

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dereham Church of England Junior Academy

Vision

Jesus came to give life better than we ever dreamed of. Based on John 10:10

We have COURAGE to travel along the most exciting and untrodden paths, and we show KINDNESS by offering a helping hand to those who follow.

We use our CREATIVITY to find different ways of tackling the trickiest routes and if what lies ahead looks scary or overwhelming, we TRUST that God will walk alongside us and help show us the way.

We have the ASPIRATION to journey to places we have never been before and do things we have never done, and while our destination may differ to our neighbours, we RESPECT that everyone's journey should be treasured.

Strengths

- Leaders and staff are committed to living out the vision to give pupils and their families a 'life better than they ever dreamed of.' They take action and make decisions in line with the vision and the best interests of the community.
- A carefully constructed curriculum supports pupils to be successful learners, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or who are deemed to be vulnerable and/or disadvantaged. Additional activities, trips and visits provide them with opportunities to try new experiences. These 'untrodden paths' develop their skills and talents in creative ways,
- The ethos of the school is characterised by strong relationships rooted in the values, particularly trust and respect. As a result, it is regarded as a 'safe' place for pupils and their families where they are supported with kindness.
- Pupil leaders contribute to a culture of justice and fairness through the many roles and responsibilities they carry out. They are proud of the positive difference they make to the lives of their friends through the support and help they provide for them.
- Opportunities for spiritual development are consistently woven across different subjects and activities. Pupils and adults are challenged through times of reflection and questioning to think and act differently.

Development Points

- Develop the current arrangements for collective worship. This to provide greater opportunities for gathering pupils and adults together physically and 'in real life.' Also to vary the styles of worship they experience.



Inspection Findings

Leaders and staff are determined that living out the Christian vision will make a real difference to the lives of others. Chosen to inspire the whole community, it encourages adults and pupils to look beyond what they know, to see what is possible. The vision encourages everyone to explore their capabilities, understanding that living a fulfilled life looks different for each individual. Actions are taken and decisions made by leaders at all levels with this in mind. The Christian vision of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT), Proverbs 24: 3 – 24, resonates with the school's. As part of DNEAT, it is one of the many 'rooms,' distinctive and individual, yet connected to the wider community of trust schools. Working with trust officers, the school lives out the trust vision through its own. Local governors know the school well. On behalf of DNEAT they monitor and evaluate how the school lives as a Church school. They support and challenge leaders to live out the vision and maintain the focus on higher aspirations for everyone. The vision is expressed through well established values. Chosen for their relevance to the school's context, they provide a framework for the community to live by.

Bold decisions around the way subjects are taught engage and inspire pupils to learn. Leaders have designed a curriculum which provides opportunities for them to 'achieve more than they thought able to do.' By evaluating current practice, leaders have made changes to how lessons are taught. These provide further opportunities for pupils to succeed from whatever starting point. Through the values, pupils are encouraged to be courageous in their learning. They develop resilience by making 'marvellous mistakes' that help them to 'learn even more.' Looking to the future, and what they hope to be, they know this will help them achieve their ambitions. Extra activities including trips, visits and after school clubs, enable pupils to try out new and creative experiences. This shows them that everyone has different talents and can be successful in many ways. Pupils can 'surprise themselves' by what they can achieve as a result, inspiring them to further success. Spiritual development is woven into each subject through careful questioning and experiences that provide a sense of wonder. Time is given through the day for quiet reflection. As a result, pupils think deeply about themselves and their place in the world, contributing to their sense of identity. Additional support is provided for SEND pupils and those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. However, leaders and staff acknowledge that any pupil and their family may need assistance at some time during their school life. Therefore, provision is available when needed. Staff are accessible and visible, so that they are ready to help. Parents appreciate this. They know that the school is a safe, kind place to be. Particularly in times of difficulty, they will be supported and nurtured.

Due to the large number of pupils and physical layout of the school, collective worship takes place in classrooms for four days a week. Using a standard planning format, which includes invitational prayer, staff adapt worship to match the needs of their class. Videos of Bible stories and other inspirational narratives show how the value of the term can apply to everyday life. In a more personal, classroom setting, pupils share their thoughts and reflections with a familiar group. Staff take this into account, amending their responses in ways which are not always possible in larger gatherings. Although this is an inclusive approach, being predominantly class based can limit pupils' experiences of different ways of worship. Also, the capacity to connect with others and share in wider worship is reduced. The whole school comes together once a week, which is a joyful occasion. Adults and pupils worship through song. They celebrate how the vision contributes to the life of the school and their own lives. Pausing to reflect on what they have heard and seen contributes to pupils' and adults' spiritual growth. They think and act differently as a result.

Strong relationships based on trust and respect characterise the culture of the school. Staff know they are valued by leaders who are mindful of their workload. Provision is in place to support good mental health for adults and pupils. Policies, including those provided by DNEAT, align with the vision, ensuring that pupils and staff are treated with dignity. Longstanding members of staff have been at the school for many years, providing stability to the community. Leaders and staff value the mutual support and encouragement they receive from



leaders and each other. They develop their own skills not just to better support learners, but also to flourish as professionals. Pupils take on many roles and responsibilities, such as school councillors and subject ambassadors. Through these they speak for others, helping to make the school a better place. Applying the values to their behaviour, pupils act kindly to each other. By raising money for charities, they contribute to making the things fairer for everyone.

Partnerships with the church are strong and highly valued. Local clergy lead worship regularly, including in the church building. This is appreciated by adults and pupils as a special time to be together. The church funded the creation of the 'good shepherd garden' as a place for reflection and prayer. Staff and members of the church gave time to complete the project, so that there would be a place of quiet reflection. The school is well regarded by the trust and diocese. In particular, for the time and support it provides to other schools, including in RE. This is of mutual benefit and staff develop their own skills as a result.

The school has renamed religious education (RE) to religion and worldviews (R&W). This is to reflect the wider perspective and content covered by the subject. RE is well lead and managed. Leaders, including governors, monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, making adaptations to practice as a result. In order for pupils to be immersed in the subject matter, RE is taught in depth over a week twice a term. As a result, they have more time to explore their learning to a greater depth. Reflecting on philosophical questions, pupils develop thinking skills which enable them to make insightful comments. Learning about a diverse range of religions and worldviews supports the development of their own beliefs. They appreciate and respect those of others. Training from the diocese and trust is valued by staff, enabling them to keep a focus on their own skills and knowledge. As a result, monitoring by leaders shows that teaching is good. Pupils self-assess their work, which is then moderated by staff. They are often accurate in their judgements, but this challenges them to accomplish more. The school has achieved a gold national award for RE twice in recent years. This reflects leaders' commitment to sustaining the quality of provision and the important position RE holds within the curriculum.

Information

Address	Dereham Church of England Junior, Academy Gilpin's Ride, Littlefields, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1BJ		
Date	04 October 2024	URN	1423095
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	389
Diocese	Norwich		
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT)		
Headteacher	Kelly Scott		
Chair of Governors	Grant King		
Inspector	Rachel Beeson		