

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

### Debden Church of England Primary Academy (Voluntary Controlled Equivalent)

High Street Debden Saffron Walden Essex CB11 3LE

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	Chelmsford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	n/a
Date of academy conversion	January 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	Great Oak Multi-Academy Trust
Date of inspection	19 October 2017
Date of last inspection	n/a
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy (Voluntary Controlled equivalent) - 115128
Headteacher	Louise Gurney
Inspector's name and number	Gillian Holmes 849

#### School context

This small primary academy serves a mixed catchment of village and an army barracks. The percentage of pupils who enter or leave the school at other than the usual times is high. Most pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is below average. In 2015 the school was judged as inadequate by OfSTED and has subsequently undergone significant change. The headteacher was new to the school from January 2016 and a deputy headteacher and a number of permanent staff have been in post since September 2016.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Debden Primary Academy (Voluntary Controlled equivalent) as a Church of England school are good

- The effective leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by the staff team, has resulted in all round and considerable improvement.
- The school ethos is firmly underpinned by the Christian vision and values, owned by all the staff and governors.
- All pupils are well-supported within a caring Christian environment.

#### Areas to improve

- Increase pupils' involvement in worship planning, leading and evaluating the programme so that its impact on school life is effectively extended.
- Involve governors fully in regularly monitoring and evaluating worship and religious education (RE) to improve their impact on school life and work.
- Develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith in order to deepen appreciation of its multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nature.

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

The school is committed to, and successful in, providing high quality Christian education for all pupils. This is summed up in its vision statement, 'together we value, inspire and prepare your child for their future within a caring Christian community'. Its Christian ethos is clearly underpinned by this vision and its three Christian values of honesty, respect and kindness. They are embedded in everything the school does. Pupils and staff rightly attribute the increasingly good behaviour to the importance of these Christian values. Pupils understand the roots of the values in biblical teaching and can clearly explain the relevance of each value to themselves and their learning in school. The relationships between adults and pupils is good. Incidents of bullying are few and far between but are dealt with swiftly and fairly, in keeping with the school's Christian ethos. The headteacher's duty of care has necessitated the recent use of fixed-term exclusions for one pupil, to maintain the safety of both staff and pupils. This was dealt with fairly and supportively, reflecting the school's Christian ethos and values well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and so attendance is excellent. Attainment in most areas is good or better than national expectations and this year's recent weaknesses at the end of Year 2 effectively identified and addressed. Progress across the school is good and above the national average. There is a clear and successful emphasis placed on how RE enhances the school's Christian distinctiveness. Pupils are excited and challenged by RE which helps to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) well. RE is not used as effectively to increase pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith. In keeping with its Christian foundation parents and pupils praise the school's inclusivity, where every child is supported to achieve their potential. The school is especially good at providing appropriate activities to support and challenge the most able pupils. 40 percent of pupils come from the neighbouring army barracks. As a consequence more pupils than is usual enter and leave the school at other than the usual times. The school works very effectively to settle pupils quickly and provide any additional support. The school council organises fun ways to raise money for a range of charities throughout the year. Many of these activities include the wider community. The school supports a school in Nepal through writing to the children and sending gift boxes at Christmas. These activities contribute well to pupils' growing understanding of diversity, difference, respect and kindness.

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

Daily worship is very well planned by the headteacher. All teachers take turns to lead worship and include some Year 6 pupils to read stories and prayers. Other pupils contribute through termly class assemblies and in the festival services in church. At present, however, the contribution made by the pupils in planning, monitoring and evaluating worship is very limited. Worship takes place at the start of the day and appropriately sets the tone for the day. It clearly expresses its central importance in school life. The Christian values and Bible stories are an integral part of the planning and are leading to an increasing understanding of their significance in school life. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and reflection. 'We pray to think about God, to listen to him, to ask for advice and to say sorry and thank you'. The Lord's Prayer is used regularly in worship and pupils have a basic understanding of its significance for Christians. Pupils also say grace before lunch. Reflection and prayer together support pupils' spiritual journey satisfactorily. Through worship pupils have developed a confidence in explaining the events of Christmas and Easter. They have some understanding of other key Christian beliefs and concepts such as that of God as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils have a limited knowledge of basic Anglican traditions. The new curate has begun to visit the school and regularly lead worship. His involvement is already impacting positively. Other church leaders from the neighbourhood visit the school and share worship. They contribute to the pupils' spiritual journey well. The local church is well used for celebrating various Christian festivals and to support the RE curriculum. Parents and members of the community enthusiastically join the school for worship on special occasions. This successfully enhances the school's family feel and links with its community. The headteacher monitors worship. However, other stakeholders such as pupils, staff, governors and parents do not have a programme for regular monitoring and feedback. This is slowing development of the impact and development of worship in school life.

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

The headteacher and her deputy have worked effectively to demonstrate the school's vision and Christian values to staff, pupils, parents, governors and the local community. As a consequence the school is a welcoming, caring, inclusive and celebratory place. The experienced and competent leaders of both RE and collective worship ensure that these areas have a high priority and that staff are given appropriate training and resources to deliver good practice. Arrangements for RE and worship meet statutory requirements and contribute significantly to pupils' SMSC development. The whole curriculum is underpinned by a Christian vision for education agreed by all the staff. Governors are very effective in fulfilling their role as strategic partners. They have ably supported the headteacher in driving up standards across the school. Governors have focused attention on regularly monitoring standards and on the general Christian ethos in the school. This means that plans for the monitoring of RE and worship are still at the embryonic stage. All staff work together to enable effective self-evaluation and in planning the ongoing development of the school as a church school. The headteacher has successfully improved communication between school and home through better use of email, social media and the school website. Parents' views are sought through a termly parent forum and an annual parent survey. Parents are kept informed of actions that result from these. This means that parents are now kept well informed and they rightly recognise that they are listened to. They are well supported through curriculum workshops. The very active parent association raises money for the school and supports its links with the church and the community very well. An example of the school's close links to the church is the fortnightly school newsletter being sent to all PCC members. The school is the centre of the community taking part in the village Remembrance service and distributing harvest baskets to the needy in the locality. Links with the Diocese and accessing diocesan training has clearly supported the school leadership and all staff to have a growing understanding of working in a church school. Pupils now regularly join with other pupils from local schools to play sport and access a range of extension and extra-curricular activities. They also join with pupils further afield. An example of this is their taking part with other choirs at the Royal Albert Hall. Staff and pupils also benefit from being part of the Great Oak Multi-Academy Trust. This has supported the school in its drive towards all-round improvement. It also provides valuable continual professional development for staff and opportunities to share expertise across the curriculum.

SIAMS report October 2017 Debden CE (VC equivalent) Primary Academy, Debden, Essex, CBI | 3LE.