

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

### Embsay Church of England VC Primary School

#### Vision

We work together to nurture an inclusive family of hard-working, respectful individuals who have a lifelong love of learning.

“Life in all its fullness” (John 10:10)

Embsay Church of England VC 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 underpins a culture that nurtures the whole community. Strong, caring relationships, inspired by the vision and associated values, are a strength of the school.
- There is a tangible culture of care in the school. Wellbeing and mental health are prioritised in this inclusive community. As a result, both pupils and adults flourish socially and emotionally.
- Pupils and adults value the opportunity to gather as a community for collective worship. The close relationship with the local church strengthens the development of spirituality.
- Pupils are advocates for the environment and understand their responsibility to help to protect it. They see their role as nurturing this precious gift from God.
- Governance is a strength of Embsay. Guided by the vision for all to ‘live life in all its fullness,’ governors lead with integrity and compassion. Partnerships with local teaching alliances, the local church and the Diocese of Leeds, provide invaluable guidance and support to governors.

#### Development Points

- Embed strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of impact of the distinctively Christian vision. This is to ensure it remains central to the school’s ongoing development.
- Ensure that the school’s vision clearly underpins all aspects of the curriculum. Agree a shared language around the school’s understanding of spirituality. This is to secure opportunities for spiritual development across all curriculum areas.
- Continue to develop the professional development of staff in religious education (RE). This is to ensure that staff are appropriately skilled to plan and deliver a quality curriculum in RE.



## Inspection Findings

A culture of nurture, central to the school's vision, infuses all aspects of this welcoming village school. Embsay has been through an extended period of instability, particularly in senior leadership and staffing. Partnership working with a number of agencies has supported governors to lead the school through this difficult time. Interim leadership arrangements, brokered through the diocese and local authority, have swiftly ensured that the vision guides strategy and actions. The relaunched Christian vision, recognising the equity of all to flourish, is understood well by pupils, staff and parents. Pupils explain how each part of the vision provides different guides for how to act and lead their lives. Parents value the changes which have been implemented, noting the positive impact on the lives of their children. A restructure of the school leadership team is supporting the flourishing of adults whilst also strengthening capacity to drive improvement. Leaders have introduced a more structured approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the school that is supporting improvements. They recognise this as key to ensuring that the Christian vision remains central to the school's ongoing growth.

Working alongside external professionals, leaders have devised a new curriculum aimed at inspiring a lifelong love of learning. Mindful of increased staff workload, dedicated time has been allocated to support these changes. Pupils are excited by learning. Specialist art teaching, visitors, trips and residential enhance the curriculum offer. Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), worship, art and RE are key drivers in promoting diversity in this monocultural school. Pupils make explicit links to their value of respect when discussing the importance of treating people equally, regardless of difference. Recent training on spirituality has initiated much discussion amongst staff about what this looks like in Embsay. Whilst there are many incidental examples, spiritual development opportunities are currently not planned as an intrinsic part of the curriculum. As a result, opportunities for spiritual reflection are missed. Embsay is deeply committed to inclusion. Leaders have implemented many changes to respond to the increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND). Training for staff, investment in new resources and involvement of specialists are effectively supporting developments. Provision, which meets the specific needs of pupils with SEND, enables them to succeed in their learning and personal growth. The newly appointed lead for pupils with SEND has established clear lines of communication with parents, which are valued. These parents report that Embsay 'goes above and beyond' what is expected, supporting them as well as their children.

Collective worship offers an opportunity to come together as a loving family. Themes are carefully planned around the vision, its associated values and the liturgical year. Worship provides numerous opportunities to reflect on the school vision and the life of Jesus. Pupils confidently compare examples of how they show compassion in their lives to stories where Jesus demonstrated it. Worship enables them to reflect on their feelings and actions, whilst also considering the impact of these on others. Staff value this 'period of calm' on busy days. These opportunities to pause, reflect and to connect with one another, strengthen the togetherness of this school community. The use of Makaton signing in the prayers and joyous singing celebrates the inclusive nature of worship. The link with St Mary's is particularly strong. The church warmly welcomes the school community to celebrate festivals, including Harvest and Christmas. Members of the church also regularly lead worship in school. This link supports the deeper understanding of Anglican traditions contributing greatly to the prayer and spiritual life of the school.

Strong and caring relationships, rooted in the vision and values, are a key strength of Embsay. Pupils feel safe, enjoy coming to school and attendance is high. They explain how the vision guides their actions by showing respect to all and valuing differences. Both in class and outside, pupils work and play harmoniously, demonstrating good



behaviours and attitudes to learning. Leaders prioritise mental health and wellbeing. Recent budget and staffing decisions evidence this commitment to providing for the needs of all. These include the creation of two specialist positions to lead on intervention and pastoral matters. Based in specially created hubs, pupils know that they have someone to talk to if worried, supporting their wellbeing. Interim leaders understand that the relationship with parents is crucial to the success of ongoing developments. Parents and carers appreciate the improved communication through weekly newsletters and regular information about what pupils are learning. They feel welcome and valued members of the community. Parents are comfortable reaching out to staff with concerns as they deal with issues sensitively and with compassion.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of justice and responsibility, which extends beyond fundraising. They are passionate about the environment. Pupils articulate clearly how the world is a 'gift from God' and everyone has a role to play to maintain it. These views are informed through the curriculum, visitors to school and links with the local church. Conscious of the impact of climate change, pupils have developed an eco-wildlife area and planted new trees on the field. Pupils speak compassionately about a wide range of inequalities in the world, including poverty and homelessness. The school's chosen charity, 'Homeless Not Hopeless,' deepens this understanding of inequality, whilst also inspiring them to help others. This includes organising independent fundraising opportunities as well as donating clothes and bedding. Pupils in Year 5 speak knowledgeably about problems the modern-day Messiah would encounter, including numerous forms of discrimination.

Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about RE. They enjoy the different approaches used to teach them. This leads to high engagement in RE lessons. They have a well-developed understanding of a range of worldviews and religions. Links with Malawi support their understanding of differences in the ways in which Christians worship around the world. Through this, pupils understand that not all Christians worship in solid structures like churches. They recognise that there are cultural differences in how people pray and celebrate. Leaders monitor and evaluate RE, taking steps to address issues identified. Knowledge organisers, with specific links to vocabulary, are effectively supporting pupils' understanding of key concepts and words. Prominent classroom displays celebrate learning in the subject. To support staff changes and the implementation of new units, leaders have prioritised training in RE. Professional development through the diocese, as well as links with other Church schools, are supporting this priority. Teachers welcome this investment, which supports their ability to deliver a high quality curriculum. Written evidence in books does not always reflect the deeper thinking and understanding evident in conversations with pupils.

## Information

Address	Pasture Road, Embsay, Skipton, BD23 6RH		
Date	26 November 2024	URN	121559
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	198
Diocese	Leeds		
Interim Executive Headteacher	Tim Whitehead		
Chair of Governors	Chris Atherton		
Inspector	Mary Connor		