

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holywell School, Cranfield	
Address	Red Lion Close, Cranfield, Bedford, MK43 0JA
School vision	
At Holywell, our vision is that everyone in our community chooses to “Live Life in all its Fullness” (John 10:10). Inspired by the teaching of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we choose to live our values, being the best we can be, in community.	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision of Holywell School is a living reality for both pupils and adults. This is due to its effective outworking through values, aspiration and community. • Leaders, inspired by the vision, ensure that the curriculum is relevant and they find ways for all pupils to have the chance to achieve. • There are many opportunities in collective worship for pupils to engage meaningfully with the vision, the Bible and prayer and reflection. • The Christian vision inspires a notably cohesive and supportive community based on mutual respect and kindness. • Pupils thrive in religious education (RE) due to its balanced and engaging curriculum and its carefully crafted assessment practice. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop staff awareness of spiritual development in the curriculum to ensure that pupils are able to evaluate views on identity, meaning and purpose. • Extend the planned opportunities in collective worship and in RE for pupils to understand that Christianity is a vibrant, diverse, global faith. • Continue to broaden opportunities for prayer and reflection to enhance pupils’ experiences of spirituality. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Leaders confidently articulate the truly inclusive Christian vision for Holywell School. They acknowledge that there are many ways to live but assert that Jesus’ offer of fullness of life (John 10:10) is what drives the school and its practices. The impact of the vision is felt throughout the school, particularly in warm relationships and unity of purpose. Pupils and adults flourish as they are helped to live out the vision through the school’s values. There is a culture of aspiration, of being the best one can be, in all aspects of personal and communal life. Pupils and adults often refer to Holywell as a team, emphasising the tangible sense of togetherness. Active governors hold the school leaders to account, especially in the way they incorporate the vision into daily life. The ethos committee encourages and prompts leaders and staff to role model the values and desired behaviours. It also pushes for continued involvement with the services of the Diocese of St Alban’s in order to connect with a wider Church school network.</p>	

The curriculum and allied enriching activities are key to fulfilling the Holywell vision. Doing one's best is both a personal quest and also a way of serving the common good. Staff identify and teach material that deepens understanding and application of the values. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. They also offer strategies, support and resources to help those who find learning hard. Enriching activities are a daily feature and broaden pupil horizons. Regular extra-curricular visits are important to pupils as is the way that such activities are open to the widest range of pupils.

Staff have identified meaningful opportunities for exploring spirituality across the subjects. RE and English deliberately tackle material on homelessness at the same time. Pupils are aware of some of these opportunities. Leaders have started to provide teachers with guidance on what constitutes spiritual development. Thus, pupils are beginning to evaluate views on identity, meaning and purpose.

Collective worship is a main route for pupils and adults to be inspired by and to respond to the vision. Each morning starts with the school prayer, mainly composed by pupils. Pupils like the communal nature of the prayer and the way it draws attention to the school values. Pupils appreciate the variety of forms of collective worship. Pupils and staff are invited to pray or to reflect as a way of making the content of worship relevant to them. This fosters spiritual growth. Pupils have fewer opportunities for voluntary prayer. Pupils display wide-ranging knowledge of the Bible, with an appropriate focus on its application to today. A pupil worship team suggests follow up topics for discussion and ideas for tutor time. They often find creative ways, using video for instance, to help pupils to voice their insights.

Partnerships with local churches are very strong. One important characteristic of this is the involvement in collective worship. Pupils look forward to clergy leading collective worship as they are often interactive in their approach. There are regular services in the local church. Pupil worship leaders help with the planning and delivery of these. The prayers they create are expressed in sincere and relatable ways. The global nature of Christianity and its diverse worship are not so well known.

The impact of the vision-inspired values is seen very clearly in the ways pupils and staff live, learn and behave. Respect and kindness are hallmarks of this. Pupils acknowledge that the effect of the values is evident in their growing confidence, courage and boldness. Clergy write a reflection for staff on the monthly value. This enables them to reflect more deeply on the values and to use them confidently in and out of lessons. The school newsletter often relates school events through the lens of the values. As a result, parents feel part of the values focus. Pupil ambassadors take real responsibility by writing some of the monthly values material. They also choose pupils and staff who demonstrate most acutely the value that month. The ambassadors deliver the award in collective worship using their own words. Pupils are inspired by hearing the values explained in a very relatable manner. In the infrequent incidents of misbehaviour, leaders stress the development of relevant values so pupils do not make the same mistake again. They also insist on the worth and dignity of all the individuals involved.

Wellbeing is understood as a key indicator of 'fullness of life'. Personal development lessons and tutor time sessions emphasise that everyone should have someone they trust to talk to. An off-timetable day on wellbeing offered useful strategies for pupils to develop resilience in and out of school. A wellbeing committee for staff makes practical suggestions on how to aspire to be the best one can be within sensible boundaries. The staff are positive and resilient.

Staff and pupils are certain that 'fullness of life' should be experienced in school, in the local community and further afield. Consequently, pupils are generous, both in their spirit and in their

actions. Pupils can articulate, with examples, the differences between equality and equity. They understand that standing up for values can entail tough choices. The recent partnership with a school in Tanzania is prompting both compassionate thought and practical action. Pupils lead fundraising as they felt that all schools should have the same facilities as they enjoy.

Passionate subject leadership ensures that the units of RE work are age-appropriate and build knowledge and key skills. There is a good range of religions and worldviews covered with emphasis on their core beliefs. There are some opportunities, particularly for older pupils, to learn about Christianity as a vibrant, diverse, global faith. Skilful questioning helps pupils to relate the issues raised to life today. For example, pupils sensitively evaluate whether religion has an important place in today's society. The annual RE off-timetable day highlights the importance of the subject to the school and affords good opportunities for visitors to contribute their insights and enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy the RE lunchtime club that allows them to explore and discuss more, often in relation to the school's vision.

The vast majority of RE lessons are taught by specialist staff. RE teaching is at least good, as evaluated by school leaders and verified at inspection. Pupils learn well, partly due to the searching termly assessments that test the range of skills needed for success. Vulnerable pupils are assisted through structuring the assessments and through extra support by staff. Learning from each assessment and setting specific targets for improvement mean that pupils are clear about how well they are doing. Staff undergo regular, relevant training. This means their lessons are characterised by current trends in RE.

The inspection findings indicate that Holywell School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	24-25 January 2024	URN	138844
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	724
Diocese	St Albans		
MAT/Federation	Single Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Michael Simpson		
Chair	Pauline Kendall		
Inspector	Simon Stevens	No.	953