

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Elsenham Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	High Street, Elsenham, Bishops Stortford, CM22 6DD
School vision	
Everyone is someone in our Church school community, becoming learners for life, ready to make a difference. 'So encourage each other and build each other up'. 1 Thessalonians 5:11	
School strengths	
• The Christian vision is a carefully considered and highly effective response to the current context of the school. As a result, each pupil and adult is accepted as 'someone' and able to flourish in a caring community. • In its content, delivery and rich enhancement, the curriculum is shaped by the vision. It is accessible, motivational and inspirational, preparing pupils well for their next steps. • The wellbeing of all is given a high priority by leaders, including the governing body. Resources are dedicated to building a fully inclusive community in which everyone feels welcome and is nurtured for growth. • From early on pupils develop resilience, taking responsibility for their own learning and development. Pupils build on this confidence through a rich variety of opportunities and act as agents of change for others. • Pupils enjoy the well-structured, carefully balanced religious education (RE) curriculum. They develop knowledge and understanding of a wide range of worldviews.	
Areas for development	
• Embed the agreed school approach to spirituality. This is to encourage identification of opportunities for its development across the curriculum and further enable spiritual flourishing for all. • Develop regular monitoring and evaluation activities by the governing body. This is to support leaders in improving the effectiveness of the RE curriculum and the impact of collective worship.	
Inspection findings	
The Christian vision is a compelling response to the recent rapid increase in the size of the school. This presents leaders with exciting opportunities for development. There is a strong commitment to maintain a focus on the importance of each individual. This ensures the school continues to offer an impressive level of personalised care. Along with a strong sense of community, this has always been a feature of the once small village school. The needs of each pupil, adult and family are clearly understood. Consequently, provision is made to enable flourishing. This includes an expectation, expressed in the key Bible verse, of mutual support and encouragement. The governing body allocates resources to ensure the school is able to make the vision a reality. This is evident in the	

commitment to pastoral work. Part of the building has been repurposed as a hub for support. This dedicated space impacts positively on the quality and consistency of the care provided. The vision highlights the importance of ongoing learning and 'making a difference'. Both are strongly apparent in the work and lives of adults as well as pupils. Staff grow professionally through high quality training and coaching. Pupils of different ages care for and help each other across the whole school. Adults provide a wide variety of opportunities for developing pupils' confidence and character.

The design of the curriculum flows directly from the key elements of the vision. Leaders ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils and fosters a love of learning. Most units of work begin with questions that encourage an active response. This engages and motivates pupils in the process of discovery. They talk about what they learn, both in school and at home, which helps to deepen understanding. Staff adapt experiences carefully for those who require extra support, ensuring that they can develop alongside their peers. Pupils chosen as 'leaders in learning' are champions for their subjects. They have a significant impact, encouraging and motivating others and contributing to a very positive and nurturing culture. In this way the vision's prompt to 'build each other up' enhances learning across the school. In many subjects, teachers create opportunities to broaden representation of peoples and cultures around the world. This reinforces the idea in the vision that 'everyone is someone'. Teachers provide time and support for pupils to reflect on their learning and use experiences to develop spiritually. However, the school-wide approach to spiritual development is not fully embedded.

Collective worship plays a significant role in the life of the school. As numbers increase, regular meeting together maintains and deepens a sense of community. Planning centres around the school's Christian values and key questions for discussion and reflection. This contributes rich opportunities for spiritual flourishing. Staff, members of the local church and the pupil 'Worship Crew' share leadership of collective worship. This ensures variety in approach and provides opportunities for discussion and response to the issues raised. Prayer, singing, music, silence and drama are used thoughtfully. They add to a culture that encourages pupils and adults on their individual spiritual journeys. All are made to feel welcome, whatever their personal beliefs, and any involvement is by invitation. As a result, there is a shared expectation that there is something for everyone in each gathering. This includes members of staff who benefit from being active participants. The key questions introduced at the start of the week are discussed in class, with responses shared a few days later. This gives a sense of continuity and enables deeper thinking and spiritual responses to develop across the school.

The school's Christian values are seen as the foundation for wellbeing and good mental health. This provides a consistency to the way in which pupils and adults are treated. Everyone is considered unique, with a responsibility to encourage and build up the rest of the school community. Staff offering pastoral support and other interventions work together very effectively in the newly established hub. Pupils feel safe, trusting that their teachers will listen to their opinions, needs and concerns. The approach to behaviour focuses on exploring consequences and ultimately the restoration of relationships. The 'inclusion ambassadors' ensure that any pupil with a specific need or vulnerability can explain this to their peers. As a result, there is a culture of understanding and equity, in which everyone is treated with compassion. Parents and carers have high levels of trust in the school staff to care for their children. Leaders give time to support families as needs arise. Adults in school feel valued and supported beyond their professional role. Their non-contact time is protected and extra time provided for tasks. This ensures good work life balance.

Leaders have identified a need for all pupils to build resilience in order for them to flourish in school. From the early years on, they take increasing responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. Progress in this development is recorded in individual books which build up a story of their growth over time. As they become more confident in themselves and their abilities pupils are more effective

in helping others. They act as agents of change in response to regular class discussion of big questions and examples of injustice. This includes writing persuasive letters to people in positions of authority. In addition, the various pupil councils listen carefully and take action on important issues. Recent litter picking in and around the school made a significant difference to the local environment.

RE is a highly valued subject enjoyed by pupils and taught with academic rigour across the school. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure a balance of approaches to study. This includes consideration of how people with a wide range of worldviews think, believe and live. Leaders have a clear rationale for the choices of worldviews studied, based on the school's context. As a result, the design of the curriculum ensures pupils are well-prepared for the diversity of life in modern Britain. Teachers are supported with high quality resources and regular training. Leaders review the content and order of units of work to ensure they are relevant and offer sufficient challenge. However, continuous improvement based on regular monitoring by the governing body, is not fully developed. Pupils express and explore their own thoughts and opinions confidently in response to what they learn. The curriculum is effective in providing appropriate knowledge and skills in the study of a range of worldviews.

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

Information			
Inspection date	11 March 2024	URN	115129
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	342
Diocese	Chelmsford		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Linda Todd		
Chair	Simon Bird		
Inspector	Peter Barfoot	No.	2216