

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

Acton Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Lambert Drive, Acton, Sudbury, CO10 0US
School vision	
<p>We pride ourselves on our warm, welcoming family atmosphere and strongly believe in our school motto 'Strive, Support, Succeed'. Pupils at Acton have a love of learning and understand the importance of challenging themselves in order to achieve their personal goals both in and out of school.</p> <p>The church plays an important and active role in the life of our school and we have a close relationship with our village church, All Saints. Our school vision 'Be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.' 1 Peter 3: 8 is key to the shared values which help us strive to be the best that we can be.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The carefully considered and specifically crafted Christian vision is the basis of all decision making, action and policy. It enables those in the school community to thrive as they are supported through challenge to overcome and succeed.</li> <li>• Leaders ensure that the wellbeing of individuals is at the heart of all that they do. The provision of strategically planned, quality, targeted mental health and pastoral support enables pupils, staff and families to flourish.</li> <li>• The curriculum and the school environment have been designed to promote spiritual development enabling pupils to reflect and question. As a result, pupils are confident to share their views and thoughts on a range of issues and ideas.</li> <li>• Pupil leaders are proud to deliver worship and unanimously describe their growth in self-confidence and biblical understanding in this role.</li> <li>• Leaders have ensured that staff are well-trained and supported to teach religious education (RE). As a result, staff are confident and enthusiastic about the subject and pupils are engaged in their learning.</li> </ul>	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop opportunities for pupils to take the initiative in response to issues of injustice. This will promote an understanding of themselves as agents of change, making a difference on global issues.</li> <li>• Promote pupil development in RE by building a deeper understanding of the implications of faith. This will help pupils to further appreciate the life choices of those of all faiths and none.</li> </ul>	
Inspection findings	
<p>The school's distinctive Christian vision, expressed through the motto Strive, Support, Succeed, motivates leaders' actions and is the basis of all decision making. Leaders resolutely ensure that the</p>	

vision drives all that the school does and is reflected in community relationships. The support, understanding and mutual respect demonstrated by staff and pupils for one another is vision inspired. Leaders foster in pupils both persistence and resilience when facing challenge or adversity. Every step forward, however small, is celebrated. Every week, pupils successes, the support that they give to each other and their determination, are rewarded. Pupils know that they are valued for personal qualities as well as academic outcomes. In staff meetings, time is allocated to reflecting on positives and on pupils who need support. In this way the Christian vision is consistently promoted. Staff are encouraged to strive professionally as they engage with research about best practice. Many undertake additional professional qualifications. There is an informed thoughtfulness in the way that staff lead their subjects or areas of responsibility. They implement change, measure its effectiveness whilst keeping pupil thriving and staff wellbeing at the heart of initiatives. Governors monitor Church school effectiveness frequently and are mindful to promote the vision in their work. Families feel well supported and praise staff for the time and attention that they receive when they need advice, reassurance or guidance. Leaders support other Church schools through collaboration in diocesan professional development. They provide advice and guidance to other schools in challenging circumstances. In this way, the vision to support one another is taken beyond the school into the wider community.

Curriculum decisions and choices are made with reference to the school's Christian vision. The personal, social and health education curriculum specifically focuses on caring, achievement and resilience in line with the motto. Pupils are encouraged to have a 'growth mindset' as they strive for success. Numerous opportunities to develop spiritually are offered to pupils. They use the idea of windows, mirrors and doors to look in, consider and experience. Big Question Journals are full of pupils' personal responses to complex issues. Pupils feel that their ideas are valued and they therefore confidently tackle philosophical dilemmas thoughtfully and imaginatively. Pupils use the school environment as a space for quiet reflection and prayer. Creativity is promoted as are times of stillness allowing pupils moments of awe and wonder. There is a very strong ethos of support and care for vulnerable pupils. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those with social or emotional needs are identified and helped. They develop coping strategies and understand how to deal with their emotions or reactions. There is a wealth of early intervention strategies and the school welcomes all. Leaders promote inclusivity and strongly advocate that nobody should feel like an outsider.

Collective worship is strategically planned to reflect the school's vision. Six carefully chosen values: perseverance, courage, compassion, friendship, wisdom and humility shape the themes for worship over the year. These values align with each word in the school motto. Local clergy and the 'Open the Book' team are very regular contributors to worship times. Such effective partnerships enhance and inspire. Pupils say that they have greater understanding of biblical stories and ideas when visitors lead worship. The pupil-lead Faith Council volunteer to organise and deliver worship fortnightly. Those taking part unanimously agree that their self-confidence and understanding has grown whilst in the role. In this way, they flourish spiritually. Collective worship enables pupils to look at faith, experience faith practices and reflect on their own responses. In this way, worship promotes spiritual development. Pupils and adults flourish spiritually as they are given space for thoughtfulness and quiet. Pupils share their responses to real life problems and biblical stories. They say that the messages help them to make right choices. Pupils use the 'Prayer Tree' reflective space to offer private prayers to God. They find this helpful in times of need. Prayer is an intrinsic part of the day at lunchtime, and at home time. Class prayers are used in collective worship promoting inclusion and pupil ownership. Special services in the church enable pupils and adults insight into faith practices and festivals. Parents describe being moved and uplifted by these occasions. Those in the parish appreciate the support that they receive through food donations at harvest time.

The way in which pupils and adults are supported and developed is a significant strength of the

school. Strategic decisions are made to invest in quality mental health support and pastoral care. The allocation of responsibilities for mental health to members of the senior leadership team illustrates the importance placed on community wellbeing. Behaviour is good, a common approach to culture and character promotes consistency. Vulnerable children and those with complex needs are taught to regulate their emotions. They are increasingly able to take ownership of their actions and reactions. The vision's aim to support and bring success unites the team of staff in their responses to vulnerable pupils. Staff turnover is very low. Staff are positive about the culture of support and development in the school. Families also appreciate the approachability of the staff team and genuinely feel their problems are taken seriously and supportively. This culture of responsibility and support has created a harmonious, nurturing environment where individuals can flourish. Pupils have begun to engage with issues of injustice, particularly in the area of environmental concern. Motivated by adults, they have contacted embassies and famous environmentalists regarding their learning. There is little evidence, however that they understand their capacity to be change makers themselves. To strive for change and support others who do not have a voice. Or that they are self-motivated to proactively to make a difference in the world.

The curriculum for RE is balanced and meets the requirements for the subject as a Church school. Additional 'Big Question' sessions enable pupils to think philosophically. A range of world religions are studied as well as worldviews. Learning is sequential and develops both knowledge and skills. Pupils eagerly recount their learning. They particularly enjoy creative approaches for example, practical learning about a variety of faiths during multi-faith week. They are able to recall the religious stories that have inspired festivals or are significant to faith. They are less confident when explaining why these stories are important to believers. They appear unclear about the relevance of narrative to those who profess a particular faith. For example, older pupils retold the Easter story, but did not know why this was significant to Christian believers. The subject leader is proactive and thoughtful, supporting and training staff. Monitoring by leaders is effective and results in refined or adapted practice enabling pupil flourishing in RE.

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

Information			
Inspection date	8 May 2024	URN	124686
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	175
Diocese	St Edmundsbury & Ipswich		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Jonathan Gray		
Chair	Barry Moulton		
Inspector	Jane Trampnow	No.	954