

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School

Vision

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, when it is grown, it becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.” Matthew 13:32

Strengths

- A compelling Christian vision shapes all aspects of the school’s work. It drives decisions at all levels ensuring significant impact for pupils and adults.
- There is a deeply embedded culture of care and nurture; inspired by carefully selected values. Leaders are determined to support the wellbeing of pupils and adults.
- Pupils and staff grow at Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School because time is taken to get to know each person as an individual. Consequently, relationships at all levels are strong enabling the school community to flourish.
- The vision underpins the curriculum ensuring pupils, including those who are vulnerable or with special education needs, enjoy rich learning experiences.

Development Points

- Develop a shared understanding of what spirituality means at Wetheringsett. This will deepen the many opportunities for spiritual development already available ensuring pupils and adults confidently talk about spirituality.
- Embolden pupils and adults in a collective ambition for courageous advocacy by creating opportunities for them to address injustice. This will enable pupils to become more confident champions for those facing adversity.
- Continue to enhance the religious education (RE) curriculum so pupils deepen their understanding of world faiths.



Inspection Findings

There is a deeply caring atmosphere evident throughout this very small school. The Christian vision, based on the parable of the mustard seed, succinctly combines the context and ambition of the school. This shared purpose creates an inclusive culture of nurture where relationships are prioritized. This ensures people feel valued and cared for. Leaders model the vision and values through the support they offer to the whole community. Pupils and staff see themselves on a journey of growth and flourishing. Strong communication and building respectful partnerships are central to the school's evident success. A powerful example of this is in the way the whole community came together following a devastating flood. Leaders' actions, supported by the multi-academy trust (MAT), church, parents and wider community, enabled the school to remain open. Parents highly value the guidance, care and dedication of the staff. Governors reflect on the vision in their meetings. Because they know the school well, they accurately evaluate its impact on the lives of adults and pupils.

The curriculum is shaped and guided by the vision. Three 'big ideas' are interwoven through each subject, offering rich learning experiences. Creative lesson planning and small class sizes permits flexibility across classes, stretching more able and supporting vulnerable learners alike. Leaders focus on the impact of the vision-led curriculum through regular monitoring, ensuring it benefits all. One pupil articulated this eloquently, 'Just like a small seed grows into a tree, we grow in our knowledge too.' Extracurricular activities enrich the curriculum by developing life skills and making good use of partnerships with the wider community. For example, a cooking club, supported by Christian school workers, connects making healthy food with learning about biblical stories. Pupils relish opportunities to use the rural location in lessons. Forest School sessions in the 'Whispering Woods' affords time for awe and wonder linked to learning in science. Big questions generated by pupils and adults, like 'What does God feel about us?', create space for deep thinking. This is typical of the many opportunities for spiritual development provided at Wetheringsett. However, the school community cannot fully articulate the impact of these because there currently is limited shared understanding of spirituality.

Collective worship is a valued part of school life. Pupils and adults appreciate this time for calm at the start of each day. It is invitational, enabling participants to reflect thoughtfully about the application of the values and living well together. The use of songs, drama and storytelling provide enjoyable opportunities for all to join in. Collective worship ambassadors contribute positively by planning and leading worship each half term. They highly value their roles as a chance to grow in confidence, building on their knowledge of Bible stories. Daily routines are framed by moments of prayer, offering space for reflection and spiritual growth. Pupils write their own prayers of gratitude which are used each lunchtime. Local lay ministers and clergy from a nearby parish enrich and enhance the variety of worship on offer. Services held in church are well attended, demonstrating the importance placed on them by the wider community.

As a result of effective and thoughtful leadership, RE has a high profile. Leaders have clearly outlined what is to be taught, providing staff with support and resources to teach the subject effectively. The content is challenging, relevant and diverse, enabling pupils to develop a good understanding of Christianity. The use of questioning prompts pupils to think, and lessons offer a safe space to discuss differing views. Pupils speak of inspirational opportunities for drama and art in RE lessons, sparking their interest to delve deeper. They share what they've learned at home in discussion that involves the whole family. Recently, staff have begun considering ways to enhance the exploration of world faiths in addition to Christianity. This work is enabling pupils to better recognize the diverse world in which they live.

The vision encourages pupils to take on responsibilities for the benefit of others within the school community. They enthusiastically take a lead in areas of shared life through groups like the sports crew and school council. Through these opportunities, they develop life skills and grow in confidence. Pupils consider the needs of others



and participate in regular charitable activities, such as collecting food for the local foodbank. They are passionate about caring for the environment and talk of individual responsibility to make considerate choices in their lives. However, pupils are not always clear as to how they can promote justice and responsibility beyond themselves. This is because there are limited opportunities for them to champion those facing injustice or adversity. Mutually supportive links with the partner school help staff balance their many responsibilities. Staff at each school benefit from shared subject leadership, resources, and training. The diocese and MAT offer many avenues of support, ensuring leaders are not isolated in times of need. For example, the MAT provides leaders with a network of forums through which they can access expertise and guidance. This ensures they are effective, alongside supporting their workload and wellbeing. Staff attend diocesan training to complement the development of RE and collective worship. Pupils and adults form a strong community in Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School because of its compelling Christian vision.

An inclusive environment, inspired by the vision, permeates throughout the school community. Adults encourage pupils to be kind to each other and work hard. Consequently, there is a culture of trust where pupils see staff as supportive and respectful towards them. A range of strategies are in place to ensure pupils' emotional needs are met. Pupils access a school-based emotional literacy support assistant when needed, alongside 'talking and drawing' sessions to support emotional regulation. Pupils enjoy their social time, which includes opportunities to join a lunch club run by the local church community. Sessions blend values-based learning through biblical stories with practical games helping them to play well together. Leaders have a strong focus on supporting the wellbeing of staff. For example, they have appointed a mental health ambassador, offering weekly check-ins. Adults appreciate leader's work on this, commenting that they are 'always listening, always supporting.' The daily nurture and loving care offered enable the seeds of this community to flourish and grow.

Information

Address	Church Street, Wetheringsett, Suffolk, IP14 5PJ		
Date	17/9/24	URN	147575
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	37
Diocese	St Edmundsbury & Ipswich		
MAT/Federation	St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Diocesan MAT		
Headteacher	Imogen Wallis		
Chair of Governors	Janine Wright		
Inspector	Philip Asher		