

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ewelme Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Vision

“Let perseverance finish its work so you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” James 1:4

Ewelme Church of England VA Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Notable Strengths

- A clear set of established values ('five Rs'), underpinned by the biblical vision statement, shapes the culture of the school. This supports the school community in living well together. These values are embedded in daily practice, shaping decisions and behaviours. In doing so, they enable pupils to flourish within a nurturing and respectful community.
- Pupils are given meaningful responsibilities, enabling them to contribute to school life and demonstrate the school's Christian values in action. This nurtures a sense of ownership, service, and pride, helping them to grow as compassionate and responsible individuals.
- Staff benefit from personal and professional guidance and encouragement that strengthen collaboration. As a result, staff feel valued, supported, and equipped to inspire pupils and one another to reach their fullest potential.
- Partnerships with the diocese and local church supports curriculum, worship, and wider school life. This deepens the school's Christian values and pupils' understanding of Christian tradition. It supports them in developing a strong sense of purpose and belonging.

Development Points

- Embed a shared approach to spirituality so that there are planned and explicit opportunities for spiritual growth across the whole curriculum.
- Increase pupils' involvement in collective worship so that they contribute directly to the spiritual flourishing of the school community.
- Ensure that there is consistency of expectations for religious education across the school. This is so that pupils make good progress at all stages and that assessment is robust.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

The school's Christian vision, inspired by James 1:4, "Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything", has recently been developed. Leaders worked in partnership with the diocese to shape this vision. Expressed through the 'five Rs', the vision reflects the Christian call to resilience, respect, and responsibility. Pupils are beginning to recognise how their school values guide both their learning and their relationships. Pupils speak of how the values help them to persevere when things are difficult and to support one another with kindness and respect. Staff describe the guidance and encouragement they receive, which strengthens teamwork and builds professional confidence. Responsibilities, such as membership of the school council, give pupils a voice, fostering pride and service. They also encourage pupils to contribute to the flourishing of the community. Leaders are starting to use the biblical vision to frame decisions about curriculum development and wellbeing. This is gradually influencing classroom practice, enabling pupils to connect their learning with their values. Governors are beginning to evaluate its impact in ways which bring about improvement. The school's unique heritage as the oldest state primary in the country is celebrated and valued. This gives pupils, parents, and staff a strong sense of identity and belonging. While the vision is still at an early stage, its biblical foundation is working well in relation to the context of the school.

Vision and Curriculum

The new vision is beginning to shape curriculum design and teaching. Leaders use the 'five Rs' to frame learning, fostering character formation, moral choices, and personal development. This is gradually influencing classroom practice, enabling pupils to connect their learning with their values. Spiritual development is becoming more intentionally woven into curriculum planning and delivery, though this work is still at an early stage. Staff are beginning to create opportunities for pupils to encounter awe, wonder, and reflection within subjects. These opportunities also arise through collective worship and the wider life of the school. The 'windows, mirrors and doors' initiative is in the very early stages of implementation. This aims to help pupils to see beyond their own experiences, reflect on personal beliefs and make informed choices about how they live.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is a valued and inclusive aspect of school life. It reflects the school's emerging Christian vision, which is beginning to shape both the content and the tone of worship. The school's values foster a sense of shared identity and purpose within the community. Worship typically includes Bible stories, reflection, prayer, and singing, providing regular opportunities for pupils to engage spiritually and express themselves creatively. The church's presence on site is a distinctive strength, grounding worship in the local Christian community. Although new to the role, clergy demonstrate clear commitment to the school by building purposeful relationships with pupils and staff. Pupils contribute with enthusiasm when invited to take part, such as during a worship session on 'Month of the military child', which created a poignant moment of reflection for the whole community. However, opportunities for pupils to engage with worship in ways which contribute to spiritual flourishing are not firmly established.

Vision and School Culture

There is a growing emphasis on mental health and wellbeing, with leaders prioritising staff support and modelling perseverance and care. Parents and carers recognise how the ethos creates a safe and nurturing environment, and pupils confidently link their behaviour and attitudes to the school's values. The Christian vision increasingly shapes relationships and behaviour, fostering a culture of dignity, respect, and inclusion. The behaviour policy, rooted in the 'five Rs', promotes restorative practices that build reconciliation and deepen mutual understanding. Staff model respect and kindness, creating an environment where pupils feel valued and supported. As a result, pupils develop positive relationships and take responsibility for their actions. Pupil leadership in promoting positive behaviour is developing. This means that pupils are beginning to take a more active role in supporting a respectful and caring school culture.



Vision, Justice and Responsibility

The value of responsibility is embedded across the school. Pupils take on meaningful roles that shape school life and extend into the wider community. The school council meets regularly with the headteacher. This provides a meaningful forum for pupils to share their ideas, influence decisions, and take ownership of initiatives. For example, pupils have led projects to improve the playground, organise charity events, and promote recycling. These initiatives clearly reflect their practical understanding of service and accountability. Rewards and sanctions are closely linked to the 'five Rs', reinforcing fairness, responsibility, and reflection on the impact of actions. Pupils speak confidently about how being responsible affects not only their learning but also their relationships and contribution to school life. They also discuss global issues such as fairness, justice, and sustainability within the wider curriculum. These experiences contribute to an emerging understanding of their place and responsibility in the wider world.

Religious Education

The RE curriculum meets the Church of England's expectations and reflects the school's Christian vision. Christianity is central, but pupils also study a range of world faiths and non-religious worldviews. The programme is carefully sequenced, beginning with simple concepts such as belief, celebration, and belonging. As pupils progress, they explore deeper questions about God, the purpose of life, and the meaning of faith. Leaders give RE a high profile and ensure that it is well resourced. Diocesan materials guide planning and teaching, supporting staff to deliver lessons with confidence.

In lessons, pupils are encouraged to ask thoughtful questions and reflect deeply on issues of belief and faith. They learn respectful dialogue by listening carefully to others and expressing their own ideas with confidence. Pupils enjoy exploring Bible stories and considering their relevance for Christians today. They also encounter a range of global beliefs, making meaningful comparisons and connections. This helps them to understand how different worldviews shape identity, values, and life choices. The curriculum supports clear progression from simple stories to more complex theological concepts such as the Trinity and salvation. Assessment in RE is not consistent across all classes, so teachers do not always build effectively on prior learning. This also means that progress in RE is not good for all pupils.

Information

Address	The Street, Ewelme , Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 6HU		
Date	16 September 2025	URN	123197
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	90
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Joseph Ottaway		
Chair of Governors	Jess Readings		
Inspector	Karen Collett		