. When asked whether they enjoy visiting the church and what it means to them, they spoke of it being "a special place" where they could feel closer to God. Pupils said that they enjoyed the recent 40 Acts activity during Lent, and were able to describe their positive feelings when visiting the church. The school's Christian values are a key part of the long-term plans for CW and have been noted by parents and visitors as having a strong impact upon both the atmosphere of the school and the relationships between those who work there. As a result of the pupils' worship, they have a strong commitment to help others, as demonstrated by their charitable work and support for each other. One parent spoke about his daughter being "acutely aware of the need for compassion in the world, knowing that it is her responsibility to help others."

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

Since the present headteacher joined the school in 2013 the structure of the leadership team has been overhauled, with two assistant headteachers taking important and growing roles within the school. The new structure allows greater stability and sustainability and is an effective way to grow future leaders for church schools. The foundation governors are very active and well-informed, and offer monitoring and strategic advice to support the headteacher. They have an influential role upon the full governing body, meet independently several times during the school year, and have a monitoring programme with relation to the school's ethos and CW. Full governing body meetings begin and end with a prayer.

The newly-appointed RE co-ordinator has a high profile in the school and is well thought of even though her teaching role is not full-time. She carries out lesson and work monitoring, has ensured that RE is well-resourced and has a high profile within the life of the school, and liaises with both the foundation governors and the diocese. She has a key role in the termly RE enrichment days which are used to reinforce the school's Christian values and ethos and further develop pupils' growing spirituality.

When asked about the impact of the changes that have been made to the school's leadership, parents spoke of the greater approachability of senior staff, saying that "there is always someone available who we can speak to when we need to." They were given a questionnaire in October 2015, which included several questions about the school's ethos and Christian distinctiveness. The results were generally very positive. Where responses were not as positive as the school would have wished, the issue was addressed in a personal letter from the chair of governors. Although they were consulted when the school ethos was last reviewed, parents do not yet have a regular monitoring role in relation to this, which was a focus from the last inspection, or of worship.

The school is well-supported by the diocese, which has provided training for the governors on, amongst other things, developing their Christian ethos, and for the RE co-ordinator. Pupils visit the cathedral at least annually, and have the opportunity to work with pupils from other church schools both there and in other events in Newmarket. The school belongs to several networks for schools, each of which offers mutual support in different ways. The headteacher works with other local headteachers in the Circle Schools group, and receives support from other church schools in the diocese. It is part of the Anglian Gateway Teaching School Alliance and a partner school of Cambridge Faculty of Education, as a result of which it takes student teachers through the SCITT and PGCE schemes. These demonstrate its commitment to sharing its resources and expertise to educate the next generation of teachers in church schools.