

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Homefield VC CofE Primary School			
Address	. Homefield Avenue, Great Yarmouth, NR31 8NS		
Date of inspection	05 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled
Diocese	Norwich	URN	121097

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	Excellent

School context

Homefield Church of England VC is a primary school with 241 pupils on roll including the nursery. Most pupils are of white British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also in line with national average. The percentage of children who are looked after is below the national average. The headteacher has been substantive head since October 2016, having been deputy head for two years prior to this. The chair of governors has been in post for approx. eight years.

The school's Christian vision

I John 4:21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.
Psalm 133:1 - Oh, how wonderful, how pleasing it is when God's people all come together as one.
"TOGETHER, WE ARE A FAMILY THAT CARES FOR, VALUES AND ENCOURAGES ALL BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO SHINE"

Key findings

- Since the last inspection, excellence as a church school has been sustained and developed.
- The Christian vision permeates all levels of school life and is embedded in systems and processes.
- RE is a strength, and the school is actively involved in sharing good practice.
- The revised curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to flourish, including the most vulnerable.
- Experiences of world faiths and cultures is less developed than other aspects of RE.
- Although spiritual development is taking place, there is no shared language for staff and pupils to articulate their experiences.

Areas for development

- Ensure that spiritual development is planned for and monitored across the curriculum, so that a shared understanding and vocabulary can be developed.
- Continue to seek out opportunities for pupils to develop a greater appreciation of world faiths and other cultures.

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

All aspects of school life are inspired by the theologically based vision, underpinned by Christian values. There is a cohesive approach to integrating the vision into leadership and management at all levels. Both vision and values were chosen to reflect the context of the community the school serves. Thus, they promote the ethos of the school as a safe, caring 'home' – taken from the first part of the school's name, Homefield. All members of the community understand this and know they have a responsibility in living out the vision, that the school is a family, with all that that entails. Leaders including governors, are passionate in modelling the vision. This ensures that it permeates to all levels. There are many examples of how pupils and their families have benefited from this. It has had a transformational effect on the lives of some. One parent said they 'do not know what path {their child} would have taken' had they not come to the school and received caring support from staff. This was echoed by others who feel deeply that the behaviour of their children as a result of the Christian vision and values promoted by the school.

Leaders, particularly the head and chair of governors, generate a culture of continuous development where a clear link has been made between Christian distinctiveness and school improvement. This is illustrated by regular 'challenge days' when an aspect of the school's action plan and an aspect of school distinctiveness are reviewed together. Governors join school leaders in rigorously evaluating the impact of all actions taken. Points noted are acted upon quickly and effectively. All policies reference the vision, and many contain a relevant, well known Bible verse as an aide memoire. Governors reference the vision when making all decisions, including difficult financial ones, and use it as a benchmark for determining how they are carried out fairly.

Staff know that they are valued by leaders who are mindful of their well-being. In an outworking of the vision, they appreciate the support and opportunities for career development that they are given.

Led by the headteacher, staff are unequivocal in wanting pupils to be the best they can be and provide innovative opportunities for this to happen. Access to outdoor learning activities is exceptional. It enables all pupils to develop practical skills as well as fostering characteristics such as resilience. Pupils gain confidence as learners through achieving in archery or bush craft.

Pupil premium funding is used creatively to match the needs of each pupil. It is regularly reviewed showing clear evidence that actions have led to improved outcomes. For example, the 'Generations Project' involving pupils and their families has 'reawakened a love of learning'.

Driven by the vision for all pupils to flourish, the curriculum was revised in 2018. Trips, visits and extra-curricular activities ensure it is fully accessible. In consultation with staff, parents and pupils a decision was made to teach some subjects, including RE, in 'blocks' across a half term. Pupils enjoy learning in this way, and the quality of work in these subjects has improved. Through links with a local college, pupils see what is possible in their future, and aspirations are raised.

Communication was identified by staff and governors as an issue and is now a strength. The extensive website, where every page makes reference to the vision, and the use of social media are seen as key in reaching out to the school and wider community. An online video proclaims what the school stands for. The decision to use paper-less methods as the principal way to share information was made on ecological and financial grounds. It has been an unmitigated success. Parent interaction with the school has increased and weekly blogs are enjoyed by all. Evidence of wider impact is that a veteran soldier 'turned up' at the Remembrance Day parade led by the school having heard about it through social media.

Pupils make an authentic contribution to strategic decision making. They demonstrate courageous advocacy in many ways such as involvement in a campaign to support the homeless in the local area. Pupils are passionate about equality, social injustice and ethical issues. They know that they can and do make a positive difference to the lives of others. Each of the pupil committees has a job specification and action plan which they implement with pride.

Caring Crusaders, for example, apply a restorative approach to playground disputes which is so effective that staff are rarely involved. In recognition, they have won a prestigious Diana award for service three times. The school council spearheads fund raising for local and national causes which are often personal to the school.

RE is well led and managed. The foundation governor is effective in monitoring provision. The school is widely recognised, including by the diocese, as a hub of good practice. The RE lead has contributed to the development of the new RE Norfolk agreed syllabus. As a result, provision is exemplary. The quality of work produced by pupils and their knowledge, skills and understanding of Christianity and world faiths is excellent. Big questions are tackled through a growth mindset approach and the three strands of RE; theology, philosophy and human/social science. Although spiritual development is taking place as part of these, it is not always distinct. There is no shared vocabulary which enables pupils to articulate their experiences so further opportunities can be missed.

Leaders are conscious that school is mono cultural and have made efforts to address this. Using resources available such as diocesan days they ensure that knowledge of other cultures and world faiths is covered as part of the curriculum. However, this remains an area where pupils lack experience.

There currently is no clergy member in post but relationships with the local church remain strong, Services take place there fortnightly, supported by members of the congregation. The assistant priest leads collective worship regularly and provides pastoral support. This is much appreciated by all.

Collective worship is seen as central to the school's identity. Pupils and staff who are not Christian are appreciative of its invitational and inclusive approach. After each collective worship, members of the school evaluate the impact through a reflection journal. Pupils routinely plan and deliver collective worship and the collective worship committee evaluate its impact alongside the headteacher. The value of prayer and reflection is articulated by pupils who like to say thank you for happy times or find it comforting when things are difficult. Prayer and reflection spaces are well used, including those in the outdoor learning area.

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