

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cross In Hand Church of England Primary School

Vision

Jesus said “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10 v 10

At Cross in Hand Church of England Primary school, we enable each child to thrive, helping them to develop to their full potential within a caring community and an engaging environment. We provide an education of the highest standard built upon the foundations of our strong Christian values and a desire to make learning fun.

Cross In Hand 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.

Notable Strengths

- There is a strong and well-established culture of care and compassion that is now central to the school vision. This is demonstrated by a deep commitment to nurturing and supporting those in need. This is particularly true for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, pupils and adults are able to overcome their challenges and thrive, living life to the full.
- The school’s Christian values are being lived out through strong and supportive relationships, based on respect and kindness. This means that the community are able to live well together. These values are naturally extended to new families and staff members, making them feel welcomed and accepted.
- The religious education (RE) subject leader has established a secure RE curriculum that is well balanced and considers progression. Learning is well planned and sequenced and develops pupils’ knowledge and understanding over time.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school. It provides a meaningful and valued time for the school to come together. Pupils and adults appreciate the opportunity to reflect, respond and express their ideas about what they hear and experience.

Development Points

- Ensure that leaders are using the school’s Christian vision to underpin their work and drive strategic responses to school improvement. This is to maximise the impact of the vision and allow for the full flourishing of pupils and adults.
- Establish a shared approach to spirituality which ensures consistency across the school. This is to enable opportunities for spiritual development that are explicitly linked to a common understanding.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

This is a welcoming and inclusive learning community. Leaders have recently developed a clear and meaningful vision that is well suited to their context. This vision is known and understood. It is supported by four associated values of respect, kindness, community and perseverance. These are underpinned by Bible verses that help pupils and adults to understand them and know how they can be lived out. Pupils and staff clearly express how the vision is encouraging them to be bolder and braver in what they do. This means that they are confident to try new things and experience life to the full. It gives them the freedom to grow personally and professionally, knowing that failure often develops perseverance, character and hope. Leaders have begun to consider how their vision might guide their broader decisions and approaches, including their learning policy. However, the vision is not consistently used to drive their work at a strategic level. This means that there are some limitations on the full flourishing of pupils and adults.

Vision and Curriculum

Cross In Hand's curriculum provides an abundance of learning experiences that helps pupils to 'live life to the full'. This rich diet means pupils are able to achieve academically, physically and creatively. Staff ensure that learning is fun and interactive. This means that pupils are eager to learn, try new things and develop their skills and knowledge. Pupils experience learning beyond the classroom through regular forest school sessions. The on-site swimming pool allows pupils across the school to become confident swimmers. A variety of well-attended extracurricular clubs enhances the breadth of opportunities. Through the careful actions of leaders, inclusion is a clear strength with pupils enabled to access a curriculum that is tailored to their needs. Their commitment to recruitment and training means that pupils receive expert provision. Leaders adapt and improve their learning environment, making it more engaging and accessible. This ensures that barriers to learning are removed and pupils have full access to the curriculum. Staff and leaders show high ambition for pupils, including pupils who have additional needs. However, leaders have not established a shared understanding of spirituality. As a consequence, opportunities for developing adults and pupils spiritually throughout the whole curriculum are being missed.

Worship and Spirituality

In this large school, worship is an uplifting and joyful experience. It provides a peaceful and purposeful start to their day. This means that pupils and adults enjoy this special time together. The use of candles, singing, signing and prayers helps to set this time apart from the rest of the school day. Leaders thoughtfully plan and provide a rich and varied worship programme. Themes are planned in response to the needs of the school community, therefore acts of worship are relevant and pupil engagement is high. Collective worship invites pupils and adults to learn more about themselves, affirm their school values and get closer to God. Pupils develop a strong sense of self-worth and achievement through weekly celebrations. They appreciate the opportunity to participate and are inspired to think differently because of the chosen themes and visitors. This includes a vision-led aspirational view of what 'life in its fullness' could look like for them. Adults support pupils to reflect and respond to thoughtful questions within worship. This facilitates meaningful conversations at school and home. However, leaders have not fully maximised opportunities for spiritual flourishing by applying a common understanding of spirituality within collective worship.

Vision and School Culture

Relationships across the school are driven by its Christian values. They are strong and supportive, based on deep respect and kindness, and bind the community together in love and compassion. Staff are ready to hold each other up, as well as to support pupils and families through times of adversity. They do this by getting alongside them and making them feel appreciated, valued and understood. For the vulnerable, the school community is a welcome place of comfort and care. Pupils and adults are ready to help and support in times of difficulty. When



needed, they work to repair and restore relationships. Uniqueness and difference are embraced and celebrated. Leaders prioritise wellbeing and work proactively to make sure that staff are well supported, including steps to reduce their workload. They make sure that pupils have access to quality support at many levels. Ongoing training promotes staff professional development. Most notable is their work around the use of nurture and thrive principles. An ongoing focus to strengthen this provision demonstrates a commitment to helping those considered vulnerable to reach their full potential. This means that staff are equipped and ready to enable the flourishing of those with a wide range of particular needs.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Pupils are guided to expect 'fullness' of life for all. They notice issues within the school and work with adults to smooth them out. This often involves clarifying expectations and establishing ways of behaving that match the school values. There are some examples of pupil-led action for a range of charitable causes, including a local foodbank, homeless charity and care home. Pupils show acts of kindness for individuals who are struggling to manage parts of the school day. They eagerly apply for the extensive range of roles of responsibility that contribute to and influence school life. Within those roles, leaders facilitate opportunities for pupils to frame and adapt expectations and rules, enabling a sense of responsibility. This means that pupils see themselves as active contributors to their school. They aspire to take on the play leader, buddy, ambassador and mediator roles. This was powerfully articulated by a pupil who explained that, 'they make you feel like you make a difference and help you to be part of the community'. Leaders actively participate in and lead local learning partnerships and groups. This allows them to experience 'fullness' in their professional roles.

Religious Education

RE is an important part of the curriculum. It is given priority and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and helps them to think deeply. Leaders deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils at the school. This has been adapted as a result of focussed monitoring and evaluation. Learning is well sequenced and develops pupils' knowledge and skills over time. In addition to the weekly lessons, leaders have established whole school RE focus days. Pupils experience increasingly creative learning in RE that is fun and engages them. They explore a range of religious and non-religious worldviews and appreciate that this subject helps them to consider how people believe, think and live. RE helps pupils to accept and embrace difference and diversity. They know that learning about others prepares them for the wider world, beyond their school community, and for their future lives.

Information

Address	Sheepsetting Lane, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 0XG		
Date	16 June 2026	URN	114496
Type of school	Voluntary controlled	No. of pupils	381
Diocese	Chichester		
Headteacher	Richard Blakeley		
Chair of Governors	John Lee		
Inspector	Paula Bliss		