

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Duxford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Community Primary School

St John's Street, Duxford, Cambridge CB22 4RA

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Ely</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection	11 November 2016
Date of last inspection	November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 110798
Headteacher	Debbie Gould
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

#### Context

Duxford Church of England Community Primary School has 214 pupils on roll. The school serves the villages of Duxford, Heathfield, Hinxton and Ickleton. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of pupils adopted from care and also pupils for whom English is not their first language. 12.5% pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding and 19.5% pupils have special educational needs. The incumbent has recently been promoted to be a canon at Ely Cathedral. The headteacher has been in post since April 2013. Religious education [RE] comes under the creative skills leader.

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

- The warm and welcoming Christian ethos embodies respect, honesty, acceptance, friendliness, perseverance and teamwork. This nurtures and inspires children and staff to aim high, fly high and grow in their learning.
- Strong leadership and good governance ensures the Christian character of this school shines through all school life. This results in the whole school community celebrating and affirming individual success within the Christian ethos of the school.
- The partnership between the churches and the school works together exceptionally well, resulting in, for example, well established Church Days. This enables deep and distinctive learning with a focus on the Christian narrative. Consequently, pupils have a very good level of religious literacy.

#### Areas to improve

- Extend the rigorous, regular and robust monitoring of RE by the governors in partnership with the Creative Team, to ensure this key aspect of Christian distinctiveness continually and consistently makes a strong contribution to the school's Christian character.
- Enrich pupils' growing understanding of the Holy Trinity as a regular part of their worshipping life to nurture their personal and spiritual journeys.

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

This school lives out its vision to aim high and fly high, within a welcoming and nurturing Christian family. This is because of the dedication and commitment of the headteacher and all her staff in serving each individual child and their families. Consequently, the school's strong Christian character makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development. Behaviour is excellent. The school attributes this to their

Christian ethos and the principles of Growth Mindset, where children learn from their mistakes within a spirit of Christian forgiveness and perseverance. Attendance is good because of the Christian ethos of the school, which makes it a safe place to be. Data shows a positive picture, where progress is good throughout the school, with outstanding results for Key Stage 2. Planned interventions support any disadvantaged children, with children encouraged to reach their full potential given their starting points and every success is celebrated. Pupils learn about diverse cultures and communities through their RE and their global awareness is enriched through charity fundraising. Pupils learn about faiths other than Christianity, such as Buddhism. They learn about Christians around the world, and inspiring Christian leaders and saints, such as Mother Teresa and Oscar Romero. They like finding things out and ask Christians from their local churches some searching questions from a young age. For example, 'Have you always believed in God?' Pupils are excited and challenged by RE. They find inspiration in Bible stories, such as those about Samson, Elijah and Moses. They can articulate the Christian narrative very well, speaking of Herod's reaction to the birth of Jesus as well as Jesus' encounter with the teachers in the temple in Jerusalem as a boy. They explain Ascension-tide in their own words as, 'Jesus being sucked up to heaven on the mountain'. They demonstrate a very good level of religious literacy. They describe Pentecost as when the disciples 'started speaking different languages which made it easier to spread Jesus' message. That was the birthday of the church'. Thus, RE makes a very good contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' personal and spiritual development.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Pupils at Duxford enjoy collective worship because of the strong links between church and school. This has been especially strong under their most recent incumbent. Indeed, they say they would like to go to church more frequently. The church is used for key festivals, such as the Christmas carol service, when pupils come with their buddies to church. One young pupil said of their first time in church, 'This is good. I like it'. Pupils know about St Peter and St John, to whom their local churches are dedicated. School council members and the eco club plan and lead worship occasionally and all children write prayers for class worship. Year 6 wrote prayers for the Harvest service. Pupils say they would like to lead worship and write prayers more frequently. Pupils also have very good ideas about how they can help evaluate the worship more effectively. Prayer is important in the life of this school with worship providing a quiet, reflective time and space to think for adults and children alike. Pupils make good use of prayer spaces. Time to reflect makes a very positive contribution to pupils' behaviour, relationships and their approach to learning, underpinned by honesty, kindness and friendship. Worship also provides 'a safe place for those with social problems, starts the day well and sends them off so they are in a better place'. Pupils reflect on key times in the church year, such as Remembrance, with some recalling relatives who fought in the great wars. They also reflect in lessons. Pupils have met the Bishop of Ely and have been able to ask him questions about his role in their diocese. For example, one pupil asked, 'What's it like being a Bishop and does it put you under pressure sometimes?' Another asked about his crozier and was reminded of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Pupils are growing in their understanding of the Holy Trinity. They speak of God as 'the father of everyone. Jesus is the Son of God and he died for us. The Holy Spirit is wind and flames and a white dove'. The school accurately confirms that extending the pupils' growing understanding of a Trinitarian God, as a regular part of their worshipping life, enriches their personal spiritual journeys.

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

Strong leadership and good governance ensures Duxford's Christian character enables it to be a supportive and reflective school. The wellbeing and development of all is a priority in this caring community. Indeed, staff say it is a 'joyous place to work'. This is because Duxford School is a creative and encouraging learning environment for children and staff. New members of staff value that 'the management really listen' and they are encouraged to further their career. 'Developing people' is a key strength of the headteacher. Moreover, the Christian values of acceptance, honesty, respect, friendliness, perseverance and teamwork underpin the school's policy and practice, resulting in everyone succeeding and thriving in their personal and academic development. Staff and governors have benefitted from diocesan training, with all areas addressed from the last inspection and a vision for the future established. The parochial church council [PCC] for the churches receive regular reports on school progress from the foundation governors. In addition, ongoing verbal reports help inform progress especially at times of change. The governing body are reflective in their practice. Governors monitor RE and worship, which are well led, managed and resourced and meet statutory requirements. The monitoring schedule has been under revision and leaders have identified the need to extend rigorous, regular and robust monitoring of RE by the governors in partnership with the Creative Team. This ensures this key aspect of Christian distinctiveness continually and consistently makes a strong contribution to the school's Christian character. Parents value the close relationship with the church and the excellent pastoral care provided by the school which is welcoming to them. They speak highly of the 'togetherness, friendship, team work and acceptance of all children and their abilities'. The excellent

partnership with the church results in annual Church Days in the summer term. These were originally established to build up confidence with the staff. These have continued and have become a unique and very effective hallmark of Duxford's church school distinctiveness. Using St Peter's and St John's on such well-established days enable the children to see how the church relates to the community in Duxford. The recent day focussed on David, Moses and Abraham and Sarah, illustrating courage. Pupils testify to the immense value of such days, saying, 'we get to work with groups, not just Key Stage 2 so it feels like a big family'. Community links are also strong, with the school choir singing at the Advent fair, an important village event as well as fundraising for Jimmy's night shelter. Staff say Duxford is 'a shining example of how a primary school should feel. Every day is distinctive and valuable'.

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