

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Address	Sand Street, Soham, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5AA		
Date of inspection	19 September 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust
Diocese	Ely	URN	141552

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

School context

St Andrew's is a large primary school with 470 pupils on roll. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils 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 (SEND) is below national averages. The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection - with an 80% turnover in teaching staff, academisation, a new headteacher and senior leadership team.

The school's Christian vision

'It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on sound rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built.' (Luke 6:48). Our vision as a Church of England school places Christian values at the heart of everything we do. The values are encapsulated in the acronym ENRICH - 'Excellence, Nurture, Respect, Integrity, Community, Hope' As a school community, we aim to serve one another and work together for the common good, so that everyone can experience life in all its fullness. (John 10:10)

Key findings

- The Christian vision and associated core values shape everything the school does, enabling all to flourish. This is seen both in the very clear moral purpose and in the shared belief that school can positively impact upon the life chances of all. Pupils lack understanding of the Christian foundation of the values.
- The mutually beneficial partnerships forged, particularly with the church, are deeply embedded and contribute positively to the strong feeling of community that surrounds the school. The impact can be seen most powerfully in the respectful relationships, enabling all to flourish.
- Collective worship is well planned, joyful and uplifting. Pupils' role in worship is limited because they do not have sufficient opportunities to make meaningful contributions to planning or leadership.
- Religious education (RE) is making a significant impact on pupils understanding of faith as represented in Britain today. As a result, they show great sensitivity and respect.

Areas for development

- Equip pupils to become partners in the school's ongoing improvement and development as a Church school by ensuring they have a sound understanding of the distinctively Christian roots of the vision and core values.
- Develop pupils' understanding of and opportunities for proactive and meaningful leadership by broadening and developing their roles, for example in collective worship.

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

Leaders' unrelenting focus on the school's Christian vision and associated values has resulted in a strong community, underpinned by mutually beneficial partnerships. These partnerships make an excellent contribution, supporting school values which focus on taking responsibility for oneself and others. This enables leaders to fulfil their vision of ensuring that everyone can grow in their own unique way, each special and precious in the eyes of God with their own gifts and talents. The theological underpinning of the school values is understood by all staff who are excellent role models, whether new to the school or not. The overwhelming sense of community, a real strength, is even more impressive given the size of the school. Gospel values not only give a firm foundation, enabling the vision to be realised, but contribute powerfully to the atmosphere of common purpose surrounding this welcoming and inclusive school, where all are treated with respect and strive to be the best they can be.

'Team St Andrew's' is an accurate phrase to describe staff committed to enriching lives. This dedicated commitment can be seen in the effective contribution made by extra-curricular activities to self-esteem and standards. Some take place before school begins to ensure that pupils start the day ready to learn. A real difference is being made to pupils' lives because of carefully thought out and tailored support. 'There is no sense of one size fits all'. This ensures all feel valued and loved and, as a result, attendance is good, pupils enjoy coming to school, want to do well and strive for excellence. Pupils make the right choices because of the successful promotion of school values in worship and throughout the day. They talk about how these values impact on their lives, especially relationships, but are less clear about the biblical roots of these values. Enhancing pupils' experiences is something everyone subscribes to because it widens horizons and raises expectations; classes are named after Cambridge colleges and this has led to links being forged with the university. It is the drive for the very best that has led the school to develop significant links with a scientific research park, successfully raising the profile of science across the school. Pupils have opportunities to apply for leadership roles, such as school councillor. They regularly evaluate worship but have no significant input in planning and leading it. Auditions are held for the drama club and those who are successful are taken to see a professional show and produce an end of year play which is a real highlight for the community.

The excellent partnership with the Church is making a significant contribution because it gives a tangible Christian message that all can relate to whether they have a personal faith or not. Led by an enthusiastic vicar, tremendous spiritual and pastoral support is provided to the school community. Parents acknowledge the support given to them by the Church school community as invaluable. The vicar is fully involved, particularly planning and delivering worship and services. Pupils see visits to church as integral to their lives. They offer advice to the vicar on how to improve and examples of what has been witnessed in school can be seen in her regular sermons. This makes St Andrew's a focal point in the community. Using the Church to study Remembrance Day strengthened pupils' understanding of service and sacrifice by local people. Christian service can be seen in the approach to charitable giving both nationally and locally, supporting communities less fortunate than themselves. Pupils regularly engage in social action projects demonstrating hope in action, for example, providing a foodbank and focussing on the exploitation of the natural world. A link with a Church school in Uganda enables pupils to talk knowledgeably about global partnerships, similarities and differences within the world and the global nature of Christianity. Skilful questioning enables staff to maximise the potential of questions posed by pupils which encourages them to reflect deeply. Prayer spaces and a pupil-led prayer club at lunchtime support worship themes and provide pupils with opportunities to send messages to God making a good contribution to spiritual development.

An engaging curriculum, tailored to the needs of all, is inspiring pupils to be the best they can be. It allows them to explore national and local issues and engages all in making a difference. Innovative and imaginative practices are making a real difference to the lives of pupils. These come from the deeply held conviction leaders promote; the in-house counselling service is one example. It can also be seen in the investment in the pupil premium champion and special educational needs co-ordinator who, together with a family liaison worker, provide strong support through a 'culture of care'. As a result, barriers to learning are significantly reduced with vulnerable pupils making good progress, narrowing the gap between them and their peers significantly. Good use is made of training opportunities provided by the multi-academy trust and the diocese, for example staff are well supported by leaders to deliver quality RE that is consistent and engaging. Pupils participate wholeheartedly in the quality learning experiences offered. Assessment shows pupils attain well. RE contributes significantly to the exploration

of worldwide faiths where pupils demonstrate a respectful curiosity. Consequently, RE is making a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of diversity and the nature of belief.

Relationships between all stakeholders are exemplary. A recent focus on ensuring the behaviour policy reflects school values is impacting positively on daily interactions between pupils and behaviour is good. Older pupils support younger pupils throughout the day. Rewarding positive behaviour has resulted in a harmonious community where pupils thrive. Support for mental wellbeing is particularly strong and staff value working in a mutually supportive environment. Sensitive leadership decisions, especially around the issue of workload, enable staff to flourish. The school contributes to the training of staff in other schools, widening its influence through disseminating good practice. It has successfully developed staff who have gone onto senior positions in other Church schools. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out with integrity and are, therefore, robust and accurate. The RE governor ensures all are fully briefed on Church school matters. As a result, governors have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses which allows them to challenge effectively and plan strategically.

Collective worship is inclusive, joyful and invitational. Pupils and adults speak passionately about what they experience during worship and levels of engagement are high. The timing has been deliberately chosen so that messages which resonate with pupils can be taken out into the community. Pupils' responses, behaviour and subsequent actions demonstrate the impact worship has upon them and, in particular, their spiritual development and understanding of the role of prayer. Significant numbers have asked for a personal Bible to follow up what they have heard at school.

Headteacher	Michael Harrison
Inspector's name and number	Linda Russell 893