Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Thurston Church of England Primary Academy

Vision

In God's hands we are Truthful, we Persevere and we Aspire.
"Let all that you do be done in love."
1 Corinthians 16:14.

Thurston Church of England Primary Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Notable Strengths

- The school's vision, underpinned by Christian love, drives leaders' decisions and is lived out by the established school community. Pupils are at the centre of the school's work. They are encouraged to be truthful, to persevere and be aspirational to help them to flourish.
- This school is fully inclusive, demonstrated by the deeply loving culture of compassion and tolerance.
- Collective worship is highly valued and central to the life of the school. Planned moments of stillness, singing and reflection encourage spiritual growth. This is enriched by a shared understanding around spirituality, reflective spaces and strong links with the local church.
- The school develops pupils as stewards of God's creation. As champions of environmental issues, they grow as compassionate individuals who model concern for the world around them. They take pride in the leadership opportunities available to them and grow in confidence as a result.
- The school has a well-led and creative religious education (RE) curriculum. This enables pupils to have a good understanding of a range of beliefs, and of Christianity as a global faith. They carefully consider how this knowledge influences their own lives and are respectful of others.

Development Points

- Ensure that in a rapidly growing and diversifying context, the school's vision and culture are consistently understood by all members of the school's community. This is so it further supports the school's work and cohesion in times of rapid change.
- Broaden the range of partnerships the school has in the local community. This is so pupils understand how they can play a positive role in their own locality.

Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership The school has an established vision with a strong biblical underpinning, which is prominently reinforced in its environment by leaders. It is clearly embedded into school life. Inspired by the biblical text of 'let all that you do be done in love', this is clearly driving actions. As a result, pupils are encouraged to be truthful, to persevere and be aspirational to help them to flourish. Staff are invested in the vision and see that it steers the decisions of leaders in their policies and procedures. For example, it underpins the approaches in the recently reviewed behaviour policy by promoting consistency and kindness. The vision is constantly evolving in its interpretation as the school grows rapidly and many new families join the community. Alongside the trust and diocese, leaders in school support the professional development of staff. As a result, both adults and pupils flourish. Governors are regularly present in school. They are heavily involved in evaluating the impact of the vision, for example through the voices of pupils and adults. They support leaders as they strive to ensure the vision remains effective in times of rapid change.
Vision and Curriculum The curriculum has been carefully developed by leaders to reflect the school's ethos. It is designed with all pupils in mind and provides varied opportunities for both learning in class and extra-curricular activities. Through planning and guidance, leaders support teachers to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of individuals and groups. A strongly inclusive ethos supports increasing numbers of vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are helped to remember previous learning through routines in lessons and are provided with emotional support where needed. Teachers plan moments within lessons for pupils to reflect spiritually, resulting in deep level discussions. The curriculum provides a number of opportunities for pupils to think deeply and respond to a range of issues. These moments encourage pupils to reflect on themselves, think about the wider community and consider how they can make a difference. As a result, spiritual development is evident.
Worship and Spirituality Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils and staff are encouraged to participate and enjoy doing so. It is well planned to take account of the annual cycle of the church and Christian festivals. It helps pupils to deepen their understanding of celebrations and Anglican traditions. Worship is used as an opportunity to explore the school vision and each of the values. This helps pupils and adults to see how these can be applied in their daily life. Worship is carefully planned out across the year, based around a clear sequence for it to follow. As a result, pupils have a rich and varied diet, including moments of stillness and calm. This helps to develop the ability of pupils and adults to reflect on themselves and wider issues. Pupil worship leaders contribute to both whole school and class worship, such as leading the school prayer. This gives them a sense of direct connection to worship. The wider environment further supports spiritual development through reflective spaces and a spiritual garden. This allows pupils and adults time and space to reflect in moments of quiet. A strong shared understanding around spirituality, using a 'doughnut' analogy, provides a framework through which they can express this. A close partnership with the local church involves the wider community in worship, nurturing a sense of belonging.
Vision and School Culture The culture of dignity and respect is well established underpinned by the vision to do all things in 'love'. However, the school is growing rapidly, which presents some challenges. This means that not all pupils understand the expectations as well as others. To support them, compassionate leaders model the culture in their interactions and decision-making. They encourage staff to root their actions in kindness and acceptance,

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with a relationships-first approach. Consequently, pupils and adults live well together. Pupils talk about and treat one another with understanding and tolerance, which stems from a strong emphasis on support and wellbeing. As a result, pupils accept each other's differences and flourish together. Pupils are polite and respectful. Leaders thoughtfully consider staff wellbeing and, as a result, staff feel a united and happy team.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Guided by the vision, pupils have been provided with enriching leadership opportunities by leaders to develop their sense of personal responsibility. The eco-council gives pupils the chance to improve the school environment, which they take with enthusiasm. They organise litter picking and have achieved national accreditation for their work. Older pupils eagerly take on leadership roles, such as leading worship or being part of a playground committee. Through the latter they support activities such as Lego at social times, organising rotas and supporting younger pupils. This results in a culture of respect for others and their environment. It gives pupils confidence and raises their self-esteem. The school's work on equality and diversity through its vision, worship and curriculum gives pupils a sense of fairness and responsibility. For example, they have worked with the diocese on a project learning about St Paul. This has focused on the 'missional' aspect of his life. As a result of this broad approach, pupils are building an awareness of their abilities to act independently as agents of change. Several pupils have consequently raised money for charity, or written to influential people to increase awareness of issues. However, currently many of these circumstances relate to either individual experiences; or wider, national or global issues. Given the recent growth of the village, many pupils do not demonstrate a perception of any potential challenges in Thurston. As the wider community grows, new opportunities for partnerships beyond the school are presenting themselves. These could further enhance the pupils' awareness of their locality.

Religious Education

RE is valued and its profile is befitting of a Church school. It is well-planned and promotes enquiry and curiosity. The 'big questions' frame the well-constructed curriculum, which covers world religions and worldviews in a progressive sequence of learning. As a result, pupils enjoy encountering a range of beliefs and have a good understanding of their similarities and differences. For example, they recognise that Humanists do not believe in a God but are guided by a secular moral purpose. They understand that Christianity is a diverse, global religion and events such as Easter are celebrated differently around the world. RE is therefore impactful in broadening pupils' experiences of different cultures. Staff have accessed a range of professional development opportunities provided by the diocese and subject leads. This enables them to deliver RE effectively through an improved understanding of subject knowledge. This ensures RE is a strength of the school.

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National Society for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales

Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Pond Field Road, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 3FT		
Date	02 July 2026	URN	142562
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	343
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich		
MAT	Thedwastre Education Trust		
MAT Chair	Ryan Temple-Summers		
Headteacher	John Bayes		
Chair of Governors	Kate Parnum		
Inspector	Paul Seeman		

