

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Fordham Church of England Primary School

Address Isleham Rd, Fordham, Ely CB7 5NL

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

At Fordham, we are committed to achieving educational excellence by making learning stimulating, practical and above all, enjoyable. We believe in developing all God's children, allowing them to grow and "flourish." We aim to do this as a whole community where "faith and friendship" are at the heart of our success.

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Key findings

- Leadership, including governance, is a strength of the school. This ensures that the vision underpins all aspects of school life both strategically and operationally.
- Driven by the Christian vision, pastoral care is a priority. Parents praise the 'exceptional support' they receive as a result.
- Leaders are passionate that all pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. Religious Education (RE) provision is of high quality.
- Springing from the Christian vision, collective worship is excellent because it energises the school day. Although there are occasions for Year 6 pupils to lead and evaluate collective worship, this is not developed across other year groups.
- Opportunities for spiritual development are identified in planning and take place in some curriculum areas. However, these are not always distinguishable from personal and social education. There is not a consistent shared understanding of spirituality among staff and pupils.

Areas for development

- Extend ways for a wider age range of pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship, thus deepening their spiritual awareness and providing further opportunities for pupil leadership.
- Create a shared understanding of spirituality so that adults can plan experiences more effectively. Build on spiritual opportunities already introduced through the curriculum.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Fordham Church of England Primary School is a welcoming, and inclusive school where everyone is valued and respected. At its heart is its Christian vision. Its theological root, 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me' underpins leaders' commitment to support adults and pupils to flourish. As a result, they make courageous decisions. Strong strategic and commercial alliances benefit and influence the life of the school community. The headteacher leads with humility, compassion, wisdom and integrity, assisted by dedicated staff and governors. They ensure that the wellbeing of all is nourished. Consequently, Fordham is a happy and reflective community of resilient pupils and adults.

Relationships between members of the school community are strong. Staff praise the support provided by senior leaders. They feel valued and listened to. They give practical illustrations of when steps have been taken to consider work life balance and wellbeing. Governors are committed to the school and to its success. They have a deep understanding of its strengths and areas for development. This is informed by effective monitoring, which focuses on the impact of actions taken. Positive relationships exist with the Diocese of Ely, who provide advice and training opportunities. Leaders ensure that staff receive induction on working in a church school.

Reflecting the school's vision, the nurture of pupils, families and staff is integral to the school's practice. The Pastoral Team, alongside Special Education Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), support the wellbeing of pupils. Effective support for individuals is in place, demonstrating that each one is unique. Careful monitoring of pupils enables staff to respond promptly to their needs. A focus on building resilience and a dedicated nurture space fosters character development and engagement with learning. This demonstrates the school's commitment to helping pupils achieve 'all things.' Established, positive relationships with external partners provide specialised support where appropriate.

The knowledge-rich, enquiry-based curriculum is planned around stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences. The school's Christian ethos underpins behaviour management through the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation. As a result, behaviour is exemplary. The behaviour charter helps pupils manage their actions, reflect on their behaviour and respect others. One pupil explained that the behaviour ladder 'helps them to do their best' and 'begin each day with a fresh start'. Diversity and differences are celebrated, and a breadth of books and resources are available which illustrate this. Opportunities for spiritual development are identified in planning. However, there is no shared understanding of spirituality. As a result, adults and pupils do not always articulate its meaning consistently.

Pupils engage positively with a myriad of extra-curricular activities. They have access to an increasing number of enrichment activities. These enable them to develop skills and experience new ways to 'do all things'. Pupils have many leadership opportunities. Their responsibilities include: school council, house captains, collective worship leaders, digital leaders and junior travel ambassadors. They carry out these roles with pride and diligence. They are clear that they make a difference to the life of the school and beyond. Year 6 pupils pair up with younger pupils as buddies. They provide practical support and as a result forge long-term friendships. Pupils and staff speak warmly about the benefits of these relationships. School council members arrange fund raising events, not only for charities personal to the school but also for international charities. Initiatives such as Adopt an Elephant and toilet twinning are driven by pupils. This enables them to become courageous advocates and agents for positive change. 'Pen pal' letters between pupils and older members of the community show the school vision reflected in small acts of kindness.

Collective worship is at the heart of school life and inspires pupils, staff, and parents. It is invitational and inclusive. Following Anglican traditions, pupils learn the rhythm of the church year and know the colours associated with each season. Visits to the church take place for major Christian festivals. This ensures pupils understand the significance of them and their relevance to faith in today's world. The Year 6 worship committee's role in collective worship is to remind all present of the three aspects of God. In addition, they organise prayer spaces around the school. Members of the worship committee are enthusiastic about their role and are keen to be actively involved. However, other year groups do not have independent opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate the effectiveness of collective worship. Visits by groups from different denominations, such as GENR8, enrich worship. This enables pupils to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways. Pupils are keen to report that worship at their school includes everyone, whether they

believed in God or not. Collective worship is regularly monitored by leaders including governors, and pupils are asked for their feedback. This has led directly to further developments such as extending the innovative use of pre-recorded video. Prayer is central not only to worship but also to everyday life in the school. Pupils frequently take opportunities to write their own prayers, and these are shared in collective worship. One parent commented how their child brought prayer into their daily lives by teaching their family how to pray at home. Pupils respond to moments of reflection in a thoughtful and sensitive way. Pupils' efforts and achievements are recognised in weekly celebration worship. 'Flourishers of the Week' capture and celebrate the outworking of their school values.

RE subject leaders are passionate about their roles. Monitoring activities, including book scrutiny and lesson observations, help form the action plan supporting the development of teaching and learning. As a result, the staff have strong subject knowledge and deliver the topics with enthusiasm. 'Big questions' stimulate thinking and discussion. The curriculum is planned to encourage pupils to question and engage in debate. They value that everyone is entitled to their own opinion and not judged by others. Pupils make effective progress in RE and display appropriate levels of religious literacy. Assessment systems are in place to enable teachers to know how well pupils learn and attainment levels are reported annually to parents. Pupils enjoy learning about world faiths and world views. They understand how this helps them appreciate the beliefs of others.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	16 May 2023	URN	110788
Date of previous inspection	2 July 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled primary school	NOR	417
Name of MAT/Federation			
Diocese / Methodist District	Ely Diocese		
Headteacher	Deborah Rankin		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Rachael Hutchinson	No.	c.21/22