

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Long Melford Church of England Primary School

Address	Cordell Road, Long Melford, Suffolk, CO10 9ED		
Date of inspection	9 May 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	URN	143147

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

School context

Long Melford is a primary academy with 172 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few 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 (SEND) is above national averages. The school joined the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust in 2016.

The school's Christian vision

The school's vision is 'Include, Achieve and Care' and is set within the story of Noah's Ark. When we think of Noah's Ark, we think of the rainbow and God's everlasting Covenant. It reminds us to show friendship, to be wise, hopeful and live well together with dignity and respect. Jesus says: 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.' John 10:10

Key findings

- The highly committed leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by governors and staff, has created an inclusive community in which a Christian vision is driving everything the school does, enabling all to flourish.
- Although relatively new, the school vision is already embedded because it is understood well by pupils, governors and staff.
- Attention paid to staff wellbeing following a turbulent period has resulted in all feeling valued, cared for and determined to be the best they can be, resulting in good outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' involvement in leading collective worship (CW) is not yet contributing significantly to their understanding of how worship impacts upon their daily lives.
- An excellent partnership with the local Church offers a range of additional experiences for pupils. As a result, they are active in the village and making a difference to their local community.

Areas for development

- Ensure the school's strong Christian vision and its centrality in the life of the school is understood by all.
- Develop effective monitoring and evaluating of CW so that its impact on all is more clearly understood and provision is further developed.
- Extend governors' monitoring and evaluating role to encompass the school's strong Christian distinctiveness in order to measure its impact on the school community.

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

Long Melford is a school where all feel welcomed and valued. Deeply held Christian values of respect, hope and fairness sit at the heart of everything the school does. As a result, there is a harmonious community working and living well together. The school prides itself on being an integral part of the local community. Clearly identified opportunities to engage in practical projects are giving pupils a deep understanding of the Christian value of service. Work undertaken as part of the local neighbourhood plan has enabled pupils to be involved in shaping local services for the future and demonstrates powerfully the commitment of the school to developing pupil voice. Pupils show good understanding of the biblical basis of the school vision. Using the story of Noah, leaders have worked tirelessly to bring this into everything they do: the success of their approach can be seen in the good understanding demonstrated by pupils of this Christian vision, 'We welcome all people as part of our community, just like Noah did'. Leaders have ensured that a focus on the development of teaching and learning has run alongside Christian values. As a result of this clarity of thought, these values are embedded and understood by pupils, staff and governors.

Learning in religious education (RE) is enjoyed by pupils who, through the Emmanuel Project, gain an insight into major world faiths alongside Christianity. Input from pupils of a range of faiths, happy to share their beliefs, has led to greater understanding of the impact of faith on individuals and a well-developed respect for other points of view. RE is assessed carefully using the school's tracker system and leaders can demonstrate good progress for all groups, including vulnerable pupils. Through careful marking, pupils are being encouraged to think deeply about RE and this is contributing to their personal development. Pupils' spiritual development is being supported effectively through the provision of prayer spaces both in and outside the classroom, enabling pupils to take time out to reflect. Wonder boards allow all pupils to share questions about faith, the modern world and personal challenges being faced. The centrality of prayer enables pupils to speak with great maturity about talking to God.

A mutually beneficial partnership exists between school and church which strongly supports the school's Christian character. Together with church services, a regular Messy Church is held in the school. Several church members support worship in school. Pupils enjoy the opportunities this close relationship brings and parents feel well supported, especially in challenging times. The school offers a beacon of hope, like the rainbow in the story of Noah. This has been cultivated by the strong Christian leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors and can be seen in the provision of wrap-around care and the support given to families in times of need. Governors, led by an able chair, embrace the role of critical friend and enjoy a strong Christian presence. Detailed monitoring activities ensure they are well informed about standards, but monitoring Christian distinctiveness is not sufficiently well developed to offer strong challenge. Governors attend training opportunities provided by the MAT and the impact of this can be seen in the way they have developed their role in challenging leaders.

A deeply held Christian conviction that school should be inclusive has resulted in a staff team galvanised by the energy and dedication of the headteacher. She inspires a happy, stable environment which allows people to flourish. Investment in developing middle leaders demonstrates a commitment to enabling all to flourish and contributes to staff feelings of self-worth. As a result, staff work enthusiastically to move the school forward. One example can be seen in the work of the SENCO, who coordinates intervention programmes that are highly effective. The MAT uses the school as an example of good practice. Staff eagerly take up professional development opportunities. This has been particularly effective in RE and has led to several initiatives, such as scrapbooks, which demonstrate the richness of the curriculum on offer to the pupils.

Christian values clearly drive the work of the school, especially approaches to behaviour management and attendance. Forgiveness underpins the behaviour policy and is clearly understood by pupils who say they trust staff to sort out any issues. Behaviour is good and attributed to the Christian value of respect. This was clear in the playground with pupils from nursery to year 6 playing happily together. A buddy system contributes significantly to wellbeing, as all say they feel safe and secure. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and are making good progress from their starting points. The provision of an emotional literacy support assistant, who works on short term, highly focussed interventions for a variety of needs, is proving to be very successful. This work ensures pupils have the skills they need to flourish in the modern world. The 'building learning power' approach, linked to perseverance, enables pupils to make good progress in their learning.

Collective worship, inclusive and invitational, supports the school vision because it provides all pupils and adults with opportunities to reflect on God's world and their place within it. Timing has been carefully considered to highlight it as a special time. Staff say it provides a daily opportunity to come together as a school family in order to reflect and praise. Pupils have good knowledge of the centrality of the Bible to Christian worship and an appropriate understanding of the relevance of the teachings of Jesus Christ. 'I like the story of the prodigal son because the son goes and does the wrong thing and comes back and is forgiven.' Whilst pupils have a good understanding of core Christian values, there is no provision for monitoring the extent to which they impact on pupils' daily lives. Staff, for example, are not all able to talk confidently about how worship contributes significantly to the life of the school. However, staff with a personal faith say their own spiritual development is supported by attending worship in school. Pupils say they enjoy attending and demonstrate respect, especially during reflection time when they engage in quiet contemplation whether they have a faith or not. Worship develops understanding of Anglican traditions and celebrates the main Christian festivals. There is a focus area, adorned with symbols of Anglican worship. Pupils experience a range of worship styles from staff and church representatives. Pupils avidly take up opportunities to plan and lead worship. This gives them a strong sense of ownership and is contributing significantly to their confidence and self-esteem.

Headteacher	Amanda Woolmer
Inspector's name and number	Linda Russell 893