

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Capel St Mary Church of England VC Primary School

Vision

'With faith as small as a mustard seed, you can move mountains.' Matthew 17: 20.

Our Christian family Cares that every individual is valued and allowed to Achieve their own personal goals. We Persevere and Enjoy our Learning (CAPEL). Through faith in ourselves and God every mustard seed knows they can move mountains and flourish.

Capel St Mary Church of England VC School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The well-established Christian vision is thoughtful and central to school life. It drives the strategic decision making of leaders, and underpins the work of the school.
- Relationships are warm and the school is welcoming. A supportive and caring culture is inspired by the school's vision and values. This ensures pupils and adults are treated well and flourish.
- The vision drives leaders to provide a carefully structured curriculum, which includes religious education (RE). A rich variety of experiences provoke deep thinking, stimulate a love of learning and give a global dimension to learning.
- Collective worship is a central part of daily life, and gives pupils and adults a moment each day to pause, reflect and be still. Prayer assemblies led by the faith council, are valued by the school community and give pupils a chance to lead reflection and prayers.
- Individuals are known and cared for within an atmosphere of encouragement and compassion. This inclusive approach supports children and families to develop faith in themselves.

Development Points

- Enrich opportunities for pupils to challenge and act on issues that are important to them. This is to reinforce their understanding that they can have influence and make a positive difference to the world.
- Extend and identify opportunities for spirituality across learning experiences. This is to support pupils to understand and deepen their spiritual development across the curriculum.



Inspection Findings

Capel St Mary's Christian vision, values and Bible verse inspire the school community to flourish and grow. The parable of the mustard seed encourages even the youngest pupils that with self-belief they can achieve. Dedicated leaders and staff ensure the vision and values including care and enjoyment, are threaded throughout the school's work. Governors are guided by the vision, which is central to forward planning and steers strategic decisions. Dedicated staff provide a motivating learning environment and carefully consider individual needs, demonstrating their commitment to 'move mountains'. Partnerships are strong, including significant links with the diocese and local schools and churches. Parents are generous supporters and actively committed to the school. A high proportion attended the school themselves, or chose it, demonstrating a strong impact on people's lives. A clear understanding of the shared vision is made more impactful to pupils through 'Monty the mustard seed'. This character is used to exemplify the vision, explain the values and reward pupil's achievements. Core values, included in the acronym CAPEL, are part of a shared language and regularly demonstrated by Monty. Governors monitor carefully and thoroughly understand the school's needs when making strategic decisions.

Staff equip pupils in this rural, isolated school to be inquisitive about the wider world. The carefully chosen curriculum offers a global perspective and encourages curiosity. The school environment has been thoughtfully developed with opportunities to reflect and experience moments of calm. An established outdoor reflective space is developing to encourage more times for spiritual development. However, opportunities throughout the day are not developed, meaning pupils lack chances to experience spirituality across the wider curriculum. Creative use of individual grants gives families' choice over their personalised support which enhances wellbeing. Pupils who are vulnerable and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are thoughtfully supported and taught to develop resilience. Extra-curricular opportunities are well supported by pupils and given careful consideration both to broadening experiences and expense to families. This ensures they are impactful and inclusive. Focussed professional development means school staff are skilful and able to provide appropriate and much appreciated support for pupils and families.

Collective worship forms a special time for the school community within the school day, incorporating the Christian vision and values. Pupils are respectful and interested, with those on the faith council taking key leadership roles. A structured approach, with routines for gathering and sending, includes some opportunities to develop spiritually, be still, think or pray. The school shares an agreed definition of spirituality, which is clear and carefully thought through. Pupils appreciate the chance to write prayers they are happy to share in worship, and value these moments to pray or reflect. Christian symbolism, such as candles and a cross, make concepts memorable and meaningful. Singing is enthusiastic and draws the school together in their understanding of the vision and a sense of joy. Parents and carers, quite correctly, value their inclusion in worship at church and school services. Local churches regularly lead worship and an 'open the book' group fuels a deeper knowledge of Bible stories. The story of David and Goliath taught one pupil to believe in herself, 'I am capable, no one's stopping me, except me!'

Capel St Mary is a friendly community which lives together well. Relationships are strong because pupils and adults are respected and cared for. Wellbeing has a high priority, with provision for pupils and adults, so the school community feel nurtured and therefore flourish. Staff have made a positive, and much appreciated, impact when supporting parents and families in times of trouble and grief. Adults and pupils have access to training from a specialist mental health provider. This has enabled the school community to learn and use strategies which develop resilience and improve well-being. Pupils thrive because the school have developed their own high-quality



provision for behaviour, mental health and wellbeing. Pupils play harmoniously, and any behaviour issues are managed with forgiveness and empathy. The Christian vision creates a warm and inclusive atmosphere where adults and pupils are 'known well'. Many indoor reflection areas are available and appreciated, including 'cosy corners'. As one pupil commented 'you can rejuvenate yourself and clear your mind'. Pre-school provision and effective transition arrangements ensure children settle into school well. The vision encourages self-belief and pupils develop confidence through opportunities such as 'learning leaders' or supporting younger children. This self-assurance and activities such as the 'move up café' mean leavers move onto their next school positively. The thoughtful support of vulnerable pupils and those who have SEND makes them feel safe and valued.

Pupils use the Christian vision and values to think about and consider their actions. They enthusiastically support acts of generosity, including national and local good causes. These include foodbank collections and a cake sale to support a project in India. The positive relationship with the parish church is strong and mutually beneficial which means the community is enriched and strengthened. Activities within the school and faith councils ensure that pupil voice is recognised and valued. Pupils are motivated to help and empathise with others in school, demonstrating acts of kindness. They understand that even the smallest 'mustard seed' can have an impact and are inspired to act with kindness and compassion. However, pupils do not understand how to create positive change in the world or initiate their own ideas and projects. Inequality and fairness are taught through curriculum themes, such as deforestation and the injustice faced by those in the 'Windrush Generation'. This encourages debate and expands their understanding of issues of justice in the world beyond their locality. Enrichment activities and educational visits support the broadening of pupil's horizons across the curriculum.

Dedicated, well-qualified leaders ensure RE has a high profile in the school and provides effective opportunities to broaden cultural awareness. They ensure it holds a high status, right from the start of the children's education. Professional development for RE has been provided by the diocese and is cascaded to staff, ensuring consistency in the curriculum. The well-established scheme is carefully planned and structured to build on prior learning and first-hand experiences where possible. It ensures a variety of religions and worldviews are taught, including Christianity. This enriches pupils' understanding of difference and respect for diverse beliefs and cultures. Learning is structured around questions that encourage curiosity and deep thinking. Pupils correctly consider RE important and say it helps them understand and carefully consider different people's beliefs and their own. Parents rightly recognise the enrichment RE offers their children, as well as developing a clear understanding of religious diversity and worldviews. As a consequence, pupils understand the subject's importance in a multi-cultural world.

Information

Address	The Street, Capel St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP9 2EG		
Date	11 February 2025	URN	124749
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	277
Diocese/District	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich		
Headteacher	Sean Cornish		
Chair of Governors	Alison Huard		
Inspector	Lynne Golding		