



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Bishop's Church of England Primary Academy, Thetford	
Address	Canterbury Way, Thetford, IP24 1EB
School vision	
<p>Learning to live life in all its fulness in our safe and happy community. To have a culture of respect, where friendships are important and we forgive to grow together. We have courage to aim high, we persevere to achieve and serve all on our community's journey. As shepherds, we include everyone in our safe and happy school to live life in all its fullness. Jesus was God's shepherd on earth and his flock was not just for his followers but was open and included anyone – open to all. At Bishop's CE Academy our community is diverse and is our flock, we serve that flock as its shepherd to ensure everyone is able to learn and achieve by being safe and happy. Biblical Reference: John 10: 1-21</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders have a very clear understanding of, and commitment to, the Christian vision and values. This supports the flourishing of all within a caring and ambitious school environment. • Bishops is a highly inclusive and nurturing school. Support is provided for pupils, with their wellbeing a priority. Those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) or who are vulnerable, are able to flourish. • Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils and adults benefit from the commitments and valuable contributions made by a range of leaders. • Staff work hard to maintain the school's transformative journey of improvement. Leaders make considered and bold decisions about the curriculum and enrichment activities offered. Changes are made that have a real impact on the learning experience especially for those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. • Religious education (RE) is carefully planned and thoughtfully led. Pupils make good progress. They gain knowledge about religions and worldviews. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop pupils as agents for change within and beyond the school. This is to give pupils an understanding of their rights and responsibilities towards others in the wider world. • Enhance the breadth and richness of opportunities for spiritual development through planned curriculum activities and designated spaces. This is to enable pupils to develop spiritually. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Bishop's Christian vision is current, relevant and integral to the daily work of the school. Associated values, including courage, perseverance and service are frequently reflected on. Dedicated and focused leaders wholeheartedly encourage pupils to live life in all its fullness. They support pupils</p>	

and families to overcome difficulties. They fully understand the community they serve. Driven by the desire to transform life chances, they work hard to defeat challenges and make improvements. Staff actively 'shepherd their flock' so pupils raise aspirations and achieve their best. This means they are well supported to feel secure, increase their confidence and enjoy learning. Many opportunities are thoughtfully provided to extend their life and cultural experiences beyond the locality. These are appreciated by pupils, parents and carers. Leaders, including governors, provide clear direction. This means every choice reflects the needs of children and adults. Opening the Nursery and providing specialist inclusion provision are examples of this. Drawing on the wider educational community, this school has made sustainable changes from which pupils are benefitting. Leaders work tirelessly to support the flourishing of people in the school.

The vision underpins curriculum decisions which are then refined and implemented thoughtfully. School improvement has been consistent, with key choices such as new early learning approaches having a positive impact. Dedicated staff give considerable thought to broadening and enriching experiences. These are tailored to individual needs, as well as introducing differences and diversity in the global community. For example, the RE scheme effectively provides opportunities to broaden cultural awareness through visits and visitors such as a Buddhist priest. Achievements from across and beyond the taught curriculum are celebrated, providing the chance for pupils to take pride and flourish. They enjoy the opportunity to increase their knowledge and consider big questions. Because of this, pupils are inquisitive and talk excitedly about their learning. Staff provide experiences and learning designed to enhance their understanding of the world. Those who are vulnerable or with SEND are sensitively supported to develop and thrive. Practitioners and therapists offer provision that would otherwise be difficult to access. A breakfast club and popular extra-curricular activities facilitate wraparound care. This is a direct support for families. Adult learning opportunities and themed cafes are well attended and appreciated by parents. Consequently a culture has developed in which peoples' wellbeing is enhanced.

Collective worship is carefully planned and incorporates the vision and values of the school. Pupils are respectful, interested, and keen to feel members of this integral part of the school day. Singing and drama support memorable storytelling. There are opportunities for stillness, reflection and prayer. Spirituality is defined. However, opportunities to deepen it are underdeveloped. The chance to gather altogether to contemplate the start of a new day is valued by pupils and staff. The local church regularly leads worship, and pupils talk enthusiastically about what is provided. Dramatising Bible stories through 'Open the book' consolidates them and enhances the pupils' understanding in RE. 'Grace Church' meet weekly on the school's premises. This reinforces the idea that the church is an important part of the Bishop's community. Local leaders including the sports community minister, are highly involved. This, plus visits to local places of worship, provide opportunities for pupils to feel part of a wider Christian world. The pupils' committee is guided thoughtfully in how to lead class worship. This increases their confidence and is appreciated by those involved. A weekly session encourages thought about the wider world. Current affairs are then related to Christian values and themes. Invitations to seasonal celebrations and presentations such as the Christmas Nativity are valued and enjoyed by families. Opportunities for reflection and response are part of every gathering. Worship is inclusive, allowing those involved to flourish spiritually.

In order to create an inclusive culture where pupils can flourish, staff work relentlessly to develop positive relationships. They refer to the shared values that include friendship, forgiveness and respect. Wellbeing is given a high priority and good mental health is central. This allows for individual flourishing and the support of each other, even in difficult times. Pupils are expected to demonstrate respectful learning behaviour. Buddies welcome and encourage newcomers. Their work is much appreciated by those who have recently moved to the school. Effective transition arrangements mean integration happens quickly and successfully. Pupils have been explicitly taught how to reconcile after disagreements and know that bullying is unacceptable. They are taught that

‘every day is a new day’. Effective communication is in place for families which means attendance is improved. This ensures pupils are in school and ready to learn. Parents and carers rightly recognise that there is genuine nurture for individuals, whose lives and aspirations are valued. Achievements are celebrated in a weekly assembly. The community rejoices in the academic and personal development of individuals.

Leaders support staff professionally so they feel valued and respected. Training opportunities from the trust and the diocese are accessed at all levels. This has an impact as expertise is developed. A major Department for Education project on behaviour has had a positive effect on the culture of the school. Leaders are proactive, ensuring staff are given the time and space to fulfil their roles. This improves wellbeing. Justice is taught through subjects such as homelessness, which promotes an understanding of fairness and responsibility. Pupils make a difference to others through fundraising and supporting charities. Activities like reverse advent or the sugar mountain help to raise awareness of social issues. This ensures pupils gain an understanding of inequality and are learning how to challenge that. However, they do not understand how to become agents of change themselves, both in their own communities and the world.

RE has a high priority. It is carefully planned, reviewed and led. A well-structured curriculum and high-quality professional development is delivered by leaders. This ensures good teaching is in place. Subject knowledge is supported by local church leaders. Christianity is balanced with a range of world faiths that enriches the pupils' appreciation of religious diversity and worldviews. The enquiry-based scheme encourages curiosity and gives pupils the confidence to debate. It demands a range of responses, such as art, sculpture or drama which support their creativity. Activities are recorded into individual or class floor books and demonstrate the progress made by individuals. RE is engaging and work demonstrates reflection and thoughtfulness. Careful assessment and feedback from staff has an impact on the quality of work in books. It supports learning and understanding. Pupils are proud of their work and motivated to improve. RE is considered an important subject. It effectively helps them learn about the lives and beliefs of people around the world.

The inspection findings indicate that Bishops Church of England Primary Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	30 April 2024	URN	142633
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	390
Diocese	Norwich		
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust		
Headteacher	Lorraine Ratcliffe		
Chair	Kate Clements		
Inspector	Lynne Golding	No.	2124