

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Polebrook Church of England Primary School	
Address	Main Street, Polebrook, PE8 5LN
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	Good

School's vision
<p>'A small and happy Christian School offering challenge and opportunity to all'</p> <p>Our vision is realised through the Christian values of creativity, courage, faithfulness and kindness with the overarching value of love.</p> <p>'Love God with all you are and your neighbour as yourself' Mark 12:30-31</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision and values are cohesively and explicitly linked together. They are deeply embedded into the life of the school, driving all actions and decisions. Staff, pupils and their families articulate the transformational impact that this has had on their lives. • The 'learning dinosaurs' provide a creative and innovative vehicle for the vision and values to permeate across the curriculum. As a result, character development is promoted alongside subject knowledge, enabling pupils to flourish socially, spiritually and academically. • Collective worship effectively promotes the vision and values. Although pupils confidently lead worship, opportunities for them to independently plan and evaluate are less well developed. • Relationships within the school and beyond are defined by the vision to 'love your neighbour'. As a result, mutually beneficial partnerships with the Rutland Learning Trust (RLT), Peterborough Diocese, local churches and the wider community are exceptionally strong. • The enquiry based curriculum enhances provision in religious education (RE) and helps pupils to become successful learners. This creative culture develops a high level of skills, knowledge and understanding. This includes of Christianity as a global faith, a range of world religions and alternative worldviews.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop outreach and partnership working so that the school's innovative practice can be more widely shared. • Ensure additional opportunities for pupils to independently plan and evaluate collective worship so that they further develop their leadership skills.

Inspection findings

The vision and values are at the heart of all school life at Polebrook. Reflecting the context of the community, they are cohesively and explicitly linked, with the 'learning dinosaurs' underpinning them. The four dinosaurs represent the outworking of the values and provide a creative way of understanding what they mean in real life. What makes for excellence is the careful consideration and deliberate intent behind all the school's activities. All are laid against the vision. This results in decisions and actions which are deeply rooted in it. The Christian values are woven into the names of the dinosaurs, creatively comparing the Bible story of the creation with a scientific viewpoint. Pupils 'grow up with them as they go through the school', so they become embedded in their behaviour and attitudes. When they leave Polebrook, they move onto their next setting with confidence. The influence of the values remains with them, however, prompting them to make positive life decisions.

The overarching Christian value of love, illustrated in the story of the Good Samaritan, underpins the vision. Adults and pupils use it to drive their actions. This results in a strong community where all feel included in a family which learns and lives well together. Pupils are proud that 'nobody stays on the Buddy Spot for more than a minute'. Somebody will always come and include them to make them feel better. They know this is one way they can be a Good Samaritan to others. Parents recognise this caring ethos and choose to send their children to the school knowing they will be nurtured. In some cases, this has had a transformational impact on families. This is particularly pertinent in the support they receive in times of challenge.

The school environment is calm and purposeful. Colourful wall paintings are visual reminders to pupils. They are a prompt to keep the dinosaurs, and the vision and values, in mind throughout the day. Pupils reference them constantly and give examples of when they provided inspiration or comfort. The language created around the dinosaurs enables everyone to talk about the curriculum and the choices they make in a consistent way. This innovative way of working has transformed learning by linking character development and academic success. Pupils are invited to explain which dinosaur they 'are' when working or playing. For example, when solving a difficult problem they are encouraged to accept it as a challenge and be a 'Tryasaurus'. This is then linked to the Christian value of faithfulness in completing a task, developing the characteristic of reliance. This also provides a framework for spiritual development, with opportunities intentionally threaded across the curriculum. As a result, pupils articulate how experiences have made them reflect on ideas beyond themselves. The behaviour policy is based on forgiveness and reconciliation. If things go wrong, a reflection area contains a sand tray where pupils can write what has happened, then rub it out. This symbolises the fresh start which everyone receives every day.

The enquiry-based curriculum is carefully crafted so all pupils can access subjects creatively and become successful learners. This approach originated from the school's provision in RE and is extending to other areas as a mark of its effectiveness. The Effort, Pride, Independence and Collaboration (EPIC) framework includes opportunities for working together on challenging tasks. This ensures pupils develop high aspirations for themselves and others. Big questions provide scope for discussion so that they can disagree well. In RE, their knowledge of Christianity and a range of world faiths is deep. Through a trust wide project, they have an understanding of Christianity as a global faith. Pupils are confident in expressing their own beliefs and worldviews, crediting the school in helping to shape them. When they express different views to others, these are treated with dignity and respect.

Leaders are entrepreneurial in making the most of available opportunities. They are mindful of their responsibility to prepare pupils for life in a global society. They actively seek out

ways to expand their knowledge of difference and diversity in the world beyond their immediate locality. The reflection garden project with a school in a nearby city, for example, provides greater understanding of contrasting areas. It also encourages spiritual development across both settings, and the chance to work with experts on technical design. As a result, pupils explore their gifts and talents, as well as their place in the world, in new ways. The local community, including parents, are involved in many school-based projects. They generously share their time and skills to the benefit of all. Involvement in village events places Polebrook at its heart. Leaders appreciate all that this brings and seek to give back to the community in love. Visiting care homes and raising funds for the foodbank enables pupils to be courageous advocates through making a positive difference to the lives of others. They understand the importance of aligning what they do with the vision to 'love their neighbour as themselves'. Proud that they can be Good Samaritans, they seek to make significant changes. Raising money is one aspect. However, by giving of their time and efforts, they know they can improve the environment through litter picking or someone's day by a small act of kindness. Relationships with the church are strong. Members of the congregation lead a transition session for all year 6 pupils. The annual summer play scheme is attended by many families, strengthening the link between home, school and church.

Collective worship is an important part of the school day. Through the changing colours of the special tablecloth, pupils learn about the seasons of the Anglican church year. Year six pupils lead confidently, re-telling Bible stories and inviting their peers to pray or reflect on the themes introduced. However, opportunities for them to independently plan and evaluate it are not developed. Clergy are regularly involved, enabling pupils to see that there are different styles of Christian worship. Parents look forward to attending the weekly celebration worship session. They enjoy seeing their children rewarded for demonstrating the values as well as for academic achievement.

Relationships with the RLT are strong, based on mutual trust and respect. The positive impact of joining has been noted by all. Staff appreciate the training and networking opportunities it provides, enabling them to develop professionally. Governors are committed to the flourishing of the school and feel empowered by working as part of a larger governance team. The school values the ongoing involvement from the Diocese of Peterborough, which supports the implementation of the vision and values.

Information			
School	Polebrook Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	10 July 2023
URN	148257	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Peterborough	Pupils on roll	89
MAT/Federation	Rutland Learning Trust		
Executive Head	Lou Coulthard		
Chair of Governors	Julia Hart		
Inspector	Rachel Beeson	No.	952