

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Spellbrook Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	London Road, Spellbrook, Bishop’s Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 4BA

School vision

‘In everything – in every circumstance – do to others as you would have them do to you’ (Matt 7:12)
‘Flourishing in love and learning’
Through a culture of kindness and supportiveness, we aim to meet the needs of all learners and enable them to flourish and reach their potential

School strengths

- The Christian vision is clearly understood by the school community and lived out by pupils and adults. This results in an inclusive, welcoming environment.
- The uniqueness of each individual is treasured. Leaders prioritise mental health and wellbeing alongside academic achievements so that pupils can flourish in a nurturing environment.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils and adults worship joyfully through song, prayer and reflection. It is enriched by a strong partnership with the local church.
- The curriculum is carefully balanced to meet the needs of pupils through support and challenge. Pupils benefit from a variety of extra activities which develop their skills and talents.
- Pupils fulfil a wide range of responsibilities within school. This gives them opportunities to make a positive difference by acting as agents for change.

Areas for development

- Develop a clear language for spirituality that is understood and articulated confidently by pupils and adults. This is so that opportunities for spiritual development have a positive impact on learning and wellbeing.
- Embed enquiry skills and opportunities for deep questioning across the RE curriculum. This is to ensure that pupils’ understanding of world religions, beliefs and alternative views is broadened.

Inspection findings

Spellbrook’s Christian vision is lived out by the school community in a tangible way. It was carefully chosen to follow the example of Jesus ‘to do to others as you would have them do to you’. This gives distinct guidance on how to live in harmony together as a moral principle. The vision and related values thread through school life. Leaders act as effective role models, carefully making decisions that reflect the vision. They are committed to ensuring that everyone has the chance to reach their potential through its implementation. Pupils are encouraged to ‘flourish in love and learning’ by developing both the personal and academic aspects

of their lives. Governors prioritise the wellbeing of staff by supporting professional development, which increases the quality of pupils' learning. The welcoming and inclusive environment in school is palpable. Some families choose to send their children to Spellbrook for its grounding in Christian values and moral purpose.

The curriculum is an expression of the vision because of its inclusive learning opportunities. Subjects are linked together to enhance pupils' appreciation of the world and their place in it. Stemming from this, leaders are developing an understanding of spirituality. This is driven by a new approach to the language of spirituality which enables pupils to reflect on their learning using different 'hearts'. For example, pupils think about how their research on preserving the environment, exemplifies a 'green world heart'. This helps them to explain their spiritual thinking. However, it is not embedded. Exciting extra activities are provided for pupils to enrich their learning. Pupils have access to playing a variety of stringed instruments. This develops their confidence and gives them great pride in performing to the rest of the school. Additionally, clubs such as gardening, sports and art enable pupils to explore different skills to broaden their experiences. The woodland area of the school is used as a place of exploration and reflection. This helps develop spirituality as pupils appreciate God's creation, giving them space to be calm and peaceful.

Collective worship embeds the school's vision and values and is central to the school day. It is a time when the school community has a chance to reflect, be quiet and consider personal actions. This is done through prayers and times of contemplation, enhancing a spiritual experience. A candle and a greeting are used effectively to invite them to worship. As a result of the strong partnership with the local church, clergy regularly lead worship. This promotes pupils' and adults' spiritual perspective as they see the link between church and school. Singing is joyous, creating an uplifting mood. The values are entwined with the church calendar with references to the Bible and scenarios that pupils can relate to. Pupils readily take on prominent roles as worship leaders at weekly celebration assemblies, organising rewards and taking photos for the school newsletter. They display the values of service and thankfulness through fulfilling their responsibilities. Although travel to the nearest church is challenging, special effort is made to celebrate festivals there, demonstrating the importance of this link. Parents speak highly of the impact that collective worship and visits to church have on their children. It helps them 'take the values to heart'. They appreciate the communication through the weekly newsletter, which highlights the Christian values, such as 'serving one another in love'. This means families can discuss and be encouraged to use them at home.

Positive relationships are underpinned by the Christian values. Compassion, respect, forgiveness and trust enable pupils to 'flourish in love and learning'. There is a strong team spirit amongst staff. They go above and beyond to work together and with parents, to meet the needs of pupils. Mental health and wellbeing are a key priority. As a result, individuals feel known, listened to and understood. Staff are trained to support and challenge pupils continually. They have high aspirations for their academic outcomes, motivating them to strive to do their best. Subsequently, pupils benefit from the care and encouragement they are given by skilled adults. Pupils know they can approach any adult in school for help. Older pupils, who act as peer mediators, 'listen to both sides and seek out the truth' of a problem. They exemplify the values of justice and forgiveness. The behaviour policy, with its restorative approach, is based on these principles. Consequently, pupils behave well in school.

Pupils thrive on the wide-ranging responsibilities presented to them to tackle issues of injustice. Travel ambassadors recently undertook a successful 'anti-idling' campaign, demonstrating that they can make a difference by helping to decrease vehicle emissions. The eco-team devised a whole school competition to

protect the environment, inspiring pupils to make bird boxes and undertake litter-picking. Prefects make a difference by monitoring lunchtime behaviour and celebrating values shown in action. Therefore, pupils of all ages recognise how the school's vision shapes their thinking and actions to make the world a better place.

The RE curriculum has been planned to reflect a breadth of world religions, beliefs and alternative views. To support this, books with global and diverse themes are used to enable pupils to gain a wider perspective of the world. This develops tolerance and respect. The new RE scheme is well-sequenced and revisits learning throughout the year groups. Thus, pupils can compare world religions and develop their knowledge over time. Trips and visits enhance the curriculum. The multi-faith trip recently undertaken by pupils helped them to understand the similarities and differences between faiths. Staff are beginning to explore how RE teaching encompasses philosophy and human sciences, as well as theology, within their teaching. However, this is not embedded and pupils' enquiry skills are not fully developed.

The inspection findings indicate that Spellbrook Church of England VC Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	01.05.24	URN	117405
VA/VC/Academy	VC	Pupils on roll	106
Diocese	St Albans		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Jeremy Fisher		
Chair	Warren Hasty		
Inspector	Claire Coulson	No.	C23/24