

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Belfry Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Overstrand

Vision

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1).

We are reminded of the many faithful and patient people whose hopes and beliefs kept them looking ahead in hard times. At North Star Federation, hope drives everything we do. We look beyond today and towards the horizon, knowing that a journey of learning and flourishing takes many steps. We know that hope will bring us onwards, even though our journey is challenging. Our shared vision of hope for The Belfry has three elements; hope for our world, our learning and our relationships. School leaders and governors look for signs of these in everything the children do

The Belfry Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The Christian vision of hope is central to the work of this school. It is lived out and embraced by staff, pupils and families. The vision and supporting values are at the heart of decision making. These positively impact school life as it moves forwards.
- The Belfry is aided on its hopeful journey by strong and supportive links across the North Star Federation, and with St Benet’s Church of England multi-academy trust (MAT). These involve widening opportunities for staff development, leading to greater confidence as staff become empowered in their roles as middle leaders. Wellbeing of pupils, staff and families is a high priority for senior leaders and governors.
- The vision for learning has led to the development of a new curriculum, constructed to meet the needs of this community. It is designed to broaden horizons, widen perspectives and break down barriers to learning. Staff make adaptations to learning, ensuring pupils with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) receive the intended content and are given the opportunity to flourish.
- Religious education (RE) is well planned, diverse and sequenced. As a result, pupils are curious and interested in learning, forming their own opinions about a wide range of religions and worldviews. Staff are ably led and supported in delivering a curriculum that offers a rich learning experience.
- Collective worship is carefully planned and developed. It has a varied approach, offering opportunities for spiritual development through singing, prayer and reflection. Regular links with clergy and visits to the church also contribute to the spiritual flourishing of pupils.

Development Points

- Extend opportunities to develop pupil voice and the self-confidence to identify and explore issues of justice and responsibility. This is to support pupils’ understanding of how they can have personal influence on ethical choices and make a difference to the lives of others.



- Fully implement new assessment practices for RE, securing staff understanding of age-related expectations. This is to enable staff to aid pupils to make even more effective progress.
- To extend pupil knowledge and understanding of the global and diverse nature of religions and worldviews. This is to broaden pupils' understanding of how personal belief and practices are lived out, including within Christianity.

Inspection Findings

A clear Christian vision and values are inspiring change at this small rural primary school. The vision of 'hope for our world, our learning and our relationships' is clearly discernible in the life of the school. The vision, its associated values of compassion and perseverance, are core drivers as the school moves through a period of transition. It has helped to cement its relationship with a local Church school to form The North Star Federation. It continues to support the federation as it joins St Benet's MAT. The impact of the vision is seen in the hope it gives to the school community as leaders develop its new curriculum, assessment processes and ways of working. Leaders' determination to enhance provision for pupils can be seen in increased pupil motivation and perseverance as they enjoy new learning and meet new experiences. Senior leaders have nurtured staff confidence through the trust placed in them as they develop their subject leader roles. Adults working at the school are growing in self belief as they see their plans taking effect and share their next steps. Families approve of the school values, they see them adding depth to their children's experiences. Values of compassion and perseverance work hand in hand as the school moves forwards and deals with new challenges. Supportive links with partners through the federation and diocese aid school improvement and professional development for staff. As an associate member of the St Benet's MAT the school has been able to access further training and support, leading to improved practice and provision. Governors are regular visitors to the school, through their monitoring they provide challenge and support, leading to improvement.

RE is a strength of the school. The subject leader enables staff, including early careers teachers, to receive mentoring, coaching and support with planning. RE has been sequenced and developed as a multi-disciplinary subject through a strong partnership with the local diocese. Embracing the vision of hope for the world, pupils engage in enquiry questions. These encourage pupils to consider thoughtfully, actively reflecting on their own responses to faith at an age appropriate level. This gives them the opportunity to investigate and make meaning of relationships, the world and belief. Pupils are curious about the diversity of faith and worldviews. They are eager to learn and understand the importance of knowing about a whole range of religions and worldviews. Pupils value the need to respect and understand a variety of opinions. They appreciate as they go out into the world this will be an important feature of life. Pupils are less secure in their understanding of diversity within a religion or worldview.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of RE teaching has led to developments within the RE curriculum. Insecure staff subject knowledge and planning have been identified and supported. Attendance at training and useful RE forums from the diocese has added impact, further improving the quality of teaching. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of knowledge prompts and assessment activities linked to each unit of work. Pupils record their learning in a variety of ways. This approach also enables pupils with SEND to express their ideas appropriately. Leaders collect this information to monitor progress and this progression can be seen in pupil books. Assessment of RE is at the development stage. Assessments are not moderated across the federation, or with Church schools within the diocese.



The revised curriculum aligns with the Christian vision of hope and looking forwards. The school has developed its own understanding of spirituality and staff are keen to reflect this through their engagement with pupils. Spiritual development is intrinsically part of the curriculum offer, broadening perspectives and arousing curiosity. Pupils are taught to review, reflect, question and engage with learning, giving them the opportunity to compare and contrast viewpoints. Reading material and other curriculum areas increasingly provide pupils with experiences of diversity, multi-ethnicity and urban life. Planned visits and visitors into school, residential trips, including to London, seek to widen horizons. Families are highly supportive of the forest schools sessions, music and other enriching extra-curricular activities. Staff adapt their teaching to break down barriers for learning, meeting the needs of pupils with SEND by inclusive and supportive teaching. Caring adults are available to speak with families and assist with practical help. The learning environment is adapted when required to support pupils who struggle. Care and consideration of the vulnerable and those with SEND ensures that pupils flourish.

Collective worship is a daily opportunity for the school to celebrate its vision of a hopeful community and its relationship with each other. It is also an opportunity to praise God and to reflect on what they see and hear. Singing is particularly joyful, some regard sharing in the inspirational singing as a favourite part of worship. Spirituality is given an opportunity to be expressed through a variety of ways. Pupils and adults are invited to sing, reflect, pray and wonder. Pupils enjoy actively participating in retelling of Bible stories. Other immersive events like the Christmas Experience also enhance spiritual growth and reflection. Pupils describe how collective worship inspires them to treat others well and impacts positively on their attitudes and behaviour to each other. One child described how they learned giving compliments builds someone up, observing 'it takes a lot to build up confidence in someone, but not much to bring it down.' Families enjoy participating in the celebration of key festivals throughout the year at the church. Clergy, also representatives from the local Free Church, are a familiar presence in school and regularly lead worship. The collective worship lead and governor regularly monitor worship leading to improvement. For example pupils' reflections are shared in a reflection book. At present the school lacks a space for private spiritual reflection.

In keeping with the Christian vision, reconciliation and forgiveness are cornerstones in relationships between pupils and with adults. Reflecting hope in their relationships, pupils treat each other with dignity and respect. They are aware of their responsibility to act fairly towards others. Protecting the wellbeing and good mental health of staff and pupils is important to leaders. Confidence and trust in the school by families is high, they speak of the school as having a sense of community. They see the school's core values enabling children to act responsibly and to stand up for what they believe is right. Families appreciate the way older pupils are caring of the younger ones. As a result school is seen as a safe space. Staff relationships are underpinned by mutual trust and respect for each other even through times of change. Teachers in the early stages of their career are supported well. The school staff works as a cohesive team, offering help and encouragement to each other.

Pupils are becoming proactive in their consideration of the world around their locality and beyond. Working with Overstand Together and with the Pen Pals Project pupils are able to establish partnerships within their local community, forming productive, hopeful relationships. The pupils and their families also take part in acts of Christian charity, for example support for the Cromer Foodbank. Through their curriculum they also learn of injustice such as the Windrush Generation. This is giving them a growing awareness of inequality and fairness in the world and fosters the importance to voice and share their opinions.



Information

Address	23 Cromer Road, Overstrand, NR27 ONT		
Date	24 January 2025	URN	121123
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	132
Diocese	Norwich		
Federation	The North Star Federation		
Headteacher	Nicholas Read		
Chair of Governors	Hayley Smith		
Inspector	Teresa Osborne		