



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dewhurst St Mary's CE Primary School

Address 94 Churchgate, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire EN8 9ND

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

School's vision

Inspiring all to Dream, Believe, Achieve.
'Let your light shine' (Matthew 5:16)

Key findings

- The vision of the school is known and articulated by all members of the school community; however, the biblical underpinning of the vision is not fully understood by everyone.
- Pupils feel safe and nurtured in their school. The most vulnerable pupils successfully access educational provision as a result of a compassionate approach which supports their flourishing. During the pandemic, the school acted as a beacon of hope and 'light' to ensure that pupils and families were supported according to need in difficult times.
- Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum, with opportunities to question, reflect and find their place in the world. Although senior leaders and staff have thought carefully about provision for spirituality, there is a need for a deeper understanding of spirituality within the context of a Church school.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum enables pupils to make connections between religions and to appreciate and respect diversity of religious thought. Pupils flourish because RE provision creates an accepting and safe environment where pupils can make informed decisions about their own beliefs.
- Pupils enjoy being active participants in worship. As worship leaders, they are supported by staff to lead collective worship and this enables them to be brave, to grow in self-confidence and to shine.

Areas for development

- To develop a deeper understanding of the biblical context of 'Let your light shine' to help pupils to understand how their talents and skills can be used to serve others and challenge injustice as agents of change.
- To ensure that there is a deeper understanding of spirituality, so that all staff and school leaders understand more clearly how spirituality is developed within the context of a Church school.
- For governors to ensure that there is a robust monitoring process in place to measure the impact of the school's Christian vision upon the flourishing of all pupils and adults in the school.

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

The school's Christian vision of 'Let your light shine' (Matthew 5:16) is expressed widely as 'not being afraid to show your true self'. There is a tangible sense of compassion and purpose within the school community, which inspires pupils to discover their talents and to be courageous, caring, and respectful. However, not all members of the school community have a shared understanding of the vision as a call to discover and use their talents to 'shine' by serving others and effecting change. Governors and senior leaders interpret the school's vision strategically through sensitive allocation of funding, policy reviews and monitoring of the curriculum to ensure that pupils flourish. Governors show a high level of commitment to the school, working effectively with senior leaders and developing good relationships with pupils and staff. Whilst the school's Christian vision underpins most strategic decision-making, the governing body needs to ensure that the monitoring undertaken measures the impact of the school's vision upon the flourishing of pupils and adults.

School leaders' commitment to pupils' flourishing means that pupils are self-confident and their learning, social and emotional needs are met. Pupils benefit from a rich and well-planned curriculum, some of which has been developed collaboratively by staff. Staff approach class teaching according to their understanding of the vision as, 'whatever barriers you have, you can shine.' Staff share subject knowledge regularly and this collegiate approach ensures that staff feel valued and are able to flourish professionally. Training to equip staff to work in a church school appears to be limited primarily to school leaders. The introduction of forest school enables pupils to discover more about the natural world and provides opportunities to engage in outdoor pursuits. Pupils discuss issues of diversity within the wider curriculum, which has been adapted to include relevant topics for the school community such as Windrush. Staff and senior leaders are committed to the flourishing of all pupils, exemplified interventions and personalized learning. Staff and pupils appreciate the depth of pastoral support offered as part of their partnership with the church, which supports wellbeing and promotes flourishing. Parents speak positively about the school's curriculum enabling their children to learn about diversity, 'so they can make their own independent life choices'. Parents value additional input given to inspire high achieving pupils and praised the compassionate and practical academic support given for those who found themselves in vulnerable situations during the pandemic, stating that, 'the school could not have done any more to help.'

Pupils feel safe, enjoy their learning, and know where to access help in school if they are struggling. Pupils are very well-behaved and polite, and older children show care and consideration of those in younger years. Instances of bullying are rare and, if they do occur, are dealt with via a therapeutic approach based upon reflection and positive reinforcement of pro-social behaviours, to encourage pupils to 'shine'. The appointment of a full-time pupil/parent support assistant has galvanized positive home-school relationships. Senior leaders ensured that all pupils and adults were provided for socially, emotionally, financially, and academically during the pandemic shining as a beacon of 'light' and hope in difficult times. As a result of effective channels of communication between the school and its governing body, governors articulate in detail how the school supported whole families to flourish despite the difficulties they faced during the pandemic. Parents speak positively about the high level of personalised support offered for whole families in lockdowns, including daily welfare calls. The school promotes a range of charitable activities and uses collective worship to highlight local, national, and global issues requiring action. Whilst pupils enjoy contributing towards and volunteering for activities that enable them to grow in self-confidence and to shine, there are comparatively few pupil-initiated acts of courageous advocacy to serve others outside their own school community.

RE has a prominent place within the curriculum and the school has created their own integrated scheme of work based upon the locally agreed syllabus. The RE curriculum enables pupils to focus upon key religious concepts from multiple perspectives and to compare religions within one unit of learning. Pupils are generally enthused by RE and talk about how it helps them to think about people of other faiths and to consider divergence of religious thought. As a result, pupils speak about different cultures and traditions, and how their knowledge of these promotes understanding, acceptance, and respect of others. Pupils are also able to make their own life choices

and find their place in the world in the safe and non-judgmental space provided. Experiential learning enables pupils to discover practical aspects of traditions and festivals, encouraging empathy. While there is provision for the spiritual development of pupils within the RE curriculum, staff do not have a deep understanding of spirituality within the context of being a church school.

Collective worship has been adapted since the pandemic to ensure safe, age-appropriate, and relevant provision for Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils and parents appreciate the opportunity given to access collective worship remotely during lockdowns to support their spiritual flourishing. Pupils consider the changes made to collective worship in school since the pandemic as being positive and more inclusive. Some collective worship is delivered outside as part of forest school provision and pupils say that they enjoy the time they have to reflect surrounded by God’s creation. Worship is led by different members of the school community, including the local vicar and pupils. Pupils are given the opportunity to become worship leaders, which they see as a clear expression of the school’s vision and a way to encourage ‘respect for God and for the people in the room’. Pupils are regularly invited to say the school prayer and to reflect upon the topic of the day and stories from the Bible. A weekly family assembly celebrates achievements according to the school’s vision and the focus value of the half term. This gives pupils an opportunity to celebrate their talents and the talents of others on a regular basis, enabling them to let their ‘light shine’.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	18 November 2021	URN	117415
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2015		
School status	Voluntary Controlled	NOR	207
Diocese	Diocese of St Alban’s		
Headteacher	Natalie Ranson		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Inspector’s name	Caroline Vinall	Number	N/A