

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Weasenham Primary Academy			
Address	Common End, Weasenham, King's Lynn. Norfolk PE32 2SP		
Date of inspection	21 June 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as voluntary controlled: Diocese of Norwich Education & Academies Trust (DNEAT)
Diocese	Norwich	URN	142855

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	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Weasenham is a primary academy with 33 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British Heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above the national average. The school is federated with nearby Rudham Church of England Primary Academy under the leadership of an executive headteacher.

The school's Christian vision

By sowing the seeds of resilience and aspirations, children are embraced by the small school community, to develop dignity and wisdom in order to flourish through the field of life'.
Luke Ch8 v1: 'The seed is the word of God'

Key findings

- Staff and governors have worked together to agree a vision statement which reflects the context of the school well. Work has been done to grow pupils' understanding of the relevance of the vision for them, but it is not yet the foundation and driver for all aspects of the life of the school.
- Pupils benefit from a broad, exciting and engaging curriculum, complemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits, which enables them to grow and flourish.
- Religious education (RE) is a strength of the school. The subject leader is highly effective in drawing on a range of strategies to ensure pupils enjoy their learning and are challenged in their thinking.
- Although the importance of collective worship is recognised by all, the opportunity for it to contribute to the outworking of the school's vision is not fully exploited.

Areas for development

- Continue the process of embedding and fully utilising the Christian vision so that it is fully understood and appreciated by the whole school community and impacts all areas of school life.
- Seek more frequent and deeper evaluation of collective worship by all stakeholders, including pupils, utilising the outcomes to inform change and strengthen its impact.
- Broaden pupils' engagement with areas set aside for reflection and prayer, linked to the school's vision, thereby encouraging and supporting pupils' spiritual development.

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 vision statement was introduced in the Autumn of 2018, having been agreed through a series of discussions between staff and governors. A key Bible verse was selected to underpin the vision and a parable of Jesus selected to assist pupils in their understanding of how the vision applies to their lives. A clear and helpful explanation of the vision and related Christian values has been posted on the school's website. Pupils link the vision to their learning and growth as individuals, seeing themselves as the seed planted by the sower. However, they struggle to verbalise the relevance of the Bible verse. Senior leaders and governors have begun the process of reviewing key policies in the light of the new vision. Good progress has been made towards their stated ambition of the vision driving all of their decision making.

The vision underpins the educational and personal development of pupils. This is particularly the case in respect of a curriculum characterised by exploration, discussion and discovery. For a very small school the range of extra-curricular activities and visits, including residential journeys, is exceptional. Leaders ensure all pupils are able to take part, enabling every individual to grow and flourish. Full advantage is taken of the small class sizes to personalise learning. Staff, whether in leadership, teaching or support role, are passionate about their school and its Christian service to all its pupils. They are effective in helping those facing barriers to learning make progress, drawing on external agencies as necessary. The pastoral as well as the educational support provided has enabled all pupils to flourish. This is extended to families who may be experiencing difficulties. The school has welcomed pupils who have experienced difficulty in other settings, valuing them as God's children. Effective additional support has ensured that these pupils succeed alongside their peers. Where pupil numbers are very small, published data is variable. The school has set ambitious targets for all pupils and pupil workbooks indicate that good progress is being made to realising these. Earlier in the year OFSTED identified the need for more able pupils to be fully extended and there is clear evidence that this priority has been successfully addressed.

Strong partnerships exist with the diocese and between schools within the federation. Effective use has been made of training events provided by the diocese, particularly in relation to RE. Collaboration and training within the federation are effective in supporting and developing staff, including those who aspire to be future Church school leaders. As a measure of its confidence in the leadership of the school, DNEAT has asked senior leaders to take responsibility for a third school which is currently experiencing difficulties. One governing body oversees both schools and members visit regularly. The ethos and community committee contribute significantly to the self-evaluation of the school, which is detailed and accurate. Evaluation and future development planning are based on evidence secured through monitoring and discussion with pupils and parents. Although governors know their school well, records of monitoring of RE and collective worship are descriptive rather than evaluative.

As an outworking of the school's vision leaders are successfully encouraging pupils to raise their aspirations for themselves and each other. Pupils demonstrate resilience when their learning is challenging and make positive choices, particularly in supporting and encouraging each other. In the classroom, in worship and informally in the playground pupils of all ages work and play together. Parents regard this as particularly beneficial, some travelling a considerable distance in order to be part of what one described as 'a really happy family. Sending my child here was the best decision I ever made.' Behaviour is exemplary. Across the federation there is a recognition of the importance of child and adult mental health. Leaders have engaged in training and a mental health first aider is established within the federation.

The Christian value of compassion is manifest in support for a range of national and international charities. Pupils' appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity is limited. To address this, and to deepen social and moral awareness, the school is committed to achieving the 'Global Neighbours' kitemark. This will also serve to further develop cultural, social and moral awareness. Attractive spaces have been created for prayer and reflection. Although these include helpful stimuli they are generally perceived by pupils as places where they can go to be calm rather than for fostering their spiritual development.

Collective worship is central to the expression of the school's Christian foundation. The programme is well planned, encouraging pupils and staff to live out the school's values and consider key Christian beliefs. All pupils and staff become involved. They listen attentively and are keen to answer questions and discuss the Christian value for the half term. The inclusive approach nourishes individuals and leads to personal response. One reported that, when considering the value of reconciliation, he was able to relate this to his own life and it changed how he deals with difficult situations. However, links with the school's vision are less clear. The wide

variety of styles of worship ensure that pupils are fully engaged. This is particularly the case in ‘messy assembly’, during which pupils engage in a range of practical activities. The clear worship structure includes pupils reciting liturgical phrases for gathering and sending, contributing to pupils’ appreciation of Anglican worship, beliefs and traditions. This is enhanced by the parish rector regularly leading of worship and working closely with the pupil worship group to plan when worship moves to the parish church. Although pupils and governors contribute periodically to the evaluation of worship, this process is insufficiently robust to have significant impact on further development.

RE is very well led. The subject leader shares her expertise to support the delivery of relevant and stimulating RE. There is a good balance between theology, philosophy and human science and between Christianity and major world faiths. RE is a priority. Leaders ensure that it is of high quality and supports the development of the vision. Assessment is based on age-related statements and informs teachers as they plan future lessons. Challenging questions prompt pupils to question their own beliefs and preconceptions. Pupils recognise the importance of RE in informing their understanding and tolerance of other people’s beliefs.

The areas for development identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. The school’s effectiveness as a Church of England school has continued to grow, enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

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