

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Roxwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address The Street, Roxwell, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4PE

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

Discovering a world of possibilities together
'All things are possible to those who believe' (Mark 9:23)
Values: courageous optimism, boundless creativity, heartfelt compassion.

Key findings

- Membership of the Life Education Trust (LIFE) is enabling subject leaders to share expertise and maximise the value of their skills and knowledge across all the trust's rural schools. The new religious education (RE) curriculum is a good example of this, although its recent introduction has meant there has been insufficient time to yet measure its impact upon pupil achievements.
- The school has a new and distinctive Christian vision that is clear and very well understood by all members of its community. The pandemic provides many opportunities for the school to demonstrate the impact of this in action and to build a closer relationship with the local community.
- There is a strong welcoming ethos where all children are valued equally and treated with dignity and respect. The school makes strong efforts to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to flourish, and makes wellbeing a high priority for all members of its community.
- Collective worship is inclusive and inspirational. The local church community is regularly involved, providing support and encouragement. The pandemic limits the interaction pupils can have with visitors but the school has plans in place to introduce a wider variety of worship leaders as soon as they are able to.
- Curriculum planning for RE is thorough and effective, supporting teachers to produce lessons of a high standard. Pupils are regularly asked to reflect and then offer their opinions, and work in RE is of a high standard.
- The many very positive changes in the school are mostly relatively recent, and further time and evaluation is needed to ensure they are becoming effective and embedded.

Areas for development

- To raise pupil achievements so that they routinely surpass expectations, by making full use of available adult expertise across the school and trust.
- To review curriculum planning and provision in RE in order to ensure that the newly-designed curriculum is enabling all staff to regularly deliver inspirational lessons that make a difference to pupils' lives.

- To enhance the pupils' learning and cultural experiences by arranging visits to alternative places of worship, and bringing leaders of other faiths and denominations to talk to them. This will make learning more meaningful and memorable for pupils, and improve their understanding of other faiths.

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

Roxwell Primary has undergone considerable change since academisation in 2019 when it joined LIFE and appointed a new senior leadership team. They successfully prioritise rebuilding relationships with the local community, embedding their new vision and lifting the quality of teaching and learning. The school has been able to rebuild a strong and mutually supportive relationship with the local and church communities. LIFE provides considerable support for all aspects of school governance and leadership, and opportunities for pupils to work together in different schools. It provides expertise in school improvement and governance, and co-ordinates effective use of subject expertise across the trust. It also funds the development of school leaders. The impact of this collaboration can be seen in staff and the additional opportunities pupils and staff have. Members of many different groups in the school community speak about the commitment and professionalism of the school staff, and the impact of their work with pupils. The vision is very effective at ensuring all members of the school community flourish. The school's values are an essential part of their distinctive Christian vision, and are familiar to and understood by all members of the community. As a result of the pandemic heartfelt compassion is demonstrated in many ways, including offering practical support and friendship to vulnerable members of the community during lockdowns. It is seen in the high value being given to staff and pupil wellbeing, and commitment to charitable work. Parents and governors speak about valuing the dedication and creativity of the executive and assistant headteachers. They recognise the impact of the vision being demonstrated through their compassion and creativity when addressing the school's needs. The school's governing body is well informed, with an accurate understanding of the school's position, and the areas chosen for further development. Governors fulfil their monitoring role effectively, and provide appropriate expertise, support and challenge. As a result of the school's vision, pupils are well behaved and polite, and have a positive attitude towards their learning. They speak confidently about the school's vision and values, and as a result are optimistic and enthusiastic when discussing how they can make a difference with global issues. They support many charities and good causes, including collecting for the Chelmsford food bank. With diocesan support, they consider wider global issues carefully, by participating in The Walk for Amal (highlighting the needs of refugees) and through close links with a school in Kenya. Parents and the community speak of holding the school in high regard, and for the first time since academisation its intake has been oversubscribed. Parents speak of pupils 'always talking about the school's values', and their confidence that the pupils 'can speak safely to any member of staff'. In line with their values and vision, school leaders demonstrate compassion and creativity, as one parent said, 'finding solutions to challenges that change pupils' lives'. The school manages to retain a close and mutually supportive relationship with the church despite the challenges of the pandemic. Pupil visits to Chelmsford and Saint Paul's cathedrals have enhanced their understanding of the Anglican church beyond their parish. The church worship group regularly supports the school with advice and by leading collective worship, while the school has ongoing involvement in the maintenance and improvement of the village church. Pupils raise money to support local church projects (helping to repair the church roof) and are developing a wildlife area in the church grounds. As a result of this close relationship, pupils meet local clergy develop their understanding of traditions and practices in the Anglican church. The RE lead works closely with the diocesan advisor for RE. She wrote and is introducing new schemes for teaching and assessment in RE across all four rural primaries in the trust. These are based upon the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus. Planning uses both the Understanding Christianity resources and additional material to ensure pupils have a good understanding of their own and other world religions. RE teaching successfully reinforces the school's vision and values. It allows pupils to explore and discuss the vision and values within their classes, and to develop learning and life skills which are directly linked to the vision. The pandemic makes it difficult to enhance pupils' learning with visits to other places of worship or to providing speakers from other faiths and denominations. The school has identified this need in its development planning.

The school has effective strategies in place to support pupils' mental health. A trainee social worker has been helping them to support pupils during the pandemic, leading with projects designed to improve confidence and help pupils cope with anxiety (Project ME). The school continues to prioritise support for pupils' mental health, and has a mental health nurse and a counsellor among its staff. Pupil attendance is now above normal national expectations despite the specific challenges to this caused by the pandemic. To achieve this the school closely monitors attendance, writes regularly to parents and uses direct and prompt interventions when appropriate. The school carefully monitors learning to ensure that all groups, including the vulnerable and those with special educational needs or disabilities, are flourishing. Their use of intervention strategies and ensuring that all pupils flourish is a good demonstration of the school's values of creativity and compassion. As well as good provision of one-to-one learning support assistants, school leaders search creatively for specific stimuli to meet the needs of special needs. There is a school horse for pupils to ride, groom and even read to when these help them. The school offers support to other local schools as part of its membership of the trust. The executive headteacher is responsible for three of these schools and the RE lead leads her subject across four. The expertise of subject leaders is increasingly being used across several schools, which has a positive impact upon standards of both teaching and learning. As more rigorous testing, monitoring and review is possible, school leaders will be able to review the success of this, and this is identified in their development planning. Pupils' spirituality is developed in many ways. Prayers and reflection happen regularly in class and collective worship. There are a number of specific spaces around the school where pupils sit and reflect, think or pray as they feel the need. Collective worship is inspirational, and several parents speak of their children talking enthusiastically about the themes, values and vision when they go home. No children are withdrawn from worship or RE, although parents are told about their rights to do so, and support is provided to ensure that all children are able to participate. This reinforces the school vision and ensures all pupils participate in exploring, developing and accepting the values associated with it. Thorough planning, records and monitoring clearly show that collective worship is regularly both inspirational and invitational. It is a key method used by the school to explain and enlarge upon the school's values. Collective worship is enhanced by support from the church worship group, which includes the rector. Pupils are invited to adopt and write prayers, and can sing in the choir if they wish. Older children can also choose to take larger roles involving leading collective worship on occasion, or supporting leaders. All pupils lead regular worship in the church when this is possible. Prayers around the school are personal and meaningful, and reflect individual commitment.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	1 March 2022	URN	147444
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2015		
School status	Academy inspected as voluntary controlled	NOR	77
Name of MAT/Federation	Life Education Trust		
Diocese	Chelmsford		
Headteacher	Maire O'Regan		
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.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Stephen Green	No.	809