

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

<b>Ely St Mary's Church of England Junior School</b>	
Address	High Barns, Ely, CB7 4RB
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	Excellent
The impact of collective worship	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Excellent

School's vision
<p>To ensure that children of all faiths and none can be the best that they can be, in an environment where everyone is valued, respected and challenged. In our school, individuals are supported in their personal journey of learning, growth and development, within an ethos of nurture, encouragement and love.</p> <p>Hebrews 10:24. Let us think about each other and help each other to show love and do good deeds.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Christian vision has created a deeply nurturing community. It transforms lives by inspiring all to 'be the best that they can be'.</li> <li>• Spiritual development is an intrinsic part of the school's aspirational and inspirational curriculum. Pupils reflect and speak openly about their own views and values.</li> <li>• As courageous advocates of change, pupils actively support those who face challenges in life. They 'think about each other and help each other to show love' when faced with injustice. This has a profound impact on the school community.</li> <li>• The very strong relationship between the local church and school deeply enriches collective worship and the religious distinctiveness of the school. Collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring and is at the heart of the school community.</li> <li>• The exceptionally well-led religious education (RE) curriculum inspires pupils to learn in depth about the diversity of religions and worldviews. They flourish because the needs of all are met through the fully inclusive and aspirational ethos of the school.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepen and expand the school's evaluation system for collective worship, so that it leads to the further development of pupils' independent roles.</li> <li>• Enhance the existing community work of pupils through opportunities for them to champion their own causes within sustained partnerships. This is so that their acts of courageous advocacy impact beyond the local area, challenging wider global issues.</li> </ul>



## Inspection findings

Ely St Mary's vision, rooted in its biblical message, is embedded within all policies and drives all school actions. It transforms lives and enables the entire school community to flourish. The headteacher inspires all to be the best that they can be; determined that no one is limited by ability or circumstance. Governors and the trust closely monitor how the school lives out its vision to ensure it drives all thoughts and discussions. The partnership between the school and local church enriches both. Their sense of purpose being deeply Christian for the common good. Leaders have ensured that staff are well supported in their Church school roles through highly effective training from the diocese. Staff also benefit from networking opportunities provided by the trust, when they share and build upon their excellent practice.

The school has developed a knowledge-rich curriculum with meaningful planned opportunities for spiritual growth within all subjects. The spirituality of pupils is richly developed throughout the innovative curriculum. Deeply reflective opportunities to reflect upon the awe and wonder in the natural world enhances spiritual flourishing. This contributes towards their development as courageous advocates when they learn of the environmental impact humans are having upon the world. Some pupils need more support and nurture to develop their sense of self-worth and enable them to flourish. Time spent with staff who are trained to support mental health equips pupils with essential tools such as resilience and resourcefulness. In their quest to improve social mobility, leaders ensure that the curriculum is aspirational and inspirational. Pupils study a diverse range of key figures across the curriculum, complemented by inspirational visitors to the school. In considering the challenges and injustices that people face, pupils benefit from the chance to evaluate what matters to them. This well-developed curriculum is rooted within the needs of the school community and underpinned by the school's vision. It is designed to transform pupils' lives through its holistic approach, including the spiritual and ethical dimensions. This gives learning a meaningful context and leads to achievements that surpass those expected.

During lockdowns, pupils and their families were reassured that although the world had changed, school provided exceptional stability. Staff exemplified the biblical roots of the vision in helping and caring for others and doing good deeds. The wider community of pupils, staff and families found online collective worship gave them comfort and was a source of hope. Pupils continued to flourish despite the challenging time because of staff commitment. They continue to go above and beyond their usual roles to ensure that no-one is left behind in terms of their wellbeing or learning.

Ely St Mary's is a fully inclusive school that finds innovative ways to ensure that every pupil flourishes. The proportion of vulnerable pupils, including those considered disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) is above national averages. The school community strives for equity of provision so that everyone gets what they need to achieve their full potential. Staff assess the needs of the individual so that each one is equipped to live the fullness of life. The highly skilled staff are able to support pupils and families because of their excellent professional development.


Ely St Mary's values permeate through the school. Pupils actively live out their vision and its associated values of responsibility, excellence, spirituality, perseverance, energy, caring and tolerance. They accept and celebrate difference. Values underpin the behaviours of pupils and adults. Respectfully they support every child to be the best they can be, using a restorative approach if things go wrong. The school's vision and associated values also guide pupils when they consider how to raise awareness of diversity or challenge injustice. Recently pupils have been courageous advocates in raising neuro-diversity awareness within their community. It involved sensitively sharing stories about their own journey or those of



others. They celebrate the richness experienced by living within a diverse community. When pupils recognise injustice or wish to raise local awareness, their school council supports action. Recent responses have been collecting for the local foodbank and raising money to support Ukraine. Most courageous advocacy focuses on the community. Pupils are well-informed about injustices beyond their community. They have not yet championed their own cause in a sustained partnership, when challenging wider global issues.

The school's vision and associated values are relevant and significant to those of any religious faith or none. Consequently, no pupils are withdrawn from worship. Worship is inclusive and invitational so that pupils engage on the level that is right for them. The collective worship lead inspires the school community through planning a varied worship programme and enabling staff to play their part in its delivery. She is also a gifted musician who further inspires the school and church community in the songs of worship that she writes. Adults and pupils value the deeply reflective discussions of meditative worship. There is a rich culture of deep and meaningful reflection, often expressed in prayer. Prayer is deeply valued by the school. The school prayer and those prayers written by pupils provide profound moments of reflection which enhances pupils' and adults' spirituality. Pupils are involved in planning and leading worship in the Altogether Club, which is so popular that a rota is in place. The relationship between members of St Mary's Church and the school is a strength of both organisations. It creates a mutually beneficial sense of wholeness for the entire community. Members of the church are regular visitors in school, leading worship as well as supporting staff on their own spiritual and religious journeys. The school is welcomed into church for Christian festivals where a sense of joyful celebration is tangible. A fully inclusive evaluation process for collective worship is in place. It supports leaders to monitor its impact and gain a sense of how it is an expression of the school's vision. Further depth and expansion would develop pupils' independent roles within worship and enhance this exemplary practice. Worship contributes to the spiritual growth of the community as they are continually drawn to reflect on the mystery of life.

Strong leadership of RE ensures all teachers have the expertise to teach RE to an excellent standard. The RE lead has resourced the subject well so that the curriculum is engaging and pupils flourish. World faiths and worldviews are taught through theology, philosophy and human sciences providing a cohesive and transformational curriculum. Pupils at Ely St Mary's benefit from learning from one another when their religious faith is the half termly focus. They add more detail to class learning and recognise the value of learning from one another. This enquiry-based curriculum develops understanding and gives pupils opportunities to reflect upon their own religious and spiritual convictions in a safe space. It generates a depth of discussion, which develops pupils' excellent religious literacy. Assessment is not dependent upon literacy skills and is therefore a reliable indicator of all pupils' learning.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Excellent
	<p>The skilled RE lead has established an exceptionally well-planned and inspiring curriculum. This ensures that teachers teach the subject well, with a high level of expertise. Engaging and thought-provoking lessons are a strikingly normal feature of the way in which pupils learn. They benefit from learning within a safe and respectful environment, where they develop the skills to fully and deeply think for themselves. This contributes towards progress exceeding expectations. Assessment accurately shows that all pupils including those with SEND, make excellent progress.</p>		
Information			
School	Ely St Mary's Church of England Junior School	Inspection date	9 December 2022
URN	141707	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Ely	Pupils on roll	284
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Rachel Clarke		
Chair of Governors	Clive Jeffries		
Inspector	Christina Galletly	No.	975