

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Dunmow St Mary's Primary School</b>			
<b>Address</b>	High Stile, Great Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1EB		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	03/10/2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Foundation Primary
<b>Diocese / Methodist District</b>	Chelmsford	<b>URN</b>	115229

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Dunmow St Mary's is a large Church of England foundation primary school. There are currently 442 children on roll. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average, although the children for whom the school receives pupil premium funding due to social disadvantage is below the national average. Links with the church are longstanding.

### The school's Christian vision

Our children will flourish by becoming resilient, reflective, independent learners in order to achieve their very best academically. Our staff will be united in providing a stimulating and supportive learning environment. Our parents will have confidence that their children will receive an education that embraces academic excellence underpinned by strong Christian values.

### Key findings

- There is an inclusive Christian vision with associated values that are central to school life and decision making. Although clearly articulated by school leaders it is not well expressed in the public domain, such as through policy documents and on the school's website. Monitoring the impact of the school's vision is under-developed.
- The school is inclusive and values every child as precious to God which results in pupils feeling safe and well cared for. Attainment and progress is good for most pupils. However, the attainment and progress of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.
- Worship is well structured and delivered, drawing on clear biblical teaching which pupils relate well to life in Britain today.
- Strong links with the church helps to develop an understanding of the Christian calendar and enhances spiritual development opportunities well.
- Religious education (RE) is well organised which allows pupils to develop attitudes of acceptance and tolerance through the wide range of religious beliefs and teachings they encounter.

### Areas for development

- Ensure a strategic plan for deepening the impact of the school's Christian vision is put in place so that the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school vision is enhanced and effectively monitored and evaluated.
- Ensure that the school's Christian vision and distinctiveness is fully and explicitly expressed on the website and in public documents.
- Ensure that disadvantaged and other vulnerable pupils achieve at least as well as the national average for similar pupils in order to fulfil the school's vision to, 'achieve their best academically'.

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**

Senior leaders demonstrate a passion for the success and well-being of pupils at Dunmow St Mary's. The vision and values are central to leaders' decision-making as they seek to ensure that every pupil is successful. However, the school vision is not well articulated in the public domain, such as in policies and through the website. This minimises its impact across the whole school community. However, the way that the school interprets this vision in action is deeply based around a strong theology. For example, every pupil in school is treated as a child of God. This is evident from the way the school invests in strong and effective pastoral support. One child said that 'it is alright to be different at our school; in fact, that is a good thing'. The parents recognise the way that the school nurtures the children and celebrates what they are good at. As a result of the strong vision and commitment of staff, instances of bullying are very rare and dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Hence attendance is above the national average.

Informal monitoring by governors and senior leaders on the impact of the vision takes place but this is not rigorous or regular enough and so its influence is lessened. Pupils' ideas and comments are addressed. An example is their questions surrounding prayer. This resulted in training for staff and pupils to make prayer more accessible. The impact of this is seen in worship where actions are used to help pupils and adults focus during prayer times. The areas that were highlighted for improvement in the previous denominational inspection have been successfully addressed. Leadership have the staff's best interests at heart and regularly assess workload. It means that staff members feel they are respected and treated with dignity. As a result, a real culture of care is seen in the school.

Pupils achieve above the national average by the time they leave the school. The progress is above that expected of others with similar starting points. The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils is variable. The school environment provides a safe space for the pupils to develop spiritually and feel safe to ask deep questions about life, God and purpose. This space is provided through carefully thought out RE lessons, good worship opportunities and a school reflective area. Prayer is a key part of the pupils' spiritual development with regular opportunities to pray in worship and throughout the day. Pupils see prayer as a chance to talk and listen to God and sharing any problems they might have. The school vision is well expressed through a broad and balanced curriculum. This successfully provides a stimulating environment in which pupils can grow. The school has a clear and age-appropriate approach to teaching about healthy relationships.

Pupils are developing good skills in theological enquiry and have a clear understanding of a range of major faiths, including Christianity. RE is enthusiastically led, teachers being supported by both the subject leader and the rector. The school also utilises the support of Chelmsford diocesan link advisors appropriately. The school is in a period of planned transition with its RE curriculum. However, it has ensured that it meets the statutory requirements, reflecting well the Church of England statement of Entitlement for RE. Through RE pupils are gaining a depth of understanding about a range of world faiths. Reflecting on this one pupil said that we need to know about each other so that we can show each other respect.

The school is a place of reconciliation and support. No one feels unfairly dealt with or ignored. The school behaviour policy is based around pupils understanding what they could improve rather than just a punishment. This means everyone is given time to be listened to and promotes fairness. Behaviour around the school is linked to a clear policy that aims to teach children how to resolve issues. Pupils link their behaviour and actions to teachings from worship such as the Good Samaritan or the story of Aaron where he learnt forgiveness.

Staff, pupils and parents feel valued; one parent said, "This is a real community, it doesn't matter who you are you are welcomed and included". A good example of this is the work the school does with the church to support real matters within the community such as CHESS, where pupils bring in items to help this homeless charity. Staff and pupils address recycling and environmental issues. This results in the school being a centre for change. Pupils understand that these initiatives come from its values of integrity and nurture, giving people hope and showing them respect. Pupils at the school have a strong awareness about global issues and raise money each year to buy acres of rainforest land. This is enhanced by lessons designed around asking big issues questions and promoting healthy discussion, debate, and friendly challenge. For example, pupils have discussed questions such as 'Where is God', with maturity and sensitivity. The school further enhances discussion and debate with a 'biscuits and banter' club where pupils can discuss hot topics in school and around the world. The school's aim is to develop the whole child and there are a great number of clubs and activities to take part in to enhance this. Pupils appreciate and enjoy these activities.

Worship in the school is well planned and involves various members of the teaching staff and the church. This joined-up planning means that there are strong and meaningful links with the wider community. The structure of the weekly worship allows for variety which engages pupils and adults well. Reflection and prayer are an integral part of the worship. The programme focuses strongly on the person of Jesus. Pupils were able to link worship themes to the school vision, Bible stories and to their lives. From RE and worship the pupils have a growing awareness and understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Music also helps to create a reverent atmosphere; pupils and adults sing out from their hearts and truly enjoy themselves making collective worship accessible to all.

The school has strong links with the church and local community. Clergy come into school to deliver worship but the pupils attend four services in church each year. The pupils see the church as an extension of the school and speak positively about projects that they carry out in the local church as part of their curriculum. The school is heavily involved with the church's 120 outreach project and this enhances its vision by adding variety and depth to the pupils' learning.

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