



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cowbit St Mary's Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address Barrier Bank, Cowbit, Spalding, PE12 6AL

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**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

Our school welcomes everyone and encourages all voices to be heard. Through challenge and support, we strive towards each person becoming the best God intended them to be, happily flourishing as human beings. We empower our whole school community to be hopeful about the future and be drivers of positive change.
'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'. (John 10:10)

Key findings

- The school's vision is successfully woven into everyday life. Leaders are passionate that all within the school community should experience 'life in all its fullness'. Adults and pupils flourish because they are empowered to be hopeful about the future. Opportunities for spiritual development however are sometimes missed.
- Governors have a focussed and strategic programme of monitoring. This enables an analytical approach to school improvement, ensuring it continues to grow and flourish as a good church school in line with the vision.
- A whole-hearted commitment to inclusion ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable are able to thrive and enjoy life in all its fullness.
- Collective worship, springing from the Christian vision, is valued, biblical and affirming. It influences the lives of both pupils and staff, enabling them to flourish. Worship is enriched by strong opportunities for leadership by the older pupils. Not all pupils have the opportunity to plan, lead or evaluate collective worship.
- School leaders have prioritised the development of a well-constructed and coherent religious education (RE) curriculum that is leading to all pupils flourishing. Its full impact is yet to be realised. There is scope for pupils to use their prior knowledge more consistently in order to create greater learning opportunities.

Areas for development

- To build on the spiritual opportunities already introduced throughout the school. Develop a clear and meaningful progression for the spiritual development of all pupils, across the curriculum that is understood by all.
- Develop ways for pupils in different age groups to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship, thus deepening their spiritual awareness and engagement in prayer and reflection.
- Encourage pupils to articulate their thoughts and ideas based on their previous learning in RE. This will enable them to confidently express and clearly communicate their views, thereby gaining a greater understanding of Christianity and world faiths.

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

Cowbit St. Mary's is a welcoming and highly inclusive church school. It is led in accordance with its Christian vision to be 'hopeful about the future' and to encourage all to be 'drivers of positive change'. School leaders are passionate about placing the Christian vision at the heart of the life of the school, believing that 'it guides us on becoming better humans as God intended'. The vision, created by the whole school community, is understood and owned by pupils, governors, staff and clergy and provides the direction and purpose of the school. Governors, the majority of whom are new to their posts since the previous inspection, have taken decisive action to deepen the school's Christian character. They work hard to ensure that the school's Christian values are part of the process to raise pupils' academic standards and aspirations. Pupils joining the school with limited reading ability, have received highly structured programmes of support. As a result they have become fluent readers, opening the door to greater opportunities in life. Governors have been on a journey to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and challenge the headteacher and staff to ensure better outcomes for all pupils. Recent and relevant diocesan training means that governors understand their role well. They speak confidently about how decisions around the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) resource area were informed by the school's Christian vision. This means that anyone working in this area is clearly focussed on removing barriers to learning and reflects the school's commitment to inclusion. The special educational needs coordinator has ensured that staff have the knowledge and expertise to support vulnerable pupils. School leaders ensure their mental health and wellbeing is given high priority.

Evidence suggests the development of an ambitious curriculum by leaders is beginning to have a positive impact on pupil outcomes. The quality and progress of work in pupils' books and their positive attitude to learning, provides clear evidence of continued improvement. Staff talk positively about their training. This helps them to develop their teaching, with a clear knowledge of pupil expectations and progress. As yet, specific opportunities for spiritual development in all subjects, are not yet embedded.

The development of the school's approach to behaviour management now clearly reflects the school's Christian vision. This results in a more equitable approach to managing pupils' behaviour. The impact of staff training encourages pupils to reflect on their actions and express their feelings, helping to overcome their anxieties. Consequently pupils are treated with dignity and respect. This leads to a demonstrable decrease in the number of exclusions over time. Pupils with a range of needs are able to flourish in an atmosphere underscored by forgiveness. Pupils behave well and there is strong adult support for those who have additional emotional needs.

The wellbeing of every member of the school community is a high priority. Leaders clearly understand the challenges to mental health and how to support their local community. This was seen during the pandemic when church and school worked closely to deliver worship themes to families. Newsletters containing inspirational words and biblical texts

encouraged all to reflect on the school's Christian values and live with hope for a brighter future. This support continues to be valued by parents giving them a sense of 'belonging to a wider family'. The school works with external agencies to support the welfare of staff and pupils and also to increase staff expertise in this area. Parents find staff very approachable and talk about the school being 'great with communication'. Staff value being part of a supportive team.

Pupils are involved in charitable activities, for example, the Shoebox Appeal and Agape food bank. This allows pupils to reflect on their own lives and generosity towards others. However, there are too few opportunities provided for pupils to consider and engage in social action and understand how the school's vision shows they can challenge injustice.

Collective worship is held daily in the adjoining church and valued by the whole school. Good support is given by the local Anglican priest. Worship is invitational and readily attended by the school community, including those of different faiths or no faith. Parents look forward to occasions when they are invited to participate. Songs inspire joyful singing and pupils are animated when they accompany these songs with actions. Pupils read prayers which they write during the school day. The programme is well planned by the collective worship lead and pupil worship leaders, who take an active role in all aspects of worship. Themes are based around the school's Christian values and the calendar of church festivals. Collective worship enables pupils and staff to live out the school's vision and values and consider key Christian beliefs. Pupils took inspiration from a worship focussed on perseverance as having a direct impact on their attitude towards completing learning tasks during lockdown. Biblical teaching underpins the worship themes, relating scripture to pupils' own lives. Older pupils are showing a growing understanding of the Holy Trinity. Prayer is frequently led by pupils and is seen as an opportunity to reflect. They are invited to contribute to the evaluation process. This helps to ensure that it continues to be engaging and inspirational for all. Pupils were keen to report that worship at their school includes everyone, whether they believed in God or not. In talking about the use of reflection areas or attending nature walks, pupils explain these as tasks rather than as opportunities for their own spiritual development.

School leaders prioritise the ongoing development of a well-constructed RE curriculum which has the same importance as core subjects. This ensures good opportunities for pupils to understand and respect difference and diversity in the community and beyond. Pupils have some knowledge of a range of religions and world views but do not articulate this clearly. They do not fully understand the variety of Christian worship around the world. RE learning is driven by 'big questions' that become more specific year-on-year and develop pupils' theological understanding. However pupils do not use their vocabulary learned during RE lessons. Effective use has been made of diocesan support for RE in developing the subject. Teachers are well-supported by the subject leader in making the curriculum accessible for those with special education needs (SEND). Pupils talk positively about the role of RE in their learning. They know it is a safe space to explore their understanding and to ask big questions.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE is led with enthusiasm. The RE leader's decisive action in reviewing the curriculum shows clearly how it is resourced, sequenced and delivered. RE is a strength of the school and popular with pupils who make good progress. The good level of support from teaching staff ensures this. Rich and varied experiences challenge thinking. RE reinforces the importance of the school's vision and as a result pupils are flourishing in the subject.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	6 May 2022	URN	121611
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2014		
School status	Voluntary aided primary school	NOR	70
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese	Lincoln		
Headteacher	Bruce Johnson		

Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with 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	Fiona Griffiths	No.	705