

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ford End Church of England VC Primary School

Address Main Road, Ford End, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 1LQ

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

Hope and a Future - Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you: plans to give you hope and a future."

Key findings

- The strongly Christian vision and associated values are understood by all. They have tangible impact on adults and pupils, enabling them to flourish.
- Beneficial and wide-ranging collaborative partnerships enable staff to provide exceptional care for pupils' progress and character development.
- Pupils (including those sensitively identified as vulnerable) are welcomed, valued and nurtured with highly-impactful and tailored support. They celebrate difference with a developed sense of compassion, but have limited opportunity to proactively engage with social action.
- Collective worship is well-resourced and valued by all, and key messages have an impact on the daily lives of pupils. Pupils are not yet, however, fully involved in the planning, delivery or evaluation of worship.
- Religious education (RE) is well-planned, constructed and resourced, enabling pupils to experience a variety of engaging activities and to ask meaningful and personal questions. As it is still very new, the curriculum is not yet fully embedded. The assessment process is still in its infancy and its impact cannot yet be measured.

Areas for development

- Increase opportunities for all pupils to be involved in identifying and taking action in order to develop their understanding of social justice.
- Develop further leadership roles for pupils within collective worship, so that pupils have a greater sense of their own spirituality and understanding of worship.
- Continue to develop and embed the new RE curriculum and assessment opportunities in order to strengthen pupils' understanding of deeper theological ideas and concepts and to allow them to flourish further.

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 vision is distinctively Christian and is quietly and purposefully lived out through the interactions of pupils, staff and the school community. Pupils and staff reflect on its meaning as the foundation of the school's ethos. Pupils understand the vision and its origin from Jeremiah. Leaders confidently express the theological basis of the school's vision and how it links with the Church of England's Vision for Education. The vision and associated values are expressed clearly through the school's positive working relationships with the diocese, Life Education Multi Academy Trust (MAT), local schools and local community. The school also has a sustained working relationship with local churches, providing additional support in school for pupils to develop their experience of spirituality. These partnerships provide good opportunities for professional training, collaboration between schools and the development of a joint creative curriculum. Staff speak highly of the benefit of staff training and the investment given for core subjects. The vision is also expressed through charitable links with the local food bank and homeless shelter to bring hope and a future to those in the community. The school vision and associated values are interwoven throughout the school's development plan. The MAT's quality assurance of the school's self-evaluation is robust. Governors' reports make clear references to the school vision. RE and collective worship are given priority in the school, and are led by experienced members of the senior leadership.

The curriculum design enables staff to tailor teaching and learning to meet the individual needs of pupils. Lessons are engaging and incorporate a wide range of learning styles and teaching methodology. Support and resources from the MAT enable staff to be creative in their approach. The school actively supports pupils and families, providing a nurturing school community that respects the dignity of all. The aim of the school is to be a sanctuary in which children feel safe and secure. Pupils talk freely about their problems and express that there is always someone they can talk to. Staff amend lesson plans, to respond to local and national events, as well as to be responsive to unplanned questions. Identification of, and planning for, vulnerable pupils is comprehensive and pupils show considerable compassion towards one another. The school is aware of pupils' needs and time is given to support pupils to understand key concepts, relating abstract ideas to real scenarios and situations. Pupils, who have joined the school with significant behavioural or emotional difficulties, have been supported and nurtured to become self-regulating and successful members of the school community. Children speak politely and are proud of their school. One pupil commented that adults "help us to solve problems, rather than tell us what to do." The vision has a clear impact on the school's approach toward supporting pupils with special education or additional needs. Parents and carers speak very highly of the school's care and compassion for all pupils, regardless of their level of need. Pupils are able to experience faith and spirituality, but the school does not currently have a clear definition of spiritual development.

Children understand the importance of charitable generosity and why particular charities have been chosen by the school. They speak well of the ways to respond to social problems, with particular reference to the Foodbank and homeless shelter. However, they have limited opportunities to engage in action to stop the inequality or challenge the injustice. Pupils interact with others respectfully and listen to one another's contributions well, and demonstrate tolerance of differing views. Staff have shown sustained care for pupils throughout the pandemic and parents speak well of how the school community lives out the school's Christian values, "The school was our port in the storm. They really cared for us." Pupils and staff demonstrate empathy towards others and describe their concern for others out of heartfelt compassion, rather than pity. In free time and around the school, pupils also show genuine care for one another and have extra-curricular opportunities to "let off steam" as well as use the prayer area to calm down and reflect. Pupils confirm strongly that they are given support, time and space for conversation about concerns, leading to meaningful restorative justice. Pupils are seen to readily offer forgiveness for mistakes. In support of the vision, the school leadership has employed a part-time counsellor to support pupils to develop their understanding of their emotions and learn strategies to look after themselves and offer others support.

In line with the school's vision, collective worship is aspirational and pupils engage well with Biblical stories and their meanings. There is an invitational approach to all aspects of collective worship, with staff and pupils expressing their joy in singing worshipfully together again. Aspects of Anglican tradition, including liturgy and artefacts, as well as opportunities for reflection and prayer enable pupils to appreciate different expressions of worship. One pupil commented "we don't have to pray, but I enjoy it, so I join in." Stillness is a welcome and appreciated aspect of collective worship. Acts of worship, planned by the MAT, provide support for staff and visiting members of clergy with clear themes, biblical passages and questions. Pupils celebrate diversity

through explicit international links and celebrations. Pupils enjoy collective worship and are keen to be more involved in the planning and leadership of worship. Pupils speak knowledgeably about key biblical figures, but did not always link this understanding to the life and teaching of Jesus.

RE is a core subject and is given priority through the time allocated, funding and strategic analysis by leaders. Teachers have access to relevant resources and stimuli to engage pupils well. The school has recently introduced a tailor-made RE curriculum, enabling pupils to develop their religious literacy, understanding of philosophy and gain insight into social sciences. Staff receive regular training in the new RE curriculum although the assessment process is not yet fully embedded. The curriculum builds on prior learning, such as pupils in Year 2 learning about the creation story from Genesis, and pupils in Year 5 using this to explore the impact of faith in art and music. Pupils speak about their enjoyment of learning about world religions, alongside Christianity. One pupil commented that “we learn about how we are different and how that difference can be valued.” Pupils show a clear understanding of how their learning in RE supports them to understand and respect other people. The school embraces religious festivals, offering pupils the opportunity to explore these in depth.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	10 November 2021	URN	148210
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2014		
School status	Academy Primary School inspected as VC	NOR	68
Name of MAT/Federation	LIFE Education Trust		
Diocese	Chelmsford		
Executive Headteacher / Head of School	Maire O'Regan / Sarah Cottee		
Pupil profile	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.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The school became an academy in December 2020. The Executive Headteacher was appointed in September 2021. The former Deputy Headteacher was promoted to Head of School in January 2021.		
Inspector's name	Matthew Harris	No.	C161720