

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Elmsett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address	The Street, Elmsett, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 6PA		
Date of inspection	06 February 2019	Status of school	VC Primary
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	URN	124695

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Elmsett is a village primary school with 70 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The headteacher has been in post since 2013 since which time standards in all aspects of the school have risen. Ofsted grade the school as good with outstanding behaviour and safety.

The school's Christian vision

As a Christian school we demonstrate and encourage all to believe that everyone is precious. 'All are precious in His sight'. We aim to work together as a team, to achieve excellence in all we do, supporting and respecting everyone and everything in all ways.

Key findings

- The effective leadership of the headteacher is well supported by her experienced staff team. Together they are committed to their Christian vision which sustains and emphasises the characteristics of this small, Christian, village school.
- Partnerships with parents, the local church and other local schools are highly effective and mutually beneficial. They enable pupils and adults to flourish.
- Inclusive, nurturing relationships based on Christian care and respect allow all pupils to flourish academically, socially and spiritually.
- Collective worship is inclusive and welcoming. It is carefully planned to link creatively to the school's Christian values and pupils' learning in religious education (RE). Opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship have been devised but not yet implemented.
- RE is strongly led by a competent subject leader. Assessment of RE, however, is as yet underdeveloped.

Areas for development

- Ensure that the Christian vision statement informs and impacts upon the review of all school policies.
- Support the governors in developing their monitoring role alongside other school leaders to facilitate increased progression in RE and collective worship.
- Support and promote reflection and spiritual enrichment for pupils through creative use of the school environment, including outdoors.

**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 school vision is articulated with passion and practical illustration by all staff and pupils. Governors are beginning to work with the headteacher to promote the vision, but it has only recently been shared with other stakeholders. The vision is clearly visible in all school practice but has yet to be included in all the school documentation. Rooted in clear theological Christian narrative the vision, together with its associated values, promotes life in all its fullness. The headteacher and her supportive staff team together ensure that the Christian vision underpins all learning and support for pupils' wellbeing. The leadership of the school is supported by strong links with the local churches. As a result, prayer and pastoral links between church and school are effectively interwoven. The school takes an active role in networking with local schools, sharing good practice and training opportunities for teachers and accessing activities for pupils. Staff make good use of diocesan training which helps to increase staff knowledge and understanding of strategic Church school leadership. Since the previous denominational inspection staff and governors have appropriately addressed the areas for improvement. An example of this has been the raising of the profile of collective worship for all stakeholders.

The Christian vision shapes the way decisions are made regarding the curriculum and extended learning. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities so that all pupils have the opportunity to flourish not only academically but also through sport and creative activities. The good teaching and pastorally sensitive staff enable all pupils to make good or better progress from their starting point. The higher than average numbers of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported by the experienced special needs coordinator. She tailors programmes for each individual child to support them both academically and socially and ensures excellent communication with parents. As a consequence SEND pupils make progress in line with their peers. Reflection is integral to learning across the curriculum, through which Christian values are threaded seamlessly, as a clear expression of its vision.

The school's inclusive vision results in all members of the community having a strong sense of belonging. The supportive atmosphere results in pupils developing confidence and self-esteem. The eco-council lead the school in addressing environmental issues relating to maintaining the school environment as well as global projects such as fund-raising for Water Aid. Classes consider news and issues from around the world and pupils organise a wide range of charitable events each term. Pupils understand how fundraising and partnerships reflect their school vision.

Priority is given to the wellbeing of everyone. Illustrating the vision in practice, staff comment on the pastoral support given them by the vicar and by the governing body. Parents know that the staff will help their children to overcome barriers to learning and provide Christian care throughout the day. The school has an open-door policy for parents, who say they are always listened to. They are also supported through regular curriculum workshops. Underpinned by the vision and values, behaviour within the school is excellent and attendance is very good because pupils enjoy coming to school.

The school helps pupils to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and others. The school has little diversity within its own community, but through the curriculum pupils have a developing understanding of different cultures and how to celebrate and respect them.

Great emphasis is placed upon collective worship being at the heart of school life where it effectively underpins and extends the school's vision and values. Pupils talk enthusiastically about worship which they enjoy because it is fully inclusive and interactive. It is well planned by the worship lead who works with the worship group of nine pupils to develop termly themes. Pupils also take a role in monitoring worship along with the foundation governors. Worship is rooted in biblical teaching, the life of Jesus and the Christian festivals. Prayer plays an important part in the school day. Pupils have frequent opportunities to write prayers and to share them in collective worship and at lunchtime. All pupils say the school prayer at home time. The Lord's Prayer is used in church services and frequently sung in morning worship. Worship includes a period for reflection often accompanied by quiet spiritual music. Pupils say reflection allows them to think about what they have heard and its application to their school day. Listening to the words of Psalm 23 put to music, one pupil responded: 'it lit a

candle in my heart'. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the possibility of creating a reflective space outside where they could go when they wanted quiet. The school has very close links with both the Anglican and Methodist churches in the village. Pupils are developing their understanding of a number of Anglican traditions such as beginning and ending worship using Anglican responses. The village church is used regularly for services and well attended by parents and the community who join with the school. Pupils and their families also develop their Christian understanding by attending 'Messy Church' at the Methodist church. Other Christian visitors also contribute to worship in the school by sharing the Christian message creatively.

Reflecting the vision to be 'excellent in all we do', leadership in RE is strong and the subject is given a high priority. The lead undertakes diocesan training and supports staff in their planning and teaching. Curriculum planning is based on the Emmanuel Project. The use of the Emmanuel RE syllabus ensures pupils rich experiences that develop their knowledge of Christianity and a range of world faiths and beliefs. The study of world faiths promotes the school's Christian vision and values in developing understanding and respect for diversity, difference and living well together. However, pupils have not had the opportunity to visit places of worship other than Christian. Pupils say they enjoy RE and that they feel safe to discuss religious and spiritual ideas: 'all our views are valued and this helps me to feel empowered.' Lessons develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills and provide opportunities to reflect on 'big' philosophical questions such as their place in the world. Pupils develop age appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation. At present the governing body have only limited involvement in monitoring RE across the school. This is, however, effectively undertaken by the subject leader who has identified that assessment in RE could be used more effectively to enhance pupils' progress. Statutory obligations for RE and collective worship are met and RE teaching is in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.

Headteacher	Elaine Burdiss
Inspector's name and number	Gillian Holmes 849