

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

East Bergholt Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address	School Lane East Bergholt Suffolk CO7 6SW.		
Date of inspection	15 October 2019	Status of school	VC Primary
Diocese	St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	URN	124729

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

School context

East Bergholt is a primary school with 203 pupils on roll. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. No pupils 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 below national averages, although several individuals have significant additional needs. Staffing, governance and parish church leadership are very stable. In March 2019 Ofsted judged the school to be 'Good'.

The school's Christian vision

Through our Christian faith we acknowledge our responsibility to all, to enrich lives and to show love and respect to all within our school family. We believe in life-long learning, aiming to equip all our children to live life in society today and for tomorrow in all its fullness.

I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full John 10:10

Key findings

- The vision is understood, articulated and embraced by governors and staff. It is threaded through the fabric of school life, informing policy and practice.
- Pupils of all ages have a well-developed understanding of the distinctively Christian values explored in worship, religious education and across the curriculum. A values-rich vocabulary ensures that even the youngest children are confident in relating values to attitudes and behaviour.
- There is a strong, firmly established and mutually beneficial partnership with the parish church. The shared commitment to promoting life in all its fullness has a major impact on pupils and their families.
- Christian leadership is faithful, strong and committed. Governors ensure that resources are in place to support and develop the Christian vision. Monitoring is largely devolved to foundation governors and does not give enough attention to impact.
- Relationships reflect the love, respect and responsibility at the heart of the vision. All members of the school community are celebrated as unique and special.

Areas for development

- Ensure that monitoring goes beyond checking provision. Secure consistency of the impact of the vision by identifying good outcomes and best practice.
- Access appropriate training to equip staff and governors to take on significant roles in embedding the school's Christian character and celebrating the impact of the vision, thereby releasing senior leaders to concentrate on developing innovative practice.
- Empower pupils to take bold steps in exploring new possibilities so that they flourish and grow as leaders and innovators.

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 existing school vision was updated in September 2019 to include the reference from John 10. Staff, governors and pupils were involved in the discussions. Consequently, there is a universally strong understanding of how the vision has relevance both to individuals and to the community. Christian values are explored in collective worship, threaded through the curriculum and consistently praised and referenced in and out of class. They are shared with parents, who reinforce them at home. Worship focuses on one Christian value each half term on a three-year programme. There are no specific core values but pupils and adults most consistently associate respect, hope, forgiveness and wisdom with their school. Leaders ensure that the interpretation of all values is distinctively Christian, using appropriate Bible stories to aid understanding and relating them to pupils' regular experiences. The impact of this is strong; reception children, for example, understand that wisdom is 'not doing wrong' and 'making good choices'.

Leaders are proud of the school's Christian foundation. The school environment is a celebration of faith and belief, including many places for prayer and quiet reflection. Strategic planning has an appropriate focus on developing spirituality. In line with the vision, the curriculum is creative, reflective and focused on inspiring every individual to flourish. Teachers employ a range of approaches to encourage imaginative responses from pupils, incorporating big questions and time to stop and think. Religious education (RE) and collective worship are well resourced because they are regarded as central to realising the vision. Provision is monitored by foundation governors, with formal reports submitted to the full governing body. Legal obligations and Church of England guidelines are fulfilled. However, monitoring reports do not include assessment of how provision supports pupils' spiritual development nor evaluation of the impact of the vision.

Collective worship, in school and at the parish church, plays a distinct role in pupils' spiritual development. It aids their understanding of and respect for Anglican traditions and Christian worship. It is a cornerstone of the school's practical celebration of its vision and values. The community sings together, prays together and celebrates their shared commitment to each other. Pupils speak of how worship 'sticks in my head', 'makes me think' and 'makes me happy to know that God is always with me'. They respond well to times of prayer and reflection, many commenting on taking advantage of quiet places around the school. Pupils and staff describe experiencing daily comfort, calm, solace and affirmation. Worship is meaningful and happy, but relatively contained and not overtly joyful.

Pupils are confident and articulate because they know that they are loved and respected as part of the school family. As a result, they enjoy school and attendance is excellent. Almost all pupils make good progress, especially those with additional needs who benefit from targeted support. Pupils have a strong understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation and can speak with maturity of respecting differences. They give many examples of how they take responsibility for others, including helping each other with their learning and the causes they support. They are beginning to think like campaigners through their focus on the environment and work on Black history. Much thought is given to the development of pupils as leaders. Their views are consistently sought, and they are proud of the roles they undertake, fulfilling them conscientiously. The worship council is growing in confidence and taking on new responsibilities. Pupil leaders are knowledgeable and respond exceptionally well to advice and guidance, although they are less confident in putting forward their own creative ideas.

Leaders have forged strong partnerships which support them in delivering the vision. Church and school are one family with a shared Christian mission. They pray for each other and share activities, including support for the local foodbank and special services. Church members lead practical RE exploration days and regularly provide dramatic Bible stories for collective worship. The incumbent is a familiar figure to pupils, staff and families. As well as leading worship and supporting religious education she is much loved and respected as a wise counsellor and 'good shepherd'. Families are embraced as full members of the school community and appreciate the many ways in which they are included. There are partnerships with local Church schools, although the impact of this work is not monitored. External partners provide specialist support for staff, particularly those who plan and deliver interventions for vulnerable pupils or provide mental health provision. Links with the diocese are deepening, for example the headteacher has joined the board of education.

The vision is evident in the way that all in the community celebrate diversity. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that every person is equally valued. This is demonstrated by the inclusion of pupils with complex additional needs in all activities, where they are treated respectfully and encouraged by their peers. Whilst the school is largely monocultural, RE plays a significant role in educating pupils about the diversity of faith and culture in British society. The well-balanced RE curriculum ensures that all pupils explore Christianity as a world-wide faith. A practical approach to learning engages pupils and they show a lively interest in shared values across different beliefs and traditions. Pupils identify as world citizens and understand that they have global responsibilities. They know that they are privileged and think carefully about the needs of others, both globally and closer to home. Their understanding of the purpose and impact of fundraising and charitable giving is developed through discussion both in class and by the school council.

Leaders' commitment to life-long learning is seen in the emphasis placed on staff training. Individuals seize opportunities to develop their subject expertise and support roles. They are empowered to be the best they can be, and this not only improves outcomes for pupils but also builds a happy and healthy team. The headteacher, her deputy and the incumbent have benefited from diocesan training which has deepened their understanding of Church school leadership. A well-established and successful team, they uphold and celebrate the Christian character of the school with skill, passion and commitment. This enthuses others to follow their example, although not always to take the initiative for themselves.

Headteacher	Gillian Mitchell
Inspector's name and number	Gill Hipwell 480