

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Mellis Church of England Primary School

Address	Yaxley Road Mellis Eye Suffolk IP23 8DP		
Date of inspection	27 March 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Diocesan Academy Trust
Diocese	St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	URN	143807

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

School context

Mellis is a primary school with 181 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few 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. Since the last inspection there is a new leadership team and a new incumbent. The school joined the diocesan multi academy trust in June 2017. Ofsted judged the school to be 'good' in February 2019.

The school's Christian vision

The school's ethos is 'To be our best'. It aims to instil a solid work ethic and a clear sense of Christian values for all. We aim to give our children the opportunities to acquire both and to live in a manner consistent with that aspiration, through Courtesy, positive Attitudes, Respect and Empathy (CARE). Luke 6:31: 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.'

Key findings

- A dedicated and inspirational leadership team clearly articulate the vision, which is understood by all and lived out in daily interactions and activities.
- The innovative curriculum not only challenges and inspires every pupil to be the best they can be but also provides opportunities for them to be enablers of each other's learning.
- Religious education is central to the school's understanding of itself as a Christian community. It is well-resourced, strongly-led and a key driver of whole-school high quality teaching and learning.
- Wellbeing for all has a high priority, based on treating each other well. The programme for promoting emotional resilience and good mental health is a model of good practice.
- Collective worship has a good impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. However, this impact is limited by the fact that some pupils do not have the opportunity to attend every day.

Areas for development

- Using the school's established framework for collective worship, support leaders in exploring a wider range of delivery styles to enhance pupils' experiences.
- As part of the policy review cycle, embed the vision in written procedures to ensure that policies clearly reflect the actual practice of the school.

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

Leaders embrace the vision and ensure that pupils experience it in every aspect of school life. Written policies, however, do not always reflect practice. They are generic and lack the values-rich vocabulary commonly used by staff and pupils. All pupils understand the vision, effortlessly linking 'be the best you can be' with 'treat others as you wish to be treated'. They see learning as a positive challenge and take responsibility for their own learning as well as playing the role of enablers of others. A vibrant and innovative curriculum and exciting extra-curricular activities provide challenge and inspire pupils to be the best they can be. Teaching across the curriculum draws on good practice in RE, providing pupils with many opportunities to explore, question and reflect with confidence. Expectations are high and pupils are not afraid to try out new things. Staff have responded as a team to a dip in progress, making changes and evaluating impact. Current data shows that progress in all areas is good. Proactive intervention strategies ensure that every pupil, including the most vulnerable, is supported to do their best.

The vision underpins attitudes to partnerships with other schools and organisations. The school works closely with others to share its good practice and is generous in its support. Parents are partners in their children's learning. They are offered regular and effective resources to help them support their children's academic and spiritual development. Leaders are keen to accept advice and guidance. Governors make good use of diocesan expertise to equip themselves to develop the Christian identity of the school. They value staff training very highly, both as a means of improving good practice and as a clear message that personal professional development is important. Staff in all roles see this as a major factor in their wellbeing. It gives them the confidence to do their jobs well and creates a culture of aspiration. Pupils take their leadership roles seriously. They are confident that their views are respected and understand their responsibilities to their fellow pupils and the school. The annual whole-school election process for head boy and girl is a meaningful process, with positive outcomes. The CARE system, where pupils are recognised for their pastoral qualities, was devised by a head boy candidate and has been integrated into the vision.

A partnership with a Christian school in Zambia is developing pupils' understanding of a vastly different culture and demonstrates the gulf in living standards. They explore this partnership through the vision and respond sensitively to the challenge of how best to support the pupils there. Support for charities is often initiated by pupils and shows an appropriate level of understanding of the underlying issues around justice, equality and compassion. The eco group promotes a strong focus on environmental stewardship and pupils are passionate advocates for change.

The partnership with the local church brings a living faith into the school. Supported by the incumbent, pupils have the opportunity to explore the purpose and place of prayer, which is prominent in the school day. Spaces for prayer and reflection are appreciated and used. The incumbent's chaplaincy role supports pupils and adults and contributes to the culture of wellbeing. This is further enhanced by an innovative approach to pupil emotional resilience and mental health. Units in the personal, social and health education programme include time for small groups of vulnerable pupils to work with trained teaching assistants in a specially designed nurture space. Further professional development has qualified these individuals to train the rest of the staff. The programme is supported by the YMCA and a counsellor works with identified individuals.

Religious education is a high priority for leaders, reflecting the Church of England's statement of entitlement. It is well-led and resourced and is monitored regularly by the governors' foundation group. The subject leader has designated time to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Progress is well documented through class scrapbooks and assessment of individual work. Good training and interaction with other schools has ensured that all staff are confident in what they teach. Approaches are creative and pupils are enthusiastic about what they learn. The comprehensive curriculum ensures that pupils explore a full range of world religions and associated cultures. A good range of visits and visitors broadens pupils' understanding of cultural and religious diversity. Work on Christianity reinforces the school's Christian values and reflects the vision. Thorough teaching of concepts starting with the youngest children, together with what pupils experience in worship, ensures age appropriate understanding of core Christian beliefs.

Reflection has a high priority and pupils are confident to give their own views whilst being respectful of the opinions of others.

Christian collective worship is a regular daily feature. It takes place in church at least every half term, when it is usually focused on a Christian festival. Significant interaction with the Church has developed pupils' knowledge and understanding of local Anglican traditions and practice, some of which are reflected in school worship. Daily worship is led by a range of people, including the headteacher, the incumbent, representatives from other Christian organisations, school staff and sometimes pupils. A formal start and finish to each act of worship and the recognisably Anglican structure give consistency. A range of Christian values is explored, changing each half term. Staff discuss the values and the Bible stories planned for worship at the start of each half term so that they can be reinforced by all staff throughout the day. Pupils understand the importance of these values, link them readily to the example of Jesus and reflect on their impact on their own lives. There is a pupil worship group with responsibility for regular monitoring. Governors also monitor and pupil views are sought. Planning is informed by feedback and practice is amended accordingly. For example, there has been greater involvement of pupils in acting out the Bible stories.

Most pupils are positive about worship, especially the singing and the pupil participation. Pupils sometimes miss worship for targeted academic intervention. There is no formal training for the leadership of worship; consequently, some leaders are less confident in their delivery than others.

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