

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

### Farcet Church of England Primary School

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|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Address</b>            | St Mary's Street, Farcet, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE7 3AR |                         |                                                               |  |
| <b>Date of inspection</b> | 20 June 2019                                                   | <b>Status of school</b> | Academy inspected as VC<br>Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust |  |
| <b>Diocese</b>            | Ely                                                            | <b>URN</b>              | 145302                                                        |  |

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| <b>Overall Judgement</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Excellent</b> |
| How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? |              |                  |
| <b>Additional Judgement</b>                                                                                                                                  |              |                  |
| <b>The impact of collective worship</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Excellent</b> |

#### School context

Farcet CE Primary is a smaller than average school with 116 pupils on roll. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is in line with national averages. The school became part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust in February 2018. There have been significant staffing changes since the last inspection including both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher who are relatively new in post. There is currently a vacancy at St Mary's, the local church.

#### The school's Christian vision

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Our church school inspires everyone to reach their unique and full potential in a joyful and encouraging Christian atmosphere. Through Christian values of trust, friendship, compassion and forgiveness, children are actively supported to believe that they can be successful and achieve.

#### Key findings

- The school's strongly held and distinctly Christian vision permeates all aspects of school life; it positively impacts on all, bringing genuine transformation. The vision is a non-negotiable. It is at the heart of all policy, procedure and actions. Consequently the school is a beacon of hope for pupils, staff and parents.
- Leaders galvanise staff and pupils to raise their aspirations. This has had significant and meaningful impact.
- Staff and partners have developed a very effective culture of care and support for all enabling flourishing. There are burgeoning global partnerships.
- The delivery of the religious education (RE) curriculum inspires and informs. It allows pupils to reflect, question and evaluate and is used as exemplification of high standards for other local schools.
- Collective worship is very effective, highly valued and precisely and collaboratively planned. There are, however, missed opportunities to develop pupil's understanding of, and interactions with, the Eucharist.

#### Areas for development

- Help pupils to further understand the meaning and purpose of the Eucharist so that their knowledge of God and their spiritual growth is deepened.
- Emphasise the mutual benefits of links with global partners so that pupils can appreciate and learn from other cultures and the global church.
- Increase the number of opportunities to share the school's excellent practice with others.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

**Inspection findings**

The distinctive Christian vision is the lifeblood of the school. It holistically infuses strategic direction and operational decisions, it is systemic and effective. Despite recent significant changes in staffing, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the school has maintained and developed its offer of exemplary church school education. Under the new leadership, vision is driving challenge and change. Induction procedures are excellent and prioritise both the safeguarding of all and the imparting of vision as fundamental and motivational. Induction processes ensure that the vision for, and impact of, collective worship is not diluted. Training which enhances church school distinctiveness is prioritised. All staff regularly refer to the vision and the values of the school; consequently the ethos has a distinct impact on learning behaviours, personal relationships and aspiration. Relationships between the school and Church are good. Stakeholders speak warmly and thankfully of the support that the lay reader gives to those in the school during times of crisis. Leaders have actively developed links with other churches and Christian organisations whose contributions enrich the spiritual life of all. The school is valued as an example to others, not only for the developmental journey that it has made but also for being at the forefront spearheading initiatives for mental health, the monitoring and organising of collective worship and the development and improvement of writing in RE.

The vision inspires children and adults to live life in all its fullness. There is a 'can do' culture at the school; the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, driven by her passionate belief in the school's vision, galvanises staff and pupils to raise their aspirations. The use of activity passports, peer coaching and a broad, innovative curriculum results in pupils being culturally enriched and encourages them to aim to live as rounded and fulfilled individuals. Leaders articulate hope for the future and passionately want to end cycles of deprivation so that all may flourish. Due to aspirational target setting, attendance for all pupils has risen above national averages in the last year. A significant rise in mathematics progress from 2016 to 2018 demonstrates impact of the vision on pupil outcomes. Spirituality has been strengthened and developed since the implementation of the new curriculum. It is transforming lives; one parent remarked that he was motivated to return to church after his child moved to the school and showed a growing interest in religion and worship. A sense of spirituality is evident in the reflective spaces within the building and the grounds. Pupils use the newly created reflective garden respectfully for quietness, prayer and contemplation. The school is an oasis of calm, behaviour is good. Leadership promotes inclusion positively and passionately resulting in enhanced life chances for all.

Pupils are encouraged to explore injustice and become courageous advocates for change. There are frequent chances to participate in social action projects; some of these initiatives are inspired by pupils' concerns. The curriculum encourages pupils to be ambassadors for change and address the exploitation of the natural world such as, ways to reduce waste. Global partnerships are developing. Links with a mission school in Zimbabwe are being strengthened and support has been raised. However, these links are yet to be mutually beneficial so that pupils understand the many positive aspects the partnership can bring.

There is a strongly promoted belief that bad experiences, behaviour or wrongdoing need not have the last word. The value of forgiveness runs deeply through the behaviour management strategy and has positive impact. One pupil reflected, 'My behaviour has changed so much' and explained that he had transformed completely from a child who 'didn't participate', attributing this to the support of school and home. A specialist teacher working with a pupil at risk of exclusion reported that the support given by staff, 'helped to reduce his exclusions'. The school joined the mental health forum at its inception, has appointed a governor for mental health, and has an effective and trusted family link worker. It also promotes mental health first aid. As a result, a survey this year indicates remarkably high sense of staff wellbeing, which challenges the national trend for deflated morale for those working in schools. There is a culture of care which impacts on families and children. A pupil new to the school explained that she felt calmer at Farcet; she attributed this to staff who are friendly and proactive, noticing when she experiences worries and then they, 'talk it out of you.' Parents describe the school feeling like a 'family'. They say that their children are 'rooted' in positive values and 'moulded' by the ethos.

Collective worship is prioritised and is delivered by staff, pupils and a range of partners. It is enjoyable, interactive and biblically based. There is an impressive amount of reflective participation involving the whole school community during worship. Adults and children talk enthusiastically of its impact and its place in their spiritual growth and understanding of God. Each class has a worship reflection book with countless examples of how collective worship has impacted on individuals and the life of the school. Following a worship time focussing

on kindness, one pupil reflected that he had reminded two pupils to be kind. He commented, 'now they're friends' attributing the change in behaviour to the value driven ethos. The school's innovative worship squad is a very effective way to ensure that the planning and delivery of worship, as well as the promotion of spirituality in the environment, has pupil ownership.

RE is rigorously planned. The curriculum enables pupils to reflect, evaluate, question and apply learning personally so that they can affect positive change. Very effective teaching challenges and supports pupils' exploration of religious belief and practices. Standards in RE books are high because leaders give the subject priority and disseminate effective professional development for staff. Older pupils compare religious practices and evaluate their impact on the believer. Christian theology, such as the nature of the Trinity, is taught very well; however, pupils have little understanding of the meaning of the Eucharist and its value to a believer.

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| Headteacher                 | Abbie Muir        |
| Inspector's name and number | Jane Trampnow 954 |