

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

<b>Ridgewell Church of England Primary School</b>			
<b>Address</b>	Church Lane, Ridgewell, Halstead, Essex, CO9 4SA		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	02/10/2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Academy inspected as VA, within The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust
<b>Diocese</b>	Chelmsford	<b>URN</b>	144645

<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>
	<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Ridgewell is a primary academy with 72 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are White British. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The school serves a significant number of pupils from the Traveller community. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is broadly in line with national averages as is the proportion who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Since the school was put into Special Measures by OfSTED in 2016, it has joined the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust. Since then, there have been significant staff changes at all levels.

### The school's Christian vision

Laying Foundations for Life-Long Learning. Guided by our Christian Values and the teachings of Jesus, we are encouraged to learn and grow together; building love and respect for others.

"For I know the plans I have for you... to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

### Key findings

- School leaders have developed a biblically based vision in consultation with their stakeholders and with the support of the Vine Trust and diocesan advisers. It is well suited to its context and, whilst not being embedded, is beginning to have a positive impact on all areas of school life.
- The school's vision and associated values contribute well to a sense that the school is a close community with a focus on the development and the nurture of the whole child. This results in progress for most pupils which is broadly in line with national averages.
- There is a growing awareness in pupils of all ages of the need to be courageous advocates for change in order to make the world a better place.
- Collective worship is an important time where the community is invited to think about their vision, values and purpose through questioning and reflection. This complements the school's creative approach to spirituality, although the range of opportunities for personal prayer across the school is more limited.
- Provision for RE has improved considerably since the previous denominational inspection but expectations are not yet consistently embedded throughout the school.

### Areas for development

- Embed and sustain the recently established vision to ensure that levels of progress continue to improve for all pupils.
- Establish a wide range of opportunities for prayer throughout the school to further enrich the spiritual development of the whole school community.
- Ensure that recording in RE is consistently reflecting the school's expectations that learning is focused on enquiry and deeper thinking.

**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 recently established vision has a clear biblical basis. It focuses on hope and laying firm foundations and is taking root rapidly in the school. Following a judgement of requiring special measures by OfSTED in 2016, the executive headteacher and head of school have worked effectively to improve teaching and learning, well supported by all staff and governors. This means that pupil progress is broadly in line with national averages for most of its pupils. Where this is not the case, appropriate interventions are put in place quickly. In the context of some small cohorts, this has resulted in better than expected outcomes for some vulnerable pupils. This continues to be a work in progress to ensure that the school's aspirational vision is fulfilled for everyone. Parents speak of the value and impact of such support for their children, both academic and emotional. They also praise the impact of the school 'family' on the flourishing of the whole child, including their moral and spiritual development. A range of effective and fruitful partnerships has been successfully forged and managed by school leaders including with the Vine Trust, the Diocese of Chelmsford, its partnership school, other local schools, and the church and village communities. Such collaborations are a demonstration of the increasingly outward looking focus of the school. Governors, who work as a single board across Ridgewell and Belchamp St Paul, play an effective role in holding the school to account as a Church school. Continuing professional development is well matched to the needs and interests of staff in the school, ensuring that their flourishing is in line with that of the children and their families. This means that staff feel valued and that they are highly committed to the school's vision and associated values.

The school lays good foundations for spiritual development, with an approach that is well suited to the school's small and rural context. This has grown out of diocesan leadership training attended by the head of school and has been shared and developed in co-operation with leaders, staff and pupils. Everyone has been encouraged to consider how they relate to others, to God and to the wider world through a series of rich experiences. These have included opportunities for awe and wonder especially outdoors, different expressions of Christian spirituality in collective worship, and a whole curriculum focus on space for quiet and reflection. This has resulted in pupils and adults being able to gain personal benefit from silence, both in worship and in class. Pupils are less confident about where to offer their own written and spoken prayers within the school day.

Pupils understand how the school's associated values of wisdom, respect, hope and friendship lay the foundations for their behaviour and their learning. An exploration of harvest, in preparation for an act of worship in church, has raised pupils' awareness of inequality in the world. This means that they are beginning to use the language of courageous advocacy as they consider how they can help and fundraise for others, both nationally and globally. The curriculum presents several opportunities to ask big questions about unfairness in the world as well as about Christian concepts in RE. This provides good foundations for developing curiosity and a deeper understanding of the wider world. It also contributes to their understanding of global difference and diversity.

Senior leaders, well supported by all staff, have ensured that the school's associated values are clear drivers for behaviour and attitudes, and that they form a secure basis for relationships at all levels. The context of the school means that there is an emphasis on older pupils supporting those who are younger and acting as role models for them. The use of the 'Seeing Anew' approach in collective worship means that mixed age groups of pupils spend time in discussion and reflection together, for example. The views of pupils are considered across the life of the school, including in improving worship. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy school. Any persistent absence is acted upon quickly by leaders. Good relationships with families mean that any issues about absence or child welfare are dealt with sensitively in line with the love and respect of the vision. Support for the whole family forms the basis for care for the whole child, including for mental health, for which there is good provision in place. Pupils understand the importance of respect for others as a key value in their school which underpins their learning and their social interactions. They feel safe in school, knowing that they are treated equally, are loved and can form firm friendships across the whole age range because the school is small and is 'our family'.

Collective worship helps the pupils to reflect on their vision and values. They can explain how this time in the school day usually has a simple message which they can put into practice. It is also a time for grappling with some bigger issues, such as how the resources of the world are not shared wisely and how this might be changed. Praise through silence and through singing are important elements of worship. There is a focus on the teachings of Jesus

and there are increasing opportunities for pupil leadership, especially in relation to leading prayers. The worship group has started to monitor and evaluate worship so that their views can shape future practice. Local church leaders are active and very effective in supporting worship in creative and dynamic ways.

The current syllabus has improved pupils' knowledge and understanding in RE, especially in relation to Christian concepts and the ways in which faith is lived out. Pupils have some appreciation of why the subject is important in terms of their own personal development, and how it helps them to better celebrate difference and diversity in the world. They enjoy opportunities to express their ideas in creative ways and they are encouraged to share their own ideas in a safe space. Training for staff, some with the other primary school in the partnership, has increased subject knowledge and skills and thus improved confidence when teaching RE. Assessment is secure and is being developed further in order to help pupils to understand how to make their next steps of progress. The subject is well led and reflects the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement for RE appropriately.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

There has been an improvement in teaching and learning since the introduction of the Understanding Christianity resources which means that standards are broadly in line with the expectations of the syllabus for this religion. Plans are in place to develop an equally challenging RE curriculum for the major world faiths studied. All pupils are encouraged to express their ideas, both verbally and in recorded form, which means that they can explore big questions meaningfully. Most of the RE teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good with a clear focus on a key question. However, recorded work does not always reflect the good practice seen in lessons in terms of enquiry and deeper thinking.

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