

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

<b>Wethersfield Church of England VC Primary School</b>	
Address	Silver Street, Wethersfield, CM7 4BP
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
<p>Every child, Every chance, Every day.</p> <p>My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ( John 15:12)</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong and determined leadership ensures this school's Christian vision shines through its life and work. Much has been achieved in a considerable short time to make a demonstrable impact on pupils' flourishing, both academically and spiritually.</li> <li>• The school's strong Christian vision results in the investment of key relationships at all levels. This ensures all can flourish within a spirit of love, respect and trust.</li> <li>• Ambitious learning experiences broaden horizons, raising hope and aspiration for real life so pupils can look beyond their rural setting. However, there is potential for strengthening pupils' experience of cultural diversity beyond the local community.</li> <li>• The well-established strong partnership between church and school enriches the spiritual lives of both pupils and adults. However, pupil-led worship is in its infancy.</li> <li>• Pupils enjoy and are enthusiastic about their learning in religious education (RE). However, moderation of RE, sharing best practice, is at an early stage of development.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend occasions for all pupils to plan and lead collective worship in church and school. This is in order to deepen their personal and spiritual journeys.</li> <li>• Enable pupils to look beyond their rural community to enrich their experience and appreciation of cultural diversity.</li> <li>• Enhance the moderation of RE with other schools in the Chorus Schools Federation and beyond. This is to enable the sharing of good practice that supports the learning journeys of all pupils.</li> </ul>



## Inspection findings

A strong sense of joy and peace pervades this small, rural school. Inspired by the deeply rooted Christian vision, committed and courageous leadership ensure love and respect are built upon trust. Chosen to be the newest member of the Chorus Schools Federation, the whole community embarked on a new journey together. From the start of the year, there have been rapid and robust changes for good. These are embraced wholeheartedly by pupils, parents and staff. Much has been accomplished, making a significant impact on pupils' academic and personal development. Pastoral care for vulnerable pupils with special needs and /or disabilities (SEND) and for pupils from military families nurtures their learning journeys. This is evidence of the school's vision in action. Parents praise the way this school enables pupils to thrive, meeting their individual needs and abilities well. They speak highly of the approachable staff living out their vision with care and compassion. Vibrant newsletters ensure parents, as partners, can celebrate the school's achievements.

Leaders provide exemplary role models. They are well supported by a dedicated team of governors and the parish church. Leaders and governors effectively engage in planning and evaluating bold decisions, strategic direction and future pathways for the school. Diocesan support is valued. School staff actively embody 'working together'. Across the three schools they share expertise and support one another. The learning environment showcases the school's vision, with a strong focus on each pupil flourishing on their learning journey.

Jesus' command to love one another encourages good relationships at all levels within this cohesive community. Dignity and respect are afforded to all. Adults and pupils alike cite the school's vision, underpinned by love, earthed in John's gospel. This inclusive community lives well together, with pupils showing Christian values in action. They are welcoming to new members of the school family, extending the hand of friendship. The commitment to supporting staff wellbeing and self-esteem helps create a positive, caring and happy learning environment.

Ambitious learning experiences help to broaden horizons, raising hope and aspirations for real life. This is enabling pupils to look beyond their rural setting. For example, earlier this term, pupils were invited to be part of the exciting 222 million dreams project. Inspired to tackle injustice, pupils wrote and spoke of their dream for all children to have a right to education. Together with other local schools, they impressed the Foreign Secretary with their presentation. Pupils felt affirmed that their voice was important as he conveyed their thoughts to Parliament the next day. Such experiences encourage pupils so they can make a difference in the world as agents of change. The school has good links with Kobi Nazrul School in Whitechapel, whose pupils are predominately Muslim. Pre pandemic, the two schools met up for a local farm visit. In a spirit of respect, pupils were able to learn first-hand about Muslim beliefs. Strengthening such experiences helps pupils' awareness of cultural diversity beyond their local, rural context.

Drawing on a rich heritage, pupils' learning is enriched by extra-curricular activities, such as music, sport and art. The newly formed choir has grown in confidence and leads singing in collective worship. Music has the power to affirm and include those for whom other subjects might be a challenge. Pupils enjoy the 'Big Sing' workshops where they learn a variety of songs to perform for a wider audience. Alongside singing and music making, in the same week, pupils enjoy tennis. They also take part in Fairtrade fortnight. Such activities greatly support pupils' character development. Learning experiences extends to Forest School activities. Pupils take risks and try new skills, such as making ash for Ash Wednesday from a campfire. Above all, they enjoy their outdoor learning, with a strong sense of being part of

God's creation in nature. This nurtures their spiritual and personal development.

Inspiring and engaging collective worship brings the whole community together. Parents raised funds for iSingPop, a singing, performing and resourcing project for schools and churches. This enables significant, powerful services to be held in the village church for all the worshipping community. The parish church of St Mary Magdalene sees the school as part of its mission. Collective worship is 'front and centre' to all school life. Church and school work closely together on long term planning. With the vision as the bedrock, pupils and adults alike feel the school value of love and are held together. In this way collective worship is sustaining for all, nurturing spiritual growth. Key times in the Christian year are celebrated, such as Christingle and Lent. Pupils reflect on how they can bring light to others. They think about different pathways on their Lent journey, such as being in deepest darkness, drawing comfort from Psalm 23. This psalm is a reminder of God's presence at all times. A creative visual worship gallery reminds everyone of recent times celebrated and travelled together. Year 6 pupils enjoy writing their own prayers and leading and planning weekly worship. Flourishing is seen as a result of responses and thinking time. Pupils value the importance of 'making their own prayers in the silence'. However, currently pupils from other year groups do not share the leadership roles that older pupils experience. A shared worship and spirituality programme benefits all. Virtual worship helps bind all three schools together. Celebratory worship values pupils' achievements, both in school and in the local community. For example, one young bell-ringer featured on the local news network, encouraging others to try new skills at their local church.

Pupils enjoy and enthuse about their RE lessons. They ask big questions, reflect in a safe space and speak with pride about their learning. Pupils encounter a range of faith traditions. They have a deep knowledge of the Christian story and the saints. Staff new to teaching RE are growing in confidence and enjoyment, supported with relevant training and guidance. However, moderation of RE across the Chorus Schools Federation, sharing best practice, is not currently fully embedded.

At Wethersfield the love of God flows through everything and is lived out in everyday life, every day, so all flourish.

Information			
School	Wethersfield Church of England VC Primary School	Inspection date	10 March 2023
URN	115110	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Chelmsford	Pupils on roll	55
Executive headteacher	Jinnie Nichols		
Chair of Governors	Penny Doe		
Inspector	Elizabeth McWhirter	No.	244