

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

East Hoathly Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address	Church Marks Lane, East Hoathly, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 6EQ		
Date of inspection	12 June 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	Chichester	URN	114501

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

School context

East Hoathly is a primary school with 102 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few 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. The school is a member of the Pioneer Foundation; the Executive Head divides time equally between the three schools, supported by Assistant Headteachers in each school.

The school's Christian vision

Achievement for all, Learning together, Learning for life, Under God's Rule.

We aim to establish a happy Christian community school, based upon the love of God and one's neighbour, where every child is provided with a toolkit for life-long learning through high quality teaching. They will have a love of learning with high standards of achievement, fostered through traits of resilience, respect for all, equality and inclusion.

Key findings

- The vision has been recently refreshed through establishing key values, including respect and resilience, which are rooted in biblical teaching. The new emphasis of the revised vision and values is not reflected in key policies and is not embedded across all practice in the school.
- There is a strong sense of community and relationships are positive. This results in pupils who are confident and articulate, collaboration within the staff team, wider links with the church and community, and parents who are full of praise for the school.
- Pupils, especially those who are more vulnerable, benefit from this being a safe and nurturing place, developing their skills for learning in a spirit of working together with enjoyment. A focus on improving pupil well-being is based upon knowing and caring for each child as an individual.

Areas for development

- Further develop the understanding of the vision and values across the school community so that all can articulate how it positively influences the strategic and operational direction of the school, and firmly impacts decision making, policies and practice at all levels
- Ensure a systematic and rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation provides detailed analysis on the impact of the vision and values on the Christian character of the school
- Increase opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship on a regular basis

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

East Hoathly school lives out a Christian vision which encourages pupils to be the best they can be. There are very positive relationships between pupils and adults as well as a strong partnership with the church. The vision has recently been revised by staff and governors in order to root it in biblical teaching; it is visible around school but has not been embedded so that all within the community can express how it influences decision making and policies. Core Christian values such as resilience and respect are explored well in collective worship and influence behaviour and relationships. A nurturing and inclusive approach is embedded; parents comment that 'morals and values are weaved through children's lives'. A passion for supporting the well-being of individual pupils demonstrates effective leadership based upon current practice in Church school education. Priority is given to the development of RE meaning that governors invest in action which is leading to improvements. The opportunities for collaboration and training within the federation are effective in supporting and developing staff. Governors visit the school frequently and know the school well. They are periodically involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's Christian vision, RE and collective worship. However, this process is insufficiently robust to provide feedback on a regular basis.

The executive headteacher is supported by a staff team who are determined that every pupil should flourish; provision for those with additional learning or personal needs is strong. Good attendance is promoted and leaders ensure persistent absentees are closely supported. Behaviour is positive and there have been no exclusions. Pupils demonstrate resilience when their learning is challenging and make positive choices, particularly in supporting and encouraging each other. Priority is given to the mental health and wellbeing of everyone. Staff speak of the ways they are supported, attributing this to the school's Christian ethos. However, understanding of the relevance of the vision to pupils' academic aspirations is limited. The school's leadership is proud of its curriculum, and in keeping with the Christian vision, leaders have ensured that raising standards in English and mathematics has taken place alongside the development of a broad and balanced curriculum. Although Year 6 progress outcomes in English and mathematics remain below the national average, the quality and progress of work in pupils' books, provide evidence of continuing improvement. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities offer pupils experiences in areas beyond the formal school curriculum, including sport, themed days and Forest School.

The school's vision underpins the positive approach to difference and diversity. Pupils are able to express their views of each other with respect, however, pupils' appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity within Britain is limited. Pupil leaders are proud of the roles that they play and how they support other pupils. One described part of her role as setting the best example for others to follow. Pupils contribute to a range of charitable giving which they link to their core value of working together. They speak positively of helping the local community through gifts at harvest time and supporting a homeless charity. One pupil explained, 'It doesn't matter how much you love God all people deserve the same'. Pupils are made aware of wider global issues, however, the extent to which they take the initiative in social action is limited.

There has been a focus on improving opportunities for spiritual development in school; prayer spaces have been created inside and outside. Pupils on the RE Council support younger pupils to access and experience these special places where their thoughts and big questions are recorded and displayed. Pupils' reflections and prayers in response to exploration of the values are captured in spiritual journals. One parent recognised this area of improvement by expressing that the school has been 'stepping out in personal prayer in the last year'.

Daily collective worship in church is recognised by staff and pupils as central to the school's Christian foundation. The programme is clearly planned, with a clear theological foundation, encouraging pupils and staff to live out the vision and values, and consider key Christian beliefs. Pupils recognise the impact on their behaviour and attitudes by treating others how they wish to be treated. Biblical teaching underpins themes for worship, relating scripture to pupils' own lives. Pupils are inspired by the weekly worship led by the Open the Book team, drawn from the congregation and wider community. They say they enjoy being actively involved and 'seeing the Bible stories come alive means you can imagine God talking'. Although they have an appreciation of the importance of Jesus for Christians, pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is limited. Prayer is frequently led by

pupils and is a natural opportunity to reflect on the school's values. In response to the last SIAMS inspection pupils have developed some understanding of the breadth of Christianity as a global faith through occasional worship led by visitors such as Christian Aid. However, their appreciation of the variety of different Christian traditions and the way this is expressed through worship has been limited. Parents attend worship at the church to join the school in celebrating key festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Although pupils and governors contribute periodically to the evaluation of worship, this process is insufficiently robust to have significant impact on further development.

Senior leaders recognise the importance of RE in ensuring pupils flourish. This results in time and resources being invested in the subject which have led to improvements in teaching and learning. The school has drawn on the support provided by the Diocese, particularly in introducing the Understanding Christianity resource. The subject leader is effective, supporting her colleagues to deliver relevant RE. Planning draws on the locally agreed syllabus and meets statutory requirements. There is a balance of content between Christianity and other faiths, although the potential of RE to contribute to pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Britain is not fully realised. Written work is of good quality and includes opportunities for pupils to reflect and respond to the area being studied. Assessment practice is continuing to be developed so that it directly links to the areas studied. The opportunities for collaboration and training within the federation are effective in supporting and developing staff.

Executive headteacher	James Procter
Inspector's name and number	Susan Costa 902