Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holbeach St Mark's Church of England Primary School

Vision

'Rooted in faith, we nurture the seeds, in the hope that all can flourish.' Mark 4 3:9
Faith - to be the good soil through our faith in God.
Hope - to be inclusive and aspiration for all.
Flourish - to be a community where all can flourish.

In the Parable of the Sower Mark taught us when the Farmer sowed his seed, some fell on the path and the birds ate them, some fell on the rocky and thorny soil and they didn't grow well. Those planted on the good soil flourished. We are the good soil, we understand that sometimes we experience the rocks, birds and thorns, but we have faith in God that we are the 'good soil.'

Holbeach St Mark's Church of England 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.

Strengths

- A strong Christian vision and set of values are deeply embedded and understood at Holbeach St Mark's. Compassionate leadership, at all levels in the school, underpins decision-making. As a result, the school is a caring, and inclusive place that proudly serves its community.
- A firm foundation of strong relationships across the school reflects how the vision is lived out. By working well together as a community pupils flourish. This is especially so for pupils who struggle with attending school. They find a loving home where they are understood and can thrive.
- Collective worship is valued as a special time when the community comes together to celebrate their identity as a Church school. It is a time to reflect on the Christian vision and values and how they apply to their daily lives. Worship enables adults and pupils to undertake calm contemplation and develop their own thoughts and beliefs. This supports spiritual flourishing.
- There is an active culture of justice, responsibility and a deep sense of care for others. This positively impacts the school's culture and ethos. An outworking of this is the social action work pupils advocate in their local community. Here, pupils believe that their actions can make a big difference in the world.
- High-quality provision of religious education (RE) results in pupils who have a rich knowledge and understanding of a range of beliefs. Strong leadership of RE ensures pupils explore diversity and celebrate difference. This includes Christianity as a global and multicultural faith.

Development Points

- Plan explicit and distinct opportunities within the curriculum and outside of it so that pupil's spiritual development is further enhanced.
- Ensure the shared language for spirituality is embedded so that adults and pupils can confidently recognise and discuss their experiences.

Inspection Findings

Holbeach St Mark's vision reflects the rural context and high aspirations of this Church school. It's deep biblical roots are known and understood by the school community. This ensures a distinctively Christian ethos drives the decisions undertaken by the school. As a result, staff are inspired by the biblical example of being the farmer who tends the 'good soil' for their community. Pupils proudly see themselves as the seeds that are nurtured in the school's vision. They live out the ethos by being fully included in a loving community, so they can flourish. This is supported by a highly motivated team of adults that champion the needs of pupils. Consequently, staff are steadfastly committed to all succeeding. For example, the school dedicates time to build strong and respectful relationships with pupils and families who might find school life hard. The nurture offered, and time given to make sure pupils are understood is a strength. This supports pupils who have found learning in other schools challenging to thrive at Holbeach St Mark's. Leaders and governors invest in the staff and prioritise their wellbeing, enabling them to work effectively. Committed governors provide support and take pride in being the custodians of the school's Christian foundation. They regularly evaluate their own work as part of their systematic checking of the impact of the school's vision. This strengthens their strategic decision making.

The vision promotes creative opportunities in the curriculum, seeking ways for pupils to 'grow in the good soil.' This brings learning to life. In addition, the wider curriculum considers ways to support pupils talents and interests. This enables pupils to recognise and achieve their potential. Many learning experiences inspire curiosity, as well as developing skills for life. This promotes the flourishing of pupils to be the best they can be. Staff are persistent in their approach and focus on the development of the whole person. Carefully considered adaptions within the curriculum respond to pupils as individuals. As a result pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) appropriately access learning. Some planned opportunities for spiritual growth exist across the curriculum. However, these are limited as is the use of language to support this. Whilst work has begun to address these, some missed opportunities to discuss and explore spiritual flourishing across the curriculum remain.

Collective worship is a valued and special time at the start of the school day. It is inclusive, and all are invited to participate. Staff and pupils recognise that being able to come together enables them to experience calm as one community. The school vision is emphasised through daily Bible readings and invitational prayers. Local clergy regularly lead worship in school or the church next door, ensuring a rich encounter with Anglican traditions. Pupils and adults are engaged positively in these opportunities and value time to hear how God wants them to live and behave. In addition, the school marks important days, such as Remembrance and Easter. Here the school will lead community services. Worship is carefully planned yet organic enough to respond to events in the world. Members of the school community are sent out of worship with ideas or reflections to act upon. The impact of this is seen in how pupils use the prayer spaces and reflection garden to explore actions further. This supports spiritual flourishing as it is part of their daily routines.

Leaders at Holbeach St Mark's seek to serve their community and treat everyone well. The vision creates an inclusive ethos where pupils and adults feel trusted. One of the school's core aims is to intentionally explore diversity and difference. This leads to individuals being celebrated for who they are. Pupils with SEND exceed expectations. This is because pupils are taught to the highest level, driven by a belief that everyone deserves the 'good soil.' Specialist support for mental health and behaviour builds resilience in pupils. Staff are trained to provide a wide range of strategies to deal with the complexity of needs of pupils. This results in parents identifying how the

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school helps their child to thrive. No barrier is too hard for the school to tackle. This leads to transformational and life changing impact because of the school's genuine love and care.

The vision motivates pupils to bring about change in their school and community. This work is evident in Holbeach St Mark's belief that they provide the 'good soil for all to flourish.' Embedded work by pupils undertaking a young leader award enables them to look beyond their school. As a result, pupils can consider decisions that impact others and recognise they can take responsibility that makes a difference. They clearly understand the school's values of koinonia and respect. These values provide a context for pupils to think about their community. Both encourage members of the school community to understand how they are treated and how they should treat others. The school offers a range of opportunities for pupils to act through the school council and other roles of responsibility. These actions have a positive impact within the community. One example is how older pupils have walked through their village and noted any issues such as litter and potholes. They have then written to the council to ask for help to improve their village. Pupils have also contacted local businesses to ask for donations of plants for their school kitchen garden. They have then distributed surplus plants to local residents. In doing so pupils are developing a range of ways to show responsibility and respond to injustice.

The RE curriculum is carefully planned to study beliefs, and religions in a multicultural and diverse way. This provides pupils with accurate knowledge about a range of religions including Christianity. Leaders have worked closely with the diocese to build a curriculum that reflects the school's mixed aged classes context. RE learning is presented as a systematic series of 'big questions' such as 'What does it mean to live a good life?' Consequently, pupils develop sophisticated ideas that enable them to build on their knowledge over time. They become enthusiastic critical thinkers by exploring these deep questions. Well-chosen teaching resources ensure pupils develop a strong understanding of a range of RE concepts. It includes the exploration of the diverse range of Christian beliefs beyond its community. This enables pupils to understand Christianity as a worldwide and multicultural faith. Leaders have created systems to map knowledge within the RE curriculum, ensuring staff teach with confidence. It helps staff to understand how RE learning develops across classes and build pupils knowledge over time. As a result pupils remember lots in RE and are enthusiastic about the subject.

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Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Main Road, Holbeach St Marks, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 8DZ		
Date	7 March 2025	URN	120549
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary	No. of pupils	44
Diocese	Lincoln		
Federation	The Griffin Federation		
Executive Headteacher	Karyn Herd		
Head of School	Louise Richardson		
Chair of Governors	Justine Sands		
Inspector	Christopher Allen		