

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Old Catton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Church Street, Old Catton, Norwich NR6 7DS

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Norwich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Norfolk
Name of Federation	Nebula
Date of inspection	30 November 2017
Date of last inspection	November 2014
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Junior 121050
Executive Headteacher/Head of School	Ashley Best-White/Kate Connelly
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Currently there are 222 pupils on roll in this junior school. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or those who eligible for pupil premium funding is in line with the national average for a school of this size. There is an executive headteacher, executive deputy headteacher and head of school. Old Catton Junior is part of the Nebula federation of 6 schools, 4 of which are church schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Old Catton Junior as a Church of England school are good

- This is an inclusive and accepting Christian community where pupils and adults are happy to belong.
- Relationships at all levels are good. This is because the school's core values of love, joy and hope underpin its compassionate and nurturing environment where all can thrive and succeed.
- Collective worship and religious education [RE] are good, providing enriching experiences for pupils to reflect, engage, enquire, deepen their knowledge of Bible stories and nurture their personal spiritual journeys.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that a range of governors rigorously and regularly monitor RE as an important aspect of Christian distinctiveness so that it is at least equal in status to other core subjects.
- Ensure the robust monitoring of collective worship enables the systems for evaluating impact and improvement to be embedded.
- Enable the newly established 'worship collective' to grow in their leadership roles, thus supporting their own spiritual journeys.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of key Christian beliefs, such as Trinity. Knowledge of such important Christian teaching helps to enrich their understanding of shared beliefs throughout the worldwide Christian church.

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

The previous report recommended developing a clear Christian vision for the school and making the values more explicitly Christian. Now this school's core values of love, hope and joy inspire and enable pupils to strive for

excellence and be successful and resilient. This takes place within a caring Christian community which encourages a strong sense of self. Pupils across all year groups make good progress. This includes meeting the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. This is attributed to skilled support staff as well as a wide range of support from outside agencies, providing for example, pet therapy, which helps to build up self-esteem. Pupils here are given life chances and those who have benefitted from the support they have received now help others in a similar position, providing good role models. Good relationships are built on trust at Old Catton Junior School [OCJS]. Consequently, attendance is good and exclusions are rare. There is very much a focus on forgiveness and making the right choices within a community where specific barriers to learning are removed. Staff demonstrate love and care for every single one of the pupils in a spirit of love, joy and hope. Pupils and parents value the inclusive approach, which includes a variety of family structures and is a strength of the school. There is a feeling of love within the school where everyone is respectful of each other. This takes place within the context of clear rules for guidance and high expectations for behaviour.

Worship and RE make good contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] and their personal development. RE has an important profile and is linked to the Christian values of the school. It enables pupils to understand Christianity as well as learn about different faiths and appreciate the cultural diversity within their own community and in the UK. This was an area for development in the previous report. Charity fundraising helps support pupils' global awareness. Year 6 also make board games about the global spread of Christianity. Mindful of the fact that their feeder school is not a church school, OCJS works to address the pupils' gaps in their Christian knowledge.

A programme of visits and visitors develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of diversity within and beyond Christianity. Visits to St Margaret's Church take place. The after school club run by the vicar, where pupils discuss Bible stories, is well attended. Further to this, Year 5 and 6 pupils visit Norwich Cathedral annually. In addition, the school holds Hindu days and invites Muslim pupils to share the importance of their beliefs and values. Pupils enjoy these experiences and say they would like more RE field trips.

Pupils say they are excited and challenged by RE, and for some it is one of their favourite subjects. Pupils are interacting with the text of the Bible. They reflect on questions such as, 'Has Christmas lost its meaning?' and discuss the difference for Christians and non-Christians. Pupils know about the birth and death of Jesus, as one might expect in a church school. They have a good understanding of incarnation. For example, they explain incarnation in their own words as, 'Jesus is the incarnation of God. When Jesus rose on the third day, that's the Holy Spirit. God made himself into a man and went down himself and did all miraculous things.' Some pupils can also explain the meaning of Ascension-tide and Pentecost.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of school life and engages adults and pupils alike. For example, pupils take part in fortnightly 'Open the Book' worship. Since the last inspection, more Bible stories are included in worship. Pupils have enjoyed exploring Bible stories, which 'give us hope for the rest of our lives' such as the prodigal son, making links to everyday life. For example, they know the Christmas story and Easter story show a trinity of values, those of 'love, joy and hope' and especially 'God's love and sacrifice'. They cite the good samaritan and the prodigal son as reminding them to say sorry if they make a mistake. There are close links with nearby St Margaret's Church. The pattern of worship includes church services at times such as Remembrance-tide.

The previous report recommended deepening pupils' experience of worship in planning and leading worship. This is being addressed through the setting up of the 'worship collective' and is also identified for ongoing development as is more formal and regular monitoring of worship. Currently, an active foundation governor leads 'Open the Book' worship and is the deputy church warden at St Margaret's Church. She carries out both informal and formal monitoring of collective worship, which is then fed back to the whole governing body. The 'worship collective' have been planning the music and prayers for Friday worship since September. Prayer and reflection is now an important part of school life, with prayer spaces and the school prayer book well used. For example, pupils pray for 'peace on earth and in heaven' and 'pray for those who have gone'. The Peace is now shared at the end of worship and pupils and adults are growing on their awareness of Anglican rituals and symbols. For example, there has been a focus on the Trinity in RE lessons and when classes have visited the church, they look for symbols of the Trinity, such as the 3- lobed window. Pupils are growing in their understanding of 'God, the three in one'. They say they would like to increase their understanding of Trinity as an important Christian belief worldwide. They are also keen to develop their knowledge of St Margaret, to whom their parish church is dedicated. The school recognises this, with the vicar welcoming supporting this initiative as the school moves forward on its journey. Currently, this is not in place. Pupils say they 'love worship and singing and reflecting because we take everything in prayer to God'. Their views are captured in a book of evaluations, which they say 'gives governors a message about how worship can improve'. They say they would like to do this more often in addition to their annual pupil survey.

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

The leadership team and governors at OCJS believe in the wellbeing of all and in nurturing every person, adult and child. In addition, valuing others and developing positive relationships with God, self and others is an important part of the school's Christian vision. This includes supporting all staff in their roles and responsibilities. For example, the RE subject leader is a member of the Norfolk Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education [SACRE]. RE is now a morning lesson, elevating it to the level of mathematics and English. The subject leader enthuses other staff, including those newly qualified, to also become passionate about teaching RE. In addition, one parent credits the school with their child, now in Year 10, having a passion for philosophy because of the good RE teaching he received at OCJS. The school has worked very closely with the diocesan RE adviser.

The previous report recommended developing the strategic role of governors. On-going development for governors has already been identified by the school. A key foundation governor helps to ensure her fellow governors act on the monitoring which has been carried out. For example, improving the quality of worship for all. Links with the diocese are very supportive, with the school benefitting from diocesan training and support for governance. This has included training on the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. Whilst the focus for governors has been very much centred on standards in mathematics, going forward, the monitoring of RE has also been identified. The RE subject leader welcomes this and would advocate termly lesson observations in line with other core subjects. Book scrutinies are more regularly carried out since the previous inspection. For example, a recent focus has been checking that challenging questions lead to expected standards. RE has its own action plan with implications for the school and leadership, including the RE subject leader. RE and worship are well led, managed and resourced, with both meeting statutory requirements. The head of school takes responsibility for the spiritual leadership of the school, frequently leading collective worship. She is supported in her leadership role by the executive headteacher and executive deputy headteacher who have distinct roles within the partnership.

Foundation governors confirm that OCJS has come a long way since the previous inspection. For example, how Christian values underpin learners' achievement is an agenda item on the governing body every time they meet. This strategic view is part of the current Nebula partnership, with an ethos committee already established as part of the new federation, going forward. Strong relationships are already developing between the staff and governors of the partnership schools. These offer mutual support, challenge and the sharing of good practice. Staff have gained leadership experience. This has been especially true for RE whose subject leaders across the partnership have worked hard to improve the quality and standards of RE. They learn from each other and share resources.

Pupils' work is displayed in church and church services are well supported by parents. The parish church takes seriously its responsibility within school. For example, a key foundation governor leads the 'Open the Book' worship team from the parish church and the vicar leads the 'Defenders' after school Christian club in St Margaret's Church hall.

Pupils' leadership roles are encouraged through the prefect system. They have an important voice in belonging to this community. Staff confirm the friendly supportive and caring community. Some cite OCJS's 'compassion with probity, conservative with liberality, unostentatious yet proud' essence with its policy and practice of inclusion and acceptance and celebration of all. This is because OCJS celebrates individuals and values each other.

Parents confirm they value the non-judgemental stance of OCJS and its open door policy. Some speak highly of the way the school has exceeded their expectations where their children 'love being at school as everyone is equally valued'. This is because OCJS builds on pupils' strengths and celebrates all achievement, including sporting and musical success. The profile of the school in the local community is good. For example, the choir sing in local venues, such as the supermarket.

OCJS is now in a good place, going forward on its school improvement journey.