

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Elm Church of England Primary School

Vision

“What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.” Mark 4: 30-32

The values of love, respect, trust, community and courage are both naturally present in us, like little seeds, but also values that we endeavour to nurture, so that we can have ‘life in all its fullness’ John 10:10

Elm Church of England Primary 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 Christian vision is carefully and thoughtfully designed to serve this rural village school. Leadership is highly effective. The determined and passionate staff team ensures that the vision is lived out across all aspects of school life. Consequently, relationships are strong, and behaviour is exemplary.
- Guided by the vision and values, inclusivity and equity are high priorities. There is a deep-rooted culture of love and care for pupils, regardless of ability. This ensures endless opportunities for them to flourish.
- The curriculum is aspirational. Pupils are supported to achieve their potential, regardless of their starting point. This is because adults know pupils and families well and support is tailored to specific and individual needs. Therefore, pupils are enabled to ‘live life in all its fullness’.
- Adults are empowered by school leaders and the Diocese of Ely multi-academy trust (DEMAT). They are valued, listened to, and respected for who they are and what they can offer. This ensures that they look outwards across the trust and are responsible for enabling others through nurture and support.
- The parable of the mustard seed, motivating all to grow, ensures ongoing spiritual development. Opportunities for pupils to develop curiosity, ask questions, consider their experiences and change their perspective are planned across the curriculum. As a result, pupils flourish spiritually.

Development Points

- To embed the recently introduced religious education (RE) curriculum through effective monitoring and evaluation. This will support pupils in deepening their understanding of a range of approaches to exploring religion, beliefs, and worldviews.



Inspection Findings

Aspiration, opportunity, and love underpin the deeply embedded Christian vision in Elm Church of England Primary School. This well-established vision of starting small and growing without limits is at the heart of all decisions. It is driven by passionate and bold leadership. The biblical story of the mustard seed links back to the agricultural beginnings of the school. Through this, it is acknowledged that all can 'grow great in God's love'. Consequently, pupils are successfully able to overcome the challenges they face. The golden threads of love, respect, trust, community, and courage weave through every aspect of school life. This enables members of the school community to flourish. Adults are inspired by the biblical example of growing as a child of God. This leads to a highly motivated staff team that serves the pupils of Elm, nurturing and supporting them, to have 'life in all its fullness'. The vision of DEMAT aligns strongly with that of the school. Together they enable staff to share good practice and expertise. This ensures that adults have the necessary skills to support pupils. The local governing board is proactive, strongly supporting the vision through monitoring and talking with pupils and families. This enables them to evaluate how the vision is leading the direction of the school.

The commitment for all 'to grow great' is evident in the school's aspirational 'no ceiling' curriculum. Pupils are supported to flourish through appropriate scaffolding and support. Adults address misconceptions immediately, ensuring pupils are confident and independent learners. Opportunities abound for learners to grow holistically. Swimming lessons and a wide range of sports activities enhance the academic provision. The most vulnerable pupils are very well supported. This ensures that pupils with complex needs thrive. Spiritual development is entwined within the curriculum. Moments of awe and wonder are intrinsically linked to learning. Pupils use these opportunities to deepen their thinking, ask questions and become aware of something 'bigger' outside of themselves. Reflection time is built into the school day through pauses in lessons and classroom reflection spaces. Consequently, pupils feel comfortable reflecting on, and talking about, their own spiritual reflections and growth.

Collective worship is a highly valued and celebratory time for pupils and adults. Leaders have created an inspiring and varied approach based around the vision. This supports the understanding of the vision across the school community. Biblical texts are central to worship. Members of the Open the Book team share Bible stories creatively. This strengthens pupils' understanding of how these stories connect to their lives. Daily worship is framed by quiet and stillness. Pupils and adults are invited to pray and to reflect on Bible teachings linked to the school's values. They are given freedom and time to contemplate how they can live out their own faith and beliefs, based on these values. As a result, they flourish spiritually. Pupils comment that worship provides space to remember how 'you grow great in God's love'. The collective worship team confidently demonstrate their wisdom and understanding of the vision. Through leading worship, they acknowledge that they are 'growing in God's love'. The school community engages with worship opportunities beyond school, including the Diocese of Ely day of prayer and services at All Saints Church. This enriches their spiritual development and allows them to feel part of a wider Christian community. The school and the parish church have a strong relationship. Pupils acknowledge and appreciate sharing worship with visitors beyond the school. This supports their understanding of how worship can be expressed in different ways.

The Christian vision creates an inclusive ethos which is the foundation for strong and positive relationships. Leaders serve their school community well. The approach to behaviour is underpinned by love and dignity. Expectations are consistently modelled and lived out. Pupils therefore feel safe, loved, and respected. They are resilient to setbacks and 'grow great' in this safe, nurturing environment. Supporting positive mental health and wellbeing is a priority.



Adults are trained to provide a wide range of strategies to deal with the complexity of the needs of pupils. Consequently, their needs are understood, and high-quality care is given. Parents confidently explain how the school helps their child to grow and flourish. Families are respected and supported by the school. The result is a very strong relationship based on trust. One parent described the school as ‘a family community where we all matter’. The ‘comfort cupboard’, a school-based foodbank, and uniform ‘swap shop’, support families during difficult times and are greatly valued. Staff are supported by leaders and DEMAT through access to supervision and support services. This has a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Leaders and adults demonstrate positive relationships underpinned by their school values. Pupils are courageous and feel empowered to live out the school’s vision of ‘growing great’ through roles of responsibility and leadership. They regularly take part in events to raise funds for charitable causes. This means they have a good understanding of their responsibility towards others. The school council actively works to develop and improve the school environment. They take their role seriously and act with great responsibility. Pupils have a strong voice, and they know that their actions are valued. They recognised the need for the ‘comfort cupboard’. They proudly discuss working with their church to set it up so ‘no one would be hungry’. Pupils have formed close links with a local care home and lunch club that supports their community. This results in robust community engagement. Pupils understand justice as ‘being fair’. This enables them to stand up for what is right.

The recently developed RE curriculum effectively meets the needs of pupils. It has a high profile within the school. The curriculum is engaging and develops enthusiastic critical thinkers who can ask and answer deep questions. It balances teaching Christianity alongside a range of faiths and worldviews. Pupils therefore feel informed to talk about these with knowledge and understanding. The curriculum is explored through the lenses of religious beliefs, how people explore these in their lives, and philosophical questioning. Pupils confidently explain and discuss these approaches. However, as the curriculum has only recently been introduced, they are not able to do this in depth. Through RE pupils engage with profound thinking. They courageously ask questions whilst maintaining respect for others. Pupils articulate a clear, respectful understanding that all views are valid, and should be shared and heard. Alongside DEMAT, the leader of RE supports and empowers staff through training, monitoring, and evaluation. Staff teaching RE feel well supported and knowledgeable. As a result, they are confident in delivering the curriculum.

Information

Address	Main Road, Elm, PE14 0AG		
Date	12 November 2024	URN	143835
Type of school	Primary (inspected as voluntary controlled)	No. of pupils	227
Diocese	Ely		
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Ely multi-academy trust (DEMAT)		
Headteacher	Jackie Mills		
Chair of Governors	Oliver Mackett		
Inspector	Laura Davies		