

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

Empingham Church of England Primary School	
Address	School Lane, Empingham, Oakham, LE15 8PQ
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>Our vision inspires our core values and love towards others based on the life and teachings of Jesus. We work to encourage and demonstrate our core values. "Together, we RISE to the challenge". "Rise up and shine for your light has come." Isaiah 60:1</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outworking of the vision galvanises pupils and adults to 'rise up and shine'. The impact of this has been transformational for some families and staff. The curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for spiritual experiences. A new policy is in place to develop this, but it is not embedded. Pupils recognise and respect difference and diversity. It is promoted through opportunities across subject areas. Their knowledge and understanding of world faiths and worldviews is increasing through the religious education (RE) curriculum, but this is not always secure. Collective worship is a special time of the day which is enjoyed by pupils. The teachings of Jesus, Bible stories and the school's Christian values are reinforced consistently through worship. The school provides opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to their world through practical activities such as litter picking. However, their understanding of what courageous advocacy means, particularly as leaders of positive change, is not embedded.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote spiritual development through consistently planned opportunities for spiritual experiences across the curriculum. Develop pupils' wider understanding of difference and diversity in all its forms within the curriculum and beyond. This to include the study of world faiths and worldviews in RE. Strengthen pupils' understanding of courageous advocacy and increase opportunities for pupil leadership so that they can become agents of positive change.

Inspection findings

Empingham Church of England Primary School's vision for adults and pupils to 'rise up and shine for your light has come' drives decision making at all levels. It was carefully chosen by leaders and the local community so that it would reflect the context of the school. The associated motto 'Together we rise to the challenge' is widely understood and shared. The Bible verse on which the vision is based, Isaiah 60:1, is less well known and understood. Leaders are passionate that the vision is promoted so that it permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils and staff alike talk about how the school, as a result of the vision, provides them with positive life choices. It constantly raises their expectations of themselves and galvanises them into 'being the best they can be'. The vision is lived out practically through Christian values. Pupils, staff and parents talk positively about the impact of the six R's of resilience, responsibility, respectfulness, resourcefulness and being reflective and ready, which are key ingredients for being part of the Empingham school family.

Governance is strong and supportive of the school. Governors regularly conduct monitoring activities which impact on the school's ongoing strategic planning. Leaders will always ask, 'will this allow us to 'rise up and let our light shine?' when considering a course of action. The school is a member of Rutland Learning Trust (MAT) which provides challenge and support. In collaboration with the trust, leaders place pupils at the heart of all decision making. The partnerships with the Diocese of Peterborough and the MAT are mutually beneficial and effective.

Inclusion is a strength, and the school is acknowledged as welcoming. Pupils behave well because everyone is treated as unique with individual needs. As a result, they are enthusiastic, kind and polite. The school has a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum which is driven by the vision. The needs of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or those who are vulnerable are effectively supported. This allows them to 'rise to the challenge'. The curriculum is designed to engage the interests of pupils and so celebrate the success of individuals. Staff are proactive in identifying needs and tailoring support to individuals. Families have confidence that they will be listened to and supported appropriately. In addition to pastoral care, staff work collaboratively with a variety of partner organisations providing specialist services when appropriate. Parents talk positively of their children rising to challenges at home as a result of the vision. They praise leaders and staff describing them as welcoming, knowledgeable and friendly. Parents say that through care given to their children the 'vision happens every day in this school'.

Leaders routinely recognise individuals' potential, providing staff with high quality professional development to ensure this is fulfilled. Staff appreciate that leaders are mindful of their workload. Well-being is given high regard. Through close working relationships, partnership and good communications, the school family is supported to flourish. Staff value being part of a team working with another local school in the trust. This allows collaboration and sharing of expertise across both.

Collective worship is the centre of the school day and everyone enjoys coming together for this special time. Those pupils with faith and those with none are equally welcomed and feel comfortable to take part. Pupils know and understand the meaning of the school prayer, using it as a time to reflect on how they can 'rise up' and 'let their light shine'. Led by local clergy, worship is grounded within the Anglican tradition. The strong relationship with the church contributes to the outworking of the vision. Singing is an important element of worship. Pupils know many songs and enjoy singing them joyfully. They articulate that visiting the church for services at special times in the Christian calendar is important to them. Parents appreciate the chance to join them in worship on these occasions.

Times of prayer and reflection are important to the school. Opportunities for spiritual development take place across the curriculum. For example, staff talk about how making bird feeders gave pupils in Early Years a sense of awe and wonder as they watched the birds feeding. To further develop this, the school has introduced special days which focus specifically on spirituality. A new policy for spiritual development is in place, but this is not embedded. A shared understanding of spirituality is not consistently articulated by staff and pupils.

Pupils undertake a number of leadership roles in the school. For example, the Green Team explain how they take part in litter picking around the grounds to keep them tidy. They know that raising money is important and they show concern for the lives of other children in their school. However, their understanding of ways to develop this beyond their immediate locality is limited. Pupils support collective worship by lighting candles, helping with the projector and leading the Lord's Prayer. Whilst pupils enjoy contributing and volunteering, there are few pupil-initiated opportunities for leadership or acts of independent courageous advocacy.

Pupils understand difference, noting that 'everyone is welcome at the school'. To recognise and celebrate this, classes are named after Amazing People who come from diverse backgrounds. This develops pupils' knowledge of people who can inspire them. However, they are not always secure about the significance of them to their own lives.

The RE curriculum reflects the Christian vision and meets the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus together with the Understanding Christianity resource to effectively plan and sequence learning. Leaders ensure that RE is given a high profile in the curriculum. Ongoing training results in staff delivering RE lessons confidently. Leaders recognise that pupils' knowledge of Christianity as a world faith is less developed. Specific RE days, where Christianity is presented as a living global faith are developing this, but their impact is not embedded. Opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge skills and understanding of other worldviews and explore their own beliefs are also less developed.

Leaders have been pivotal in creating a distinct ethos that is underpinned by an expectation that everyone will 'rise up' and know 'to shine their light'. This develops hope and aspiration and enables pupils to continue to develop their skills and talents in their next setting.

Information			
School	Empingham Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	22 May 2023
URN	146425	Academy/VA/VC	Academy
Diocese	Peterborough	Pupils on roll	80
MAT	Rutland Learning Trust		
Executive Headteacher	Sally Gooding		
Chair of Governors	Kevin Osbourne		
Inspector	Becky Dolby-Molson	No.	C.21/22