



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Marshland St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address School Road, Marshland St James, Wisbech, PE14 8EY

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

Requires improvement

School's vision

"Believing, Belonging, Being"

"Be strong and be courageous, all you who hope in the Lord" Psalm 31:24

We aim to nurture children's ambitions within a loving, safe and secure environment; encouraging courageous learning, developing self-belief and supporting pupils as compassionate, tolerant and respectful members of society. Everyone acquires the knowledge and skills to make sense of an ever-changing world within the love of our Church school family.

Key findings

- In line with its vision for everyone to 'belong', the school is inclusive and welcoming to all pupils and their families. This is valued highly by the community it serves.
- Leaders, including governors, are committed to continuously improving the school for the benefit of all. Although the vision is used to drive this forward, formal monitoring of the impact of actions taken is not fully embedded.
- The curriculum is creatively designed to provide opportunities for pupils to be ambitious learners, developing self-belief, high aspirations and pride in their achievements.
- Collective worship promotes the vision and associated mission statement 'believing, belonging, being'. Opportunities for prayer, and reflection are sometimes limited. Pupils do not always understand the significance of this special time in the school day and so do not benefit from it.
- Religious education (RE) is well taught through the Emmanuel Project. Pupils' flourish in their learning. Their knowledge and understanding of Christianity is strong. It is less so for a wider range of religions and worldviews.

Areas for development

- Develop collective worship so that pupils and adults appreciate its significance, and it fully contributes to their spiritual development.
- Build on current good practice in RE so that pupils' knowledge and understanding of a wider range of religions and world views is as strong as it is for Christianity.
- Put in place formal procedures so that leaders, including governors and pupils, are more involved with planning and evaluating collective worship and RE.

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

Marshland School is deeply rooted in the community it serves. It is a focus for village life and is highly regarded as a result. The vision and associated mission statement have been developed to reflect its well-established position in the local area. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, all are encouraged to live these daily. Displays around the school remind pupils and adults of what it means to be part of the school and promote the high expectations modelled by the headteacher. Behaviour is exemplary as a result. Pupils know the vision and talk of believing in themselves, doing well and fulfilling their hopes for the future. They know staff will help them achieve this within the safe and nurturing environment created by the outworking of the vision. If, as rarely happens, difficulties arise, pupils are confident that staff will listen and help resolve them. Relationships are a strength, built on mutual trust. Staff and pupils feel valued and flourish as a result. Sustaining positive mental health is important to leaders, and a range of strategies are available to support this.

All are welcome to 'belong' and are nurtured to succeed. When new pupils join, parents speak warmly of how staff 'go the extra mile' to make sure that they are happy and settled. Some families choose the school because they hear of the kindness and respect received by others. Parents praise the accessibility of staff, and know that if they have concerns, these will be listened to. During the pandemic, the school's continuing support through phone calls and practical help was greatly appreciated.

Leaders, including governors, are committed to helping all to flourish. Governors understand what the school means to the community and provide an important link between the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT) and the school. They are proud of what pupils and staff achieve, and work with the trust to ensure that priorities are met. Governors' meetings include discussions around church school distinctiveness, and the vision is referred to when making decisions. The impact of this is not always evaluated. Although governors are active in the school, formal monitoring of collective worship and RE are not yet in place.

Links with the local Methodist church are strong and are important to both the school and congregation. Pupils take part in activities such as the children's club. Club leaders comment on the behaviour of the children, as evidence of how they live out the vision beyond the school. As there is no Anglican church in the village, the school has on occasions, been 'the church'. Services for the community are held in the hall and clergy from Anglican and Methodist denominations participate and lead. This contributes to pupils' experience of different styles of worship. The school benefits from the support of the wider Anglican church through links with the Diocese of Ely.

Pupils see themselves as agents for positive change. Global and local issues matter to them. These are debated as part of the curriculum, but pupils turn them into action. They have strong views on the use of plastic and challenge the school to improve its re-cycling and carbon footprint. Pupils enjoy raising funds for causes such as Children in Need and understand this as part of their mission to 'help others live better lives'. Prior to the pandemic, they regularly visited a local care home. This was a way to 'show care and compassion' and they look forward to this happening again.

Collective worship is planned as a mix of class based and whole school activities. It re-enforces the vision and values and how to live by them. Bible stories are shared which pupils enjoy listening to. Collective worship is not yet good because whilst there are opportunities for prayer and reflection, this is not yet a natural part of all acts of worship. As a result, pupils are not clear of their value and how they can be useful to them. The use of liturgies or strategies to invite pupils to stillness so that they can be part of a distinct and special time are not consistent. Pupils are not able to talk about the difference collective worship makes to them and so the impact it has on their spiritual development is not clear. Some monitoring has taken place, but this is not robust enough to lead to positive change. Pupils are not yet

part of the planning and evaluation of collective worship. They value opportunities to take part, and love to sing worship songs.

Marshland is recognised as a leader in curriculum development within DEMAT. The headteacher and staff share their good practice across the trust. The curriculum has been creatively planned, capitalising on the strengths of being a small school. This means that the needs of individuals are constantly reviewed and pupils flourish as a result. They are courageous learners who are not afraid to fail. They know that this will be seen positively, helping them succeed in future. Asking big questions is integral to lessons across the curriculum. Pupils listen carefully to the views of others and learn to respectfully disagree. Although this supports their understanding of ethical and moral issues, there is not yet a shared understanding of spiritual development across the curriculum. This means that opportunities for spiritual growth can be missed.

RE has a high priority. The introduction of the Emmanuel Project has had a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of RE. They learn through creative approaches that capture their interest and challenge them. Their knowledge of Christianity is strong and they are beginning to develop a better understanding of world religions and views. Prior to the pandemic, the school had links with a multi-cultural school in an inner-city area. This supported pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. They respect difference and say that everyone is equally important within the school, surrounding community and the wider world.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	15 March 2022	URN	142057
Date of previous inspection	14 October 2014		
School status	Voluntary controlled academy converter primary school	NOR	109
Name of MAT	Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust		
Diocese	Ely		
Headteacher	Sarah Durrant		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The school has been part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust since 2015.		
Inspector's name	Rachel Beeson	No.	952