

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Norton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Vision

Learn, Believe, Achieve: Hand in hand with God and each other.

Learn: We are a caring Christian community that learns together; developing the skills and knowledge we need to understand ourselves, show compassion and make wise choices.

Believe: We respect the beliefs of others and expect the same in return. We believe in ourselves and understand the importance of perseverance.

Achieve: We encourage everyone to work hard, try their best and have the courage to challenge themselves. We understand that everyone is unique and celebrate each other's achievements.

When we face life's challenges and opportunities we are not alone, we have the support of God and each other. 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' (Joshua 1:9)

Norton Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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

- The Christian vision is embedded through core values and a strong ethos. Compassionate and highly dedicated leadership underpins all decision making, enabling the vision to be understood and lived out. As a result, pupils and adults have consistent opportunities to 'learn, believe and achieve.'
- Staff work relentlessly to offer the best for every pupil, supporting those who may find school hard, to thrive. Many opportunities are explored through a rich and engaging curriculum to make sure pupils grow and flourish. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) flourish.
- Collective Worship is well planned and developed to offer opportunities for spiritual growth. It is an outworking of the vision and of this Church school's identity and foundation. It is valued as a spiritual pause in the busy school day, enabling nurture and respect.
- Pupils draw on the biblical verse of Joshua 1:9 to 'be strong and courageous' in their social justice work. This enables them to live out the school's vision of serving others through leadership roles of responsibility.
- Religious education (RE) is expertly led, it is planned well to enable critical thinking. This drives the whole RE curriculum. It ensures the subject has a high profile and leads to pupils encountering a range of religions and worldviews.

Development Points

- Deepen opportunities to grow pupils' curiosity through questioning, so they reflect more and strengthen their spiritual development.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision has been judiciously thought through by leaders and governors. They ensure it continually reflects the needs of the community. It pervades everything undertaken at Norton. Regular review ensures it remains fit for purpose. As a result, staff are inspired by working together with God to offer the very best. Pupils proudly refer to being courageous as a reminder to aspire with no limits. They refer to finding their spark to be curious and achieve. The school's vision offers staff a clear purpose to be attentive to the needs of pupils. This ensures staff are highly committed to enabling each pupil to succeed. A lived example is how the school dedicates time to build trusting relationships with families. Consequently, it is exceptionally well regarded in the community. Leaders invest in the staff and prioritise their wellbeing, enabling them to work effectively. Through wellbeing checks, staff feel highly valued by senior leaders, who see the school community as family. Committed governors take pride in being the custodians of the school's vision. Regular evaluation is part of their systematic checking of the impact of the vision on the school community. This strengthens their strategic decision-making processes.

The rich curriculum has many opportunities for pupils to reflect and grow spiritually. Subject leaders have carefully considered how to articulate what spiritual development looks like in their subject. This leads to staff planning for this with sensitivity. Intentionally planned moments of awe and wonderment feed the pupils' curious nature to ask questions. However, pupils sometimes want to explore their curiosity further but are not sure how. A strong culture of creative and immersive learning experiences is evident for pupils. This is framed in the school's belief of teaching a curriculum that has been filtered through its vision. This ensures the curriculum offers long-term memorable experiences that root learning connected to the individual. A good example is the weekly call out to parents to nominate pupils as 'bold adventurers.' Here, pupils are celebrated for achievements in and outside of school that live out its values and vision. These are celebrated in weekly worship and in newsletters. As a result, a culture of overcoming barriers is a central theme. This results in the vision of 'learn, believe, achieve' being lived out through courageous actions.

Collective worship offers a calm pause in the school's busy day. It is a joyful and engaging experience that provides ideal conditions for spiritual development. Leaders plan worship so the school community can explore its Christian vision and values. Music and singing are a fundamental part of the expression of everyone in worship.

Contemporary songs frame the theological context and messages. Creative weaving of biblical texts into each session helps everyone to understand the vision's roots in Christian teaching. Norton Churches Together group hosts services with the school, in the parish church and Baptist church. This along with leading weekly worship in school enhances the provision. It leads to pupils encountering the local diversity of Christian faith. Pupils feel privileged to lead aspects of spiritual reflection and Bible study in daily worship. They deeply value it and see it as an invitation to share time together with God. Others simply enjoy the calm and quiet time to think. Pupils also have opportunities to extend their spiritual time together through two well-attended after school clubs. Consequently, pupils feel naturally comfortable in spiritual reflection and growth.

Leaders seek to serve their community and treat everyone well. The Christian vision creates a welcoming and inclusive ethos where pupils and adults feel trusted. Pupils act as behaviour ambassadors to role model positive relationships at Norton. They take responsibility to lead clubs for pupils. A culture of everyone being celebrated for who they are, underpins the ethos of the school. This means no limits are placed on an individual. Pupils with SEND exceed expectations because they are supported through appropriate adaptations. A school team provides specialist support for mental health, wellbeing and behaviour. This team builds resilience and self-regulation in



pupils. Staff are trained to provide a wide range of strategies to deal with the complexity of needs at Norton. This results in parents identifying how the school helps their child believe in themselves. Leaders and staff passionately believe they are there to relentlessly support every pupil and family. No barrier is too hard to tackle, this leads to transformational and at times life changing work. Norton has clear examples of improving lives for the better because of its genuine love and care.

Pupils live out the school's vision of serving others through leadership roles of responsibility. This includes eco-councillors, junior journalists and behaviour ambassadors. School councillors have regular meetings with senior leaders to express their views and ideas to help others. They are driven by the school's vision to work together and be courageous to champion this work. Pupils regularly organise events to raise funds for charitable causes. This has led to them advocating greater understanding around times of significant challenge at Norton. One example is raising funds for cancer charities who supported families and staff during cancer treatments. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to make informed choices. It expects pupils to use their knowledge wisely in the world to make a difference to others. This encourages pupils to make links from their learning to the actions they choose to undertake. A school-wide project on water conservation and pollution is a rich example. Pupils connected with a local water company, international charities, and with their MP to systematically explore their concerns. Consequently, pupils make informed decisions about social action opportunities presented to them in the wider community.

The RE curriculum is carefully constructed to study beliefs and religions in a multicultural and diverse way. This provides pupils with accurate knowledge about a range of religions and worldviews including Christianity. Leaders have worked closely with the diocese to build a curriculum that reflects the school's context. Consequently, pupils develop sophisticated ideas that enable them to respond creatively to their learning. They are enthusiastic critical thinkers and can ask and answer deep questions. Leaders support teachers continuously to improve their knowledge. They have focused on how RE can be explored through different lenses, such as philosophy and theology. This builds complex knowledge in RE and grows confidence in understanding the many views within a belief. Well-chosen teaching resources support this complexity, enabling pupils to have a good understanding of a range of RE concepts. These are presented as 'big questions' such as 'Why are there so many different ideas about God?' The school explores a diverse range of Christian beliefs beyond its community. This supports pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide and multicultural faith.

Information

Address	School Close, Norton, Suffolk, IP31 3LZ		
Date	21 November 2024	URN	124710
Type of school	Primary	No. of pupils	206
Diocese/District	St Edmundsbury & Ipswich		
MAT/Federation	None		
Headteacher	Lisa Sparkes		
Chair of Governors	Nicky Broughton		
Inspector	Christopher J Allen		