

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Milton Ernest Church of England Primary School	
Address	Thurleigh Road, Milton Ernest, MK44 1RF

School vision
<p>Working Together, Aiming High, Shining Brightly</p> <p>‘Let your light shine before others’ Matthew 5:16</p> <p>Our federation values every individual enabling them to flourish, aim high and reach their full potential with a lifelong love of learning that will prepare them for their future. Through their experience with us, they will foster a resilient attitude towards challenge and demonstrate a desire to learn, the motivation to improve and aspiration to be a positive contributor to our community and global village.</p> <p>We want our school and church to be beacons that shine far and wide, lighting up our region with the light of Jesus through our work, rest and play. By learning Christian Values, by listening to the teachings of Jesus and by following the examples of Jesus we say to every member of our Community ‘Let your Light Shine’</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision reflects the culture of Milton Ernest as a welcoming, nurturing school. Everyone is encouraged to 'shine brightly'. The influence of the values, which express the vision, is far reaching and impacts all aspects of school life. • Relationships are a strength. A supportive ethos enables adults and pupils to flourish in a trusting and positive environment. They know they are valued and cared for. • Pupil voice is strong. They have an impact through carrying out a range of leadership roles. Pupils are committed to 'making the school a better place' and are proud to do so. Influenced by the vision, they want to contribute to helping others 'shine'. • Collective worship is valued as a special part of the day. Adults and pupils spend time together in a calm and reflective atmosphere. It contributes to their spiritual development through the provision of time to reflect and act on what they have learnt. • The learning is crafted around the needs of pupils and the strengths of staff. This means that adult's skills are utilised and pupils benefit from specialist teaching. This provides opportunities for them to shine within and beyond the curriculum.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a robust system for strategic leaders to monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision across all aspects of school life. This so leaders can track and celebrate its influence as part of the improvement cycle. • Embed the religious education (RE) curriculum so that pupils' knowledge and understanding of world religions, including Christianity, is deepened and expanded.

Inspection findings

The carefully chosen Christian vision reflects the context of the school as smaller than average, and the ambition of staff for their pupils. Size is seen as a strength to be utilised. It means that each pupil can be nurtured as an individual. As such, providing 'big' opportunities for everyone to shine brightly are at the heart of the vision's implementation. Mindful of the school's small size, it is a driver to prepare pupils for the future. It supports their capacity to deal with situations they may encounter by fostering self-confidence and sense of identity. This empowers them to flourish academically and as people who can make a positive contribution to the wider world. Staff encourage pupils to 'stand out' within the school and beyond, in ways which are personal to them. Recognising their individual strengths motivates them to have confidence in their own abilities.

The vision is expressed through Christian values. These are well known to pupils and staff who articulate their meaning and how they are relevant to their daily lives. Parents attribute their children's positive behaviour at home to the impact of the school's vision and values. They use them as a source of discussion, recognising their importance in developing a culture where all live well together. Comments from sources outside of the school confirm that pupils' behaviour and attitudes are noted as 'different' in a positive way. This rightly confirms that the impact of the vision and values extends well beyond pupils' time at the school. A significant number win awards at their secondary setting, for example. The school is well thought of. It 'shines' as a 'beacon' in the locality through its contribution to and involvement in community life. Pupils understand their responsibility towards others and are committed to helping them 'shine'. Within the school, they encourage and nurture each other, striving to 'make it a better place for everyone'. Those with responsibilities, such as school councillors, can see the difference they make. They inspire others to do the same as a result.

Learning experiences are effectively organised, providing challenge and support to all ages. Subject leadership is based on the 'passion' and expertise of staff members. This ensures specialist knowledge and skills are utilised and enables them to develop further in their field. Opportunities are provided for pupils to experience and develop their talents through many extra-curricular activities. They 'try new and exciting things out, enjoy them' and become more confident learners as a result. Sport plays an important part in school life. Leaders are ambitious for everyone to be physically literate and active, 'whatever that looks like' to each individual. A progressive and innovative and physical education (PE) programme, for example, is aligned to the vision and ethos of the school. It develops not just the physical aspects of sport. Thinking, tactical and social skills, linked to Christian and British values, are built alongside. The school is successful in many sporting tournaments. However, sportsmanship and a pride in one's own performance is valued above winning. As a result, pupils are known to 'shine' out among many, in line with the vision.

Forest school presents opportunities for pupils and staff to spend time outside, connecting with God's world. This benefits their mental health and well-being. Through observing changes in the seasons, they experience awe and wonder in nature. Collaborating with their peers enables pupils to connect with each other and explore their place in the world. This contributes to their spiritual development. However, although staff have a shared understanding of spirituality, and recognise its impact, it is not consistently woven across all curriculum areas. 'Candle time' provides a calm, reflective session. Pupils and adults review their week, contemplating on how the vision has influenced their actions.

Knowledgeable leaders ensure that RE is well led. Pupils enjoy discussing 'big' questions which develop their thinking skills. They understand the importance of learning about world religions, including Christianity, in developing respect for all. However, their knowledge of them is not always

accurate.

Staff see themselves as advocates for pupils and their families. Working within the vision, they believe 'each and every child deserves the same chance to 'shine'. However, they recognise that some will need extra help to do so at some point in their school life. Thus a culture of equity and equality is promoted through a shared understanding of this principle. Staff know pupils well and can provide help to each as an individual. Parents recognise the impact this nurturing environment has upon their children. They value that it enables them to be successful learners and 'develop as people'.

Systems are in place to identify additional needs, with staff adapting quickly and flexibly to changes in pupils' circumstances. Interventions are provided from within the school. Staff are trained to deliver specific assistance where appropriate. This includes strategies to help pupils' positive mental health. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are vulnerable receive bespoke support enabling them to flourish.

An established daily pattern provides time for worship in different contexts and physical spaces. Whole school collective worship reinforces the value for the half term, inviting pupils to respond by demonstrating it to themselves and others. Using the strategy of 'windows, mirrors and doors,' pupils develop their spirituality in action. Class worship intentionally focuses on individual responses. It enables adults and pupils to get to know each other in a spiritual setting. Resources enable staff to interpret world events as part of worship. They relate them to the school's values and encourage pupil discussion on what they think and believe. This inspires pupils to shape their own worldviews. Partnerships with the local church are strong. Clergy lead collective worship, which often takes place at the church. This enhances spiritual experiences through an appreciation of the building's beauty.

Governors know the school well. Decisions are made in line with the vision, in the best interests of all. They recognise its impact, but there is no formal monitoring system to evaluate this. Staff value the opportunities afforded them to develop their professional expertise. They know their work is valued. They follow leaders' example in implementing the vision for all to succeed within a culture of mutual trust and respect.

The inspection findings indicate that Milton Ernest Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	15 January 2024	URN	109613
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	58
Diocese	St Albans		
MAT/Federation	The Federation of Eileen Wade and Milton Ernest Church of England Primary Schools		
Headteacher	Lisa Virnuls		
Chair	James Bass		
Inspector	Rachel Beeson	No.	952