

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Herstmonceux Church of England Primary School	
Address	Hailsham Road, Hailsham, BN27 4LG
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>Learning to be the best we can be.</p> <p>Loving all God's kingdom.</p> <p>Living life to the full.</p> <p>John 10: 10 ' I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distinctive Christian vision is clearly lived in the school community through well understood Christian values. Although highly effective in some, the impact of the vision on all policies is inconsistent. • Religious education (RE) has outstanding impact on the lives of the pupils. They speak with great confidence about religion, worldviews and philosophy, and show high levels of progression in knowledge and understanding. • Collective worship is well planned and resourced and inspires pupils to action. However, pupil involvement in worship planning is limited. • Spirituality and impressively high quality reflection is evident throughout the school. However, the way in which rich opportunities for spiritual reflection are identified across the whole curriculum is less clear in some subjects. • There is a strong sense of teamwork between staff and governors giving clear strategic direction to development as a Church school. New senior leaders are developing the skills to support this with enthusiasm and commitment.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally identify opportunities for promoting spiritual development in all curriculum subject areas to show pupils that spirituality pervades all areas of life. • Develop the involvement of pupils in the planning of collective worship to further strengthen the school ethos in living out the vision. • Extend how the vision drives and motivates all areas of school life through enhancing the way it explicitly guides school policies . This is to ensure the vision enriches the further development of Herstmonceux as a Church school.



Inspection findings

A highly committed and collaborative staff leadership team and governors promote a clear Christian vision rooted in biblical teaching. Their expertise covers both Church schools in the Sussex Spires Federation which provides mutual support in spiritual, academic, and practical matters. The theme of the vision and associated values is readily understood by pupils. It has an immediately apparent and positive impact on all their relationships with each other. They understand that as this is derived from the teaching of the Bible, it is a possible guide for living. The school has a strong sense of community driven by the vision. This is seen in supportive partnerships between the school, parents, the village, and the local church. Classrooms and communal areas have displays based around the vision supplemented with reflective work from the pupils. They readily relate all their activities to it and speak confidently about the vision's impact on their lives. Foundation governors monitor the school vision through an ethos committee which is strongly led and ensures Church school distinctiveness. The school also has a close relationship with the Diocese of Chichester and makes effective use of support and training. The governors have a wide skill set, as a result there is a clear strategic direction as a Church school.

The Christian vision is lived through comprehensive care in educating and supporting all pupils. Evidence shows that for some this has been transformational. The vision encourages aspiration and achievement through 'being the best that we can be.' A range of strategies have been developed to assist those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Early identification of needs by the co-ordinator ensures that Christian love and care is very evident. There is a sense that every pupil is deeply valued, with needs appropriately met. A well developed system for using additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is in place. There is a broad curriculum and opportunities are taken to encourage spiritual development. However, these are not currently identified in subject teaching plans. Pupils are very good at reflecting on their learning, and they realise the vision impacts on all areas of life. The vision also ensures the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community is prioritized through the 'Twelve rocks of wellbeing'. A counselling service for staff is also readily available. As a result, adults and pupils indicate they feel cared for and supported.

Pupils steadily realise their potential in various ways. They react positively to reflective moments in lessons and in personal interaction. Teaching staff continually encourage them to broaden their horizons. Pupils understand that the teaching of Jesus promotes human flourishing. They realise his example may help them and others achieve the same through their knowledge of biblical stories. Pupils on the school council have a good understanding of being agents of social change. This leads them to actively see themselves as stewards of God's creation and easily explain this idea. There is some understanding that justice for all God's people is an important part of 'life in all its fullness'. Pupils readily appreciate issues around climate change, and members of the school council are articulate and enthusiastic in working together. They understand how the vision may help them resolve differences of opinion and show dignity and respect to each other. This is also evident in all pupil behaviour around the school. The Christian ideal of love and forgiveness is modelled in every possible way. There are a relatively small number of pupils who are not of White British heritage. Though the curriculum and working vision of the school, pupils demonstrate respect and celebrate difference. Leaders ensure that pupils have some understanding of diversity in the world although opportunities exist to extend this further.

Collective worship is delivered daily to the whole school. It is clearly invitational and inclusive, and pupils respond well to moments of reflection. Parents are invited to join class worship

several times a year so the positive impact of worship extends beyond the school. Pupils can also point to moments where they have been inspired to action by collective worship, particularly around matters of personal behaviour. A pupil comments 'If you give people a little more kindness, it will give them a huge amount of joy'. This followed a time of personal reflection on one of Jesus' parables. Reflection areas are available around the school and readily appreciated and used. There is a strong understanding of prayer seen in books of prayers written and used by pupils. They are familiar with a number of formal prayers, and have an understanding of the variety of traditions in Christian worship. Regular visits from other worship leaders take place to support this. Links with the parish church have been maintained despite the vacancy for a vicar. Visits to church take place occasionally so there is a familiarity with the building. Pupils understand the significance of the major Christian festivals and their impact on the world. Bible verses are considered in every act of worship, and there is an understanding of Anglican practice. The vision is linked and featured in worship, and pupils show an understanding of the life of Jesus and his impact on the world. They can readily explain the Christian idea of God as three in one through the concept of the Trinity. Pupils participate in collective worship through many of the practical arrangements. They show potential and enthusiasm for greater involvement in the planning of collective worship and have some imaginative ideas. Participation in collective worship is enthusiastic and joyful and this is seen in the ready engagement of the pupils.

RE is highly effective with pupils displaying a very strong level of subject knowledge of Christianity and world faiths. They very confidently explain beliefs and deploy technical terms correctly. The impact of the subject extends into the ability to reflect on their learning, and they see the significance of belief in peoples' lives. They enthusiastically engage in philosophy of religion, and the 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) programme supports this. Pupils recognise that learning about religious beliefs is important because it is about dignity and mutual respect for one another. They say that it is essential to understand where people are coming from when you meet them. The RE lead resources the other school in the federation, and keeps up to date with issues in the subject. Staff involvement in diocesan training supports confident teaching. Effective tracking systems ensure pupils' development in RE. This is done through regular marking and review of pupils' work and feedback to them.

Information			
School	Herstmonceux Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	9 May 2023
URN	114506	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Chichester	Pupils on roll	207
Executive Headteacher	Catherine Cottingham		
Chair of Governors	Duncan Irvine		
Inspector	Jeremy Hellier	No.	899