



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Oakmeadow Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School and Nursery

Long Meadow
Bayston Hill
Shrewsbury
SY3 0NU

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Shropshire

Date of inspection: 26 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 15 June 2011

School's unique reference number: 135787

Headteacher: Carla Whelan

Inspector's name and number: Allyson Taylor 768

School context

Oakmeadow Church of England Primary School and Nursery is a large school with 373 children on roll. The school serves an area of relatively low deprivation, although the number of children with more complex learning and personal needs is significantly above national figures. The majority of learners are of White British background. Ofsted recently judged the school to be good with outstanding leadership, personal development and provision for Early Years. The headteacher was appointed in 2013. The parish church is in the process of appointing an incumbent.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Oakmeadow as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are lived out so that they enhance the daily lives of children when at school and at home.
- Highly skilled leadership of the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, ensures that the school is exceptionally inclusive and that children's needs are met.
- The Christian character has developed since the last inspection so that it supports the excellent academic and personal outcomes of all pupils.

Areas to improve

- Establish formal systems for all leaders, particularly governors, to evaluate the Christian character, religious education (RE) and worship so they sustain the impact of the distinctive ethos.
- Review policies and the website to more comprehensively reflect the strong Christian character.
- Create a definition of spirituality to support explicit planning for reflection and spiritual development across the curriculum.

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

The Christian character of Oakmeadow has sustained staff and governors through the challenges of securing improvements in standards while reducing a budget deficit. The Christian ethos shines and there is a joyous sense of harmony and welcome which ensures children feel secure. The headteacher says 'God's light shines in dark moments, support and extra funds have come at the times of greatest need.' The chosen Christian values of respect, love, faith, honesty and resilience are rooted in examples from the Bible but also understood as universal in application. The values have a significant impact on achievement, personal development and well-being. Learners show resilience and engagement with their work. They are confident to take risks and make mistakes. A year 6 said 'Jesus showed resilience in his life, this helped me with SATs.' Another explained how 'humility helps us accept that everyone has different talents.' This demonstrates that alongside the core values, other values support all children to work and grow together. As a direct result of the strong Christian character, standards against national averages are high and attendance has improved. The staff work in a supportive team to ensure every child knows they are valued and ready to learn. Relationships are filled with kindness towards all the ages and abilities. Learners regard their teachers as trusted friends who take good care of them, even knowing instinctively when someone is out of sorts. The 'Oakreach' provision, whereby the school admits children who have found school difficult elsewhere, shows the commitment to valuing all God's children. This is a school which is completely child-centred and as such provides for a wide range of needs in the spirit of generous love and compassion. It is clear that staff go the extra mile, as Jesus taught. RE has a high status and this has not wavered during the focus on standards in English and maths. Learners gain a respect for and appreciation of other faiths and cultures through RE lessons. The subject, therefore, makes an important contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This school is a Christian community in action, living and breathing its values and so making a difference to all its members.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of the school as a Christian community. It shapes how the values are understood within a Christian context. Each value is explored through specific examples from the Bible. Acts of worship enrich the day to day lives of the whole school community. Adults appreciate reflecting on familiar Bible stories and children say 'worship makes the school a better place.' The time to come together in classes, the studio, church and the school hall, to share stories, sing, reflect and to pray is valued by all the ages. Worship is securely grounded in the Bible and the teaching of Jesus. It is well-planned by the coordinator and worship team with a focus on children leading parts of worship, including greetings and prayers. This was an area identified for development in the last inspection which has been met. Worship is relevant to children's lives so they are keen to take action to support others. Learners chose to support Amnesty International and this shows their understanding of our diverse world. Key events in the Church's calendar frame the worship life of the school. Wednesday worship, led by members of the church, ensures learners are familiar with several Anglican traditions. Daily worship includes Anglican greetings and symbols. A child in year 1 said 'the dove makes me think Jesus is always with me.' Learners have an impressive knowledge of the Christian belief on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, they explain how an egg can be a symbol for three in one. Bi-annual worship weeks give children a deeper experience of how faith binds their community together. In describing the Holy Spirit during the worship week, a child said 'it went into their bodies and helped them talk in different languages.' Monthly services held in Church have a positive effect on all ages. Parents attend these and this indicates the impact of worship beyond the school day. Prayer is a frequent and natural part of school. Reflection spaces in every class and the outdoors offer opportunities for prayer throughout the day. The school does not have a clear definition of spirituality and plans to explore this and so increase opportunities across the curriculum for spiritual development. Prayer has a 'refreshing' effect and one child stated 'it takes away bad things.' Staff and children offer informal feedback on worship. More formal systems for governors to evaluate and so improve worship are less developed.

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

As a result of the determined and compassionate leadership of the headteacher, Oakmeadow is an effective church school. Leaders have a shared vision, seen in the various statements about 'Learning and Growing Together' and being 'a brain-stretching school.' Senior leaders and governors articulate the impact of the Christian values on academic standards and well-being. Their vision is actively lived out and underpins strategic decisions, for example by appointing staff to support more vulnerable children and their families. Key documents and the website do not reflect the strong Christian vision as fully as they might. The focus on raising standards, driven by Ofsted, has improved academic results but also reflects the commitment to ensuring each child flourishes as a child of God. Senior staff have focused on the importance of the Christian foundations and this is seen in the action plans integral to whole school improvement. However, since the former vicar moved on, governors have not monitored standards in RE and worship in a systematic way that has informed improvement plans. This prevents leadership from being outstanding. In addition, there is limited evidence of how all the areas for development from the last inspection have been addressed. Partnerships with parents and the local community are strong and of mutual benefit. Parents appreciate the way the values help with family life, one said 'the values are in all of it, we get a lot from them.' Another described the 'outworking of the ethos' in the way all staff relate exceptionally well to parents and children. The school has benefitted from close partnership with the local church and leaders look forward to working with the new incumbent when an appointment is made. The diocese provides high quality support and the school makes good use of relationships with other schools to share best practice. Leaders ensure the coordinator for RE and worship is properly remunerated and given time to fulfil these key roles. As a result, governors demonstrate a willingness to develop future leaders of church schools and ensure that statutory requirements for RE and worship are met. The school is in a strong position to build on the improvements secured by its current leadership. With a positive outcome from SIAMS and Ofsted, Oakmeadow is ready to face the challenges of the current educational landscape while holding fast to its Christian vision and values.

SIAMS report May 2016 Oakmeadow Church of England School and Nursery Shrewsbury SY3 0NU