

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

<b>Hickling Church of England Infant School and Pre-School</b>			
Address	The Street, Hickling, Norfolk NR12 0XX		
Date of inspection	4 March 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Infant
Diocese	Norwich	URN	121043

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgement</b>	The impact of collective worship	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Hickling is an infant school with 19 pupils on roll. All pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils speak English as an additional language. 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. The school is one of three schools in the Swallowtail Federation of Church of England schools. The executive headteacher was newly appointed from within the federation this academic year.

### The school's Christian vision

With friendship, trust and kindness we fly!  
*'Love your neighbour as yourself' Mark 12:30-31*

### Key findings

- The school's vision is well-established and has a demonstrable impact on relationships across the school community. School leaders relate their aim for all children and staff to 'fly' to each person flourishing academically, socially and personally, but parents and children do not readily make this connection.
- Governors and parents testify to the impact of the executive headteacher who, together with the head of school and RE (religious education) subject leader, has strengthened the Christian distinctiveness of the school and drawn the federation staff and children more closely together.
- Children are provided with exceptional learning opportunities within both the formal and informal curriculum beyond what might be expected for the size and age range of the school. The highly effective staff team ensure all pupils make excellent progress, laying down firm foundations for their future learning.
- RE and collective worship are important parts of school life and contribute well to the vision and associated values. The recent initiative to appoint vision ambassadors from the primary school in the federation has had a positive initial impact.

### Areas for development

- Deepen children and parents' understanding of the whole school vision and its theological underpinning so that its impact can be clearly seen across all areas of school life.
- Extend the role of the vision ambassadors so that they contribute to school evaluation and 'grow' future pupil leaders of worship.
- Explore opportunities for the highly effective model of partnership-working within the federation to be recognised and drawn on beyond the local area.

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

Staff, parents and children recognise the centrality of the vision statement in the life and work of the school. All adults model the vision in action and the children follow their example in their relationships with one another. There is a sense of joy in being together at school, whether that be in the classroom, the playground or together for collective worship. Parents particularly value how the small numbers result in their children being known and nurtured as unique individuals in a way which would not be possible in a larger school. This applies equally to more able children and those with additional needs. As a result, all children make very good progress and outcomes are above national averages in all measures. This inclusive expression of the Christian ethos of the school extends to the pre-school on site, for which the school now has responsibility. The story of four friends bringing a paralysed man to Jesus for healing has been used effectively to explore the vision in the context of the Bible. Children also appreciate how the Bible verse which complements the vision should shape their attitude to everyone they meet, even though they don't readily attribute this teaching to Jesus. The aspects of the vision which relate to relationships and behaviour are deeply embedded. However, the contribution the vision makes to all in the school being able to 'fly' is less well understood. Leaders have a shared understanding that this is synonymous with flourishing in all aspects of life. That is certainly their ambition for all children and staff at Hickling.

The vision statement is shared across the federation, further strengthening the partnerships between schools. The executive headteacher describes the occasions when all of the children come together to share their learning as being 'like one big school'. Although Hickling is the smallest, the contribution staff, and the head of school in particular, make to the partnership flourishing is greatly valued. Staff appreciate the opportunity to lead areas across the schools and undertake shared professional development, including sessions provided by the diocese. Hickling children benefit from a wider range of opportunities than would be possible as an individual school. A particular example of the impact of this can be seen in the vision ambassadors. Four upper primary pupils from another federation school applied and were appointed to this new role. In her letter of application one wrote that by helping to embed the vision she wanted to 'make a lasting change for the other children before I leave'. The ambassadors have planned and led worship at Hickling and are in the process of coaching some Hickling children to do so. As yet their role does not extend to evaluating either worship or the vision in action across the schools. One teacher has responsibility for RE and collective worship across the federation. Her infectious enthusiasm for RE overflows in her lessons and in the high profile the subject has attained under her leadership. Children engage enthusiastically in the subject and produce work of a high standard in their workbooks and in displays around the school. Assessment systems allow staff to track the progress of every individual and plan effectively for their future needs. Challenging questions encourage discussion and respect for each other's ideas and opinions. RE is an important part of a rich, exciting curriculum which equips every child to flourish. Children are universally enthusiastic about 'Forest Schools'. As well as exploring the great outdoors and learning to work in teams, there is a deliberate focus on nurturing their sense of awe and wonder at God's creation. Parents report that their children frequently come home from these sessions 'filthy but buzzing'. As the result of training the head of school has received in mental health children have been taught strategies which contribute to their well-being.

School leaders fully utilise the expertise of governors. One, in particular, has made frequent monitoring visits to Hickling, working closely with school staff and the RE and worship leader. Her visit notes indicate that she fulfils the role of being a critical friend very effectively. Governors and leaders work together on the process of school self-evaluation with the result that strengths and areas for future development are accurately identified. However, the resulting plans do not always indicate clear milestones for tracking progress against actions. Leaders also take full advantage of training and support provided by the diocese. Both governors and diocesan representatives testify to the impact the executive headteacher has had in raising the profile of the Christian vision in order to strengthen the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Leadership of collective worship is drawn from the churches as well as members of staff and the vision ambassadors. As a result, children develop an appreciation of different styles of worship within a well-established framework. Planning is premised on Christian values. Leaders explore stories from the Bible and the life of Jesus in ways which capture the interest and imagination of children. Their challenging questions provoke interesting answers and, at times, deep reflection by the children. However, visiting leaders do not currently link their sessions to the value in focus or the school's vision statement. Older children are developing a leadership role for parts of worship, including reading their own prayers. They all participate with enthusiasm and sing beautifully.

The current theme for worship is continued within a space for reflection and prayer in the library. Children are keen to spend time there, writing their own prayers or talking to God. Other opportunities to encourage reflection and prayer beyond worship are less well developed.

The school's Christian vision in action is seen in the wide range of the school's charitable giving. Some of this has been prompted by children's awareness of particular needs, such as animals suffering in forest fires in Australia and the local food bank. The partnership with a school in Malawi gives children an understanding of the global Christian community. This has been recently strengthened through staff exchange visits. Leaders recognise the challenge of children at Hickling developing an appreciation of multi-cultural Britain. In order to contribute to addressing this, children attended a county diversity day, meeting others from a wide variety of backgrounds and ethnicities.

The committed and highly effective staff of Hickling Infants provide all pupils with every opportunity to flourish. As a result, the children listen with sustained concentration, are confident and articulate and love being at school and with each other.

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