

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Address	Portman Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2AX.		
Date of inspection	29 October 2019	Status of school	Academy – St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Multi Academy Trust – Inspected as VA.
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	URN	146229

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

St Matthew's is a primary school with 417 pupils on roll. The school has a high level of religious and cultural diversity and many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. The school became an Academy in March 2019 as part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Multi Academy Trust. The headteacher has been leading the school since September 2019 having previously had the role of deputy headteacher.

The school's Christian vision

'Whatever you do, do it with all your heart', Colossians 3:23

The school's six associated values are love, community, forgiveness, peace, thankfulness and wisdom.

Key findings

- The school leaders very effectively demonstrate how the school's vision and values inform and shape the strategic direction of the school. They completely underpin innovation in policy and practice in an exemplary way.
- Pupils talk confidently and with passion about how everyone in the school lives out the vision and how the values support that.
- Governors have very effective systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school life. They work closely with staff to ensure that the school is a shining example of a Church school.
- Practical, pastoral and academic support for pupils and their families is a striking example of the school's vision. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is outstanding.
- The school and the Church have a close working relationship. Clergy support worship both in school and in the Church. Collective worship is a strength and the school is ambitious for ongoing improvement and innovation.
- Pupils are motivated and inspired by religious education (RE). It is well led but at present the assessment is not sufficiently effective to drive forward improvement.

Areas for development

- To ensure that assessment in RE is used effectively to move pupils on in their learning. To add RE to the whole school tracking system for recording and analysing pupil progress in RE to more effectively inform future planning.
- To look for innovative ways to make collective worship even more engaging. Include pupils more fully in all areas of planning and delivery of daily worship.

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

The school's vision and six associated values are passionately articulated by all stakeholders. The vision is the Bible verse, 'Whatever you do, do it with all your heart'. This is illustrated, for example, through pupils' exemplary attitudes to work as well as their aspirational attitudes. All stakeholders played a part in developing and embedding the vision. Governors are integral to the life of the school. Their support and expertise are evident. They continually strive to further deepen the school's Christian distinctiveness and contribute significantly to the school's excellent Christian leadership. Their focus on ensuring the very best for their Church school is illustrated by their desire to see the school benefitting from becoming an academy within the diocesan MAT. They were also actively involved in the selection of a new headteacher who would continue to drive forward the Christian vision of the school in an innovative and exemplary way. Governors regularly monitor RE and worship. Their contribution to monitoring is complemented by that of staff and pupils. This ensures that the school is continually implementing ways to support the pupils and staff on their spiritual journeys. RE is given a high priority and enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of a range of world faiths including Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism. The RE leader is highly skilled and passionate about supporting staff. The three ordained staff at the local church are regularly in school and contribute significantly to the excellent spiritual development of all the pupils. Areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have been successfully addressed. One example is the implementation of strategies to develop all pupils' confidence and motivation. The school is a flagship for its innovative work with its EAL pupils. For over half of the pupils English is not their first language and is not spoken at home. Staff with specific language skills, have been appointed to support families.

All decisions made regarding the curriculum and extra-curricular activities stem from the strong Christian vision that is tangible throughout the school. There is a caring, fully inclusive ethos. Staff have high aspirations for themselves and their pupils. The school has established a programme for its Roma pupils and their families. They support the parents in providing language lessons and practical support for daily living. This includes practical tasks such as making appointments for health care and supporting housing issues. The school is passionate in working with families acknowledging the great benefit of home and school working closely together to enable pupils to flourish. The appointment of a teaching assistant who speaks Roma and acts as a translator means that parents can communicate more effectively with the school and support their children's learning. High aspirations and academic rigour ensure that all pupils flourish and shine. Attainment in Key Stage 1 is below national expectations because of many pupils' speech and language difficulties. However, by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is at least in line with national expectations and all pupils make good or better progress from their starting point. The school chaplain, family support worker and the skilled support staff work alongside the teaching staff to very ably support pupils' emotional needs.

Pupils confidently relate the vision and values in shaping their attitudes to work and behaviour. The school council decide on which local and national charities to select for fund-raising. One example is ongoing communication and support for a child in Senegal. Pupils are passionate about supporting others as a way of following the example of Jesus, sharing what they have and demonstrating courageous advocacy.

Pupils behave well. The new whole school rules are based on the vision and associated values and focus on reconciliation and positivity. The school is recognised in the community as a centre for practical and emotional support for all its families. This is provided both from the staff in school and through signposting to external providers. Governors give a high priority to the wellbeing of staff and pupils. Staff praise the support and care they are given and this is illustrated by the high staff retention and positive attitudes of all staff.

A focus on inclusion, particularly with regard to culture and tradition, has had a significant impact on how the school is enabling pupils and their families to flourish and grow. Practical action to address attendance concerns related to cultural diversity and lack of understanding of the importance of regular attendance and arriving at school on time has made a positive difference. The curriculum is a successful vehicle for developing greater understanding of different cultures and faiths. Pupils and their parents from different cultures are encouraged to share their knowledge when it contributes to related topics.

Collective worship is totally inclusive and engaging. It is the focal point of the day and celebrates fully the school's Christian ethos contributing significantly to pupils' and staff spiritual journeys. The vision and values are referenced throughout. It is well planned by the headteacher and culturally relevant to all pupils. The school church council positively carries out its role to actively promote the Christian ethos but pupils are not yet sufficiently proactive to deepen their ownership of worship. Reflection and prayer are very important to the life of the school and pupils talk confidently about why they pray and why they feel it is important. Pupils have excellent Bible knowledge and can thoughtfully relate stories to their lives and explain how these illustrate their school's Christian values. The clergy regularly contribute to the worship programme supporting pupils' developing understanding of Anglican traditions including the Eucharist. Pupils value St Matthew's church as an extension of the school. Worship for Key Stage 2 pupils takes place in church every Thursday. The church is also used for whole school celebrations of the major Christian festivals. Parents enthusiastically attend these. There is a termly Eucharist for staff. To ensure excellent practice is extended firm plans are in place to increase further pupil involvement in planning and leading worship more regularly.

There is evidence of very good practice in RE throughout the school. The highly skilled RE subject leader ensures that teachers have the training and expertise necessary to deliver inspiring, well planned lessons. Effective planning in RE ensures that all lessons are exciting and challenging and pupils say they enjoy RE. Very effective use is made of questioning and critical thinking. Everyone's views are listened to and valued. Lessons are fully inclusive with support for pupils with any educational needs or disabilities. Excellent use is made of wall displays and 'Scrapbooks' to record and celebrate pupils' learning. Staff carry out regular assessment activities but these have only a limited impact upon supporting pupils' progress. There is an appropriate balance between the teaching of Christianity and other world faiths which fully reflects the Church of England's statement of entitlement for RE.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Teaching is always good and often better in all RE lessons but the assessment system used to inform planning is not sufficiently rigorous and is therefore not effective in driving forward standards. Attainment and progress for all pupils in RE is in line with national expectations and with other core subjects.

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Inspector's name and number	Gillian Holmes 849