

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Hilgay Riverside Academy</b>	
Address	Church View, Hilgay, PE38 0JL
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	Excellent

School's vision
<p>Opportunity, Challenge, Respect</p> <p>Like the parable of the mustard seed, our children grow from tiny seeds into the greatest of trees. We provide our children with the opportunity to grow; we deliver the challenge they need to become valuable members of the Christian community; we build respect for God's world and each other.</p> <p>Matthew 13:31-32</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Christian vision is deeply embedded. It is well known by the school community and a key driver for school improvement and strategic decision making.</li> <li>• Leadership at all levels of this small, rural primary school is strong. Every child and family is well known by staff and the focus is on meeting the needs of each individual child.</li> <li>• Aspiration and ambition are demonstrated by Christian vision and the school's curriculum choices. Currently there are not enough opportunities to widen horizons and develop a global outlook.</li> <li>• Collective worship is well planned, engaging and inspirational. Opportunities for reflection enable the pupils to make connections to their lives and learning. Pupils' understanding of spirituality would be deepened by more opportunities for spiritual development.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is carefully planned to cover Christianity as well as world religions and beliefs within mixed age classes. Pupils experience local places of worship. However relationships between the new vicar and the school community are not yet sufficiently strong.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on pupils' experience of the world and the rich curriculum they are offered. This is so they extend understanding of religious beliefs.</li> <li>• Extend and enhance opportunities for spirituality across the curriculum. This is so pupils can develop their vocabulary and understanding of spiritual development, enabling them to flourish.</li> <li>• Further develop the relationship between the school and the newly appointed vicar. This is to enhance the already positive links between the school and the community.</li> </ul>



## Inspection findings

Opportunity, challenge and respect underpin the aspirational Christian vision of this good Church school. It embodies the vision of a mustard seed planted and enabling pupils and adults to grow. Well-established and understood by the pupils, staff and community, the vision drives the rapid improvement of this small, rural school. Consequently, pupils are confident, motivated to widen their horizons and supported to develop harmonious relationships and flourish.

The headteacher's leadership has a positive impact, promoting the Christian vision to all. Significant innovations, including 'vision days' ensure the distinctive vision is clarified and shared across the school community. Partnerships are strong, including good links with the local village community, churches and the federated school. Leaders ensure these relationships are maintained even during a vacancy. Services for Harvest and Remembrance and good links with the Methodist Church enable pupils to feel part of the wider Christian community. However consolidating relationships with the new vicar would be beneficial. Leaders are aware of the isolation of this village school. Governors and the Trust, support wise decisions, informed by the vision. These include changes to RE and improved opportunities to extend pupils cultural awareness. The federation partnership enables the sharing of subject leadership, resources and educational visits across schools. It provides support for pupils, staff and leaders and offers the chance to share workload, therefore enhancing wellbeing. Parents, families and the community are very supportive of the work of the school. Relationships throughout the school are welcoming, kind and respectful.

Pupils are interested in their learning and make good progress. The Christian vision drives aspiration so they develop wisdom, knowledge and skills for life. The curriculum encourages pupils to be inquisitive and curious, acting for this isolated community as 'a window on the outside world'. However, more opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons would improve their experience and understanding of the world. The vision, embedded in the school's culture, is at the heart of planning, teaching and subsequent learning. Skilled staff support and enhance learning experiences so pupils are challenged and thrive. Pupils ask probing questions in discussions, such as 'Did God have any struggles when becoming human?'. The curriculum encourages ambition, enabling pupils, including the most able, to respond positively and flourish. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported to broaden their horizons and achieve their best. Family learning cafes are valued by parents, who share learning with their children on a range of topics such as reading.

Reflection areas have been developed in classrooms which include Christian symbols and the opportunity for children's written prayers to be created. Pupils value the opportunity to use the areas for thought and reflection. This provision is beginning to be developed in the outside environment. Collective worship offers pupils and adults opportunity for spiritual experiences and time to pray, think and reflect. Opportunities for spiritual development are not yet embedded across the curriculum for pupils to develop spiritual vocabulary and discuss experiences. Children are provided with opportunities to experience wonder and awe during the curriculum which are beginning to be mapped.

This is a local village school with which many families have a long association, some travelling from out of catchment. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. The friendly, family atmosphere is valued and parents praise the support and encouragement for individuals as 'every child is known'. Christian values including justice and compassion, arise from the vision which permeates school life. During the pandemic leaders offered practical and emotional support, from welfare calls and advice to virtual worship. Staff actively promote



good mental health, helping pupils overcome anxieties and develop positive coping strategies. Consistent strategies and a specifically taught behaviour curriculum have impact. Behaviour is underpinned by the golden rules of respect for oneself, respect for others and respect for the world around them. Pupils are considerate and caring and allowed opportunities to nurture and encourage younger students. They know how to reconcile after disagreements, stay safe on and off line, and that bullying in all forms is unacceptable.

Pupils have a sense of social justice and want to bring hope and make a difference to the world. They are enthusiastic supporters of both national and local charities including the food bank. To develop pupils' appreciation of diversity in society, the school designs cultural opportunities within the curriculum. To support aspiration a popular 'Girl Up' club has been established which allows girls to discuss gender and news issues. This example of courageous advocacy has given girls the confidence to speak about relationships and aspirations. Adults compassionately support all pupils, accepting and embracing needs and difference. Class 'vision books' compile examples of the distinctive vision in practice, from educational visits and visitors to environmental work. Pupils' response to an environmental project led to a litter picking day and village recycling scheme.

Collective worship is inspiring, invitational and inclusive, supported by pupil worship ambassadors. Carefully planned, using Christian values, the worship themes and materials mean that it is understood and relevant to the lives of pupils. Memorable and highly valued, worship enthuses all. There is clear structure and routine, with opportunities for prayer and reflection. Christian symbols such as candles and a cross are prominent. Worship ambassadors are positively engaged and at the forefront of leading worship. Visiting the local church for seasonal celebrations, worship and as a historical resource creates a sense of awe and wonder for pupils. The growing links between the school and the church are important to both, but would benefit from further development. Adults collaborate to lead worship that is creative and biblically based. Leading worship is considered a privilege and pupils are respectful, responsive and reflective. Class worship tables include models and artwork illustrating the Christian vision and encourage moments of reflection. One pupil explained 'We are mustard seeds and are watered with opportunities at this school'.

A creative and engaging RE curriculum has been enthusiastically implemented by the staff. RE is well planned, engaging and given sufficient curriculum time. It balances the teaching of Christianity with world faiths. The RE scheme engages the pupils and demands a range of responses which means all pupils can succeed. RE folders demonstrate thoughtfulness from the pupils about their learning and pupils make links across the curriculum. One pupil commented that the church pulpit was decorated in a rococo style, which they had learnt about in art. Pupils are proud of their work and enjoy the many opportunities for creativity. Assessment ensures pupils understand their learning and make progress. However, improved provision of diverse cultural experiences would enrich pupils' appreciation of world religions and beliefs further.



Information			
School	Hilgay Riverside Academy	Inspection date	1 December 2022
URN	142526	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Ely	Pupils on roll	54
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust		
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Turner		
Chair of Governors	Clive Jeffries		
Inspector	Lynne Golding	No.	2124