



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

## Mundford Church of England Primary Academy

Address St Leonard's Street, Mundford, THETFORD, IP26 5ED

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

**Overall grade**

**Good**

**The impact of collective worship**

**Good**

### School's vision

Train a child in the way they should go and when they are old, they shall not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Encouraging Excellence in Everyone

Honesty Respect Kindness

### Key findings

- The Biblically based Christian vision to create a community of life-long learners is reflected through the innovative enquiry-based curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning and flourish as a result.
- Aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education are included across the curriculum. Whilst the moral, social and cultural elements are clear and visible, examples of opportunities that lead to spiritual development are less explicit and distinctive.
- Religious education (RE) follows the pattern of the enquiry-based curriculum. Pupils engage well because they enjoy learning in this creative way.
- Collective worship is recognised as an important part of school life for pupils and staff. It is invitational and inclusive. Pupils present Bible stories and prayers and respond to the content of the worship. They are yet to be fully engaged with planning, monitoring and evaluating collective worship.
- Pupil voice is strong. There are authentic opportunities for them to contribute to the life of the community through the school council and the relatively new role of curriculum ambassadors. Curriculum ambassadors do not fully understand the extent and scope of their roles yet. The positive impact they have on the school and beyond is not as effective as it could be as a result.

### Areas for development

- Create a shared understanding of spirituality so that it can be explicitly identified and planned for across the curriculum, including in RE.
- Develop pupil voice so that they fully understand their roles as curriculum ambassadors and courageous advocates for change. As such they will have more opportunities to have a positive impact on the life of the school.
- Increase pupil involvement in collective worship so that they plan, monitor and evaluate it in ways that lead to improving practice.

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

Mundford Academy is inclusive and welcoming. The Biblically based Christian vision emphasises the learning and personal journey pupils make through school and beyond. Led by the dynamic executive headteacher, all members of the school community live this out. Pupils are provided with the tools they need to become lifelong learners who have high aspirations for their future. Positive attitudes and habits are encouraged through the core values of kindness, respect and honesty. These were specifically chosen to support pupils to make positive choices in life. Pupils know the values well and provide examples of when they have demonstrated them or noted them in others. They say the values encourage them to behave well. Each value has an associated Bible verse, but these are less well known. To further promote the vision, a child friendly poem makes clear what the school stands for in an accessible way.

Relationships are a strength, and all live well together. Adults and pupils work within an ethos of mutual support and respect that enables all to feel valued. Leaders, including local governors, are mindful of staff and pupils' mental health and wellbeing and have put in place resources to support their welfare. This includes taking the financial decision to employ a counsellor to smooth the journey back into school. Parents are grateful for the care staff show to their children and the accessibility of staff is important to them. They are known to have a 'great empathy' with families in time of need. Staff enjoy working at Mundford. They say they are 'challenged to be their best in the same way as the pupils are'. Links with the Diocese of Norwich and the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) are strong and mutually beneficial and appreciated.

Governors know the school well. The vision is considered when decisions are made, so that the best options are found for pupils making their journey through the school. They monitor the vision through reports from, and discussions with, the headteacher and other leaders. This was sustained during school closures so that they were able to provide appropriate support to staff.

Led by the Christian vision, pupils are provided with authentic opportunities to put forward their views. They know their voice make a difference to school life. School council members are proud of the money raised for charity and understand the importance of supporting 'good causes.' The difference they are making in other ways, as advocates of positive change, is not clear to them. The recently appointed curriculum ambassadors champion the status of their subject. They explain that they collect views of other pupils on their subject. Although important, their role is not yet clearly defined for them to see its significance.

The school is well regarded in the community and is described as the 'hub' of the village. It is involved in local activities, and contributes to newsletters, sharing information about its activities widely. During lockdown, a garden was built by volunteers so pupils could enjoy growing plants when they returned to school. This was greatly appreciated by the school community. As an outworking of the vision, a local nursery that was set for closure will become part of the school. This is seen as an opportunity to serve the community. Also, to enable pupils to begin their journey with the school earlier, within the nurturing environment it provides. Prior to the pandemic, parents and friends were encouraged to attend school events, including church services and the Mundford Junction reading cafe. These brought the community together and have been much missed. Parents particularly look forward to sharing worship in church with their children once again, regarding it as important to the Christian life of the school.

The vision is particularly exemplified in the innovative way the curriculum is delivered. It is holistic and enquiry-based, designed with the learning needs of pupils at the heart. Using a different 'big question' each half term, pupils are encouraged to explore a range of themes and topics designed to challenge and excite them. Questions include 'what is it like to be British?' All are deliberately crafted to cover as many different ideas as possible. Pupils enjoy the creative ways they can learn and record their learning. Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with additional needs so

that they can express their understanding in a way that suits them. ‘No plan’ days are, particularly popular, where they are free to follow their own interests. They enjoy learning and flourish as a result.

RE is also enquiry-based, using the Norfolk Syllabus. The three strands of human science, theology and philosophy are intertwined through the themes. Pupils enjoy learning through art, music and drama. The events of Holy Week were enthusiastically re-enacted through actions, for example. Their knowledge and understanding of Christianity is sound, including that of the Trinity. They appreciate learning about world faiths, so that they can better understand the beliefs and practices of others. Deep issues are debated as part of the philosophy strand, but links to spiritual development are less obvious or included as ethical or moral aspects.

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is effectively used throughout the curriculum. Pupils develop thinking skills and explore opinions in a safe environment. They confidently articulate their views, learning to disagree well with others, understanding that all opinions are valid and to be treated with dignity and respect. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) learning and British values are included within the 'big question'. SMSC is plotted across the curriculum with links made to each subject. Examples of social, moral and cultural learning are frequent, such as the global dimension to the question ‘who is my neighbour?’ Examples that are explicitly exploring spiritual development are less frequent, however. Thus, opportunities may be missed where questions or comments interpreted to be spiritual are actually moral or philosophical.

During lockdown, collective worship moved online and continued a pattern of daily worship. As the school re-opened, the benefits of this were recognised and exploited. Worship continues to be virtual, whilst being invitational and inclusive. A gathering liturgy signals that this is a special time in the school day. The recording can be stopped at points for discussion of the Bible story to take place. This enables comments to be posted online and in real time. The inclusivity of collective worship is increased through this, as many pupils participate and share reflections this way, where they may not have done so in person. Plans to re-instate ‘live’ collective worship will include these positive aspects. Although pupils act out stories and read prayers, these are largely adult directed. Pupils are not fully involved in planning, monitoring and evaluating collective worship independently.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	28 April 2022	URN	141584
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled	NOR	169
Name of MAT/Federation	DNEAT		
Diocese	Norwich		
Headteacher	Sarah Godbold		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The school is federated with Gooderstone Academy as the Churchside Federation. The federation is a member of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT).		
Inspector’s name	Rachel Beeson	No.	952