

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Whittingham Church of England Primary School

Address	The Old School, Alnwick, NE66 4UP		
Date of inspection	2 July 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled
Diocese	Newcastle	URN	122279

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

School context

Whittingham voluntary controlled primary school currently has 112 pupils on roll. The vast majority of 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 in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above national averages. In September 2016, the school transitioned from a first school to a primary school. The leadership team has been in place since the previous SIAMS inspection. Ofsted completed an inspection in February 2018 and judged the school as continuing to be good.

The school's Christian vision

'Hand in hand we will become resilient, respectful and responsible citizens of our community and the wider world.' The three values which emanate from the vision are linked to the Bible in the following way:
 Resilience – 'I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.' (Philippians 4:13)
 Respect – 'In your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.' (Peter 3:15)
 Responsibility – Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25: 14-30)

Key findings

- Pupils talk candidly about their understanding of the school's Christian vision and values and how these contribute to transforming and impacting on their lives.
- Inspirational leadership from the headteacher has generated a culture amongst all staff of striving to achieve the best for all pupils and allowing them to flourish in the fullest sense of the word.
- Mutually beneficial links between school and church, catalysed by the tireless dedication of the local vicar, provide significant opportunities for pupils to engage in the life of the community.
- An exciting and innovative partnership has developed with an ethnically and religiously diverse regional primary school, particularly through the religious education (RE) curriculum, ensuring that pupils' understanding of respect and celebrating difference and diversity has been enhanced.
- Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school providing a myriad of opportunities for pupils to engage with the vision and values and to demonstrate how these impact on their lives.

Areas for development

- Embrace the strategies from the 'Thrive Approach' to provide further support for good mental health and wellbeing for all pupils.
- Continue to build upon existing opportunities that focus on developing pupils' understanding of respect and celebrating difference and diversity so that they are resilient to face life outside of their rural community.

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

The Christian vision of 'hand in hand we will become resilient, respectful and responsible citizens of our community and the wider world' permeates all aspects of school life and is embraced by the entire community. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the Christian vision and values (known as the '3R's'). They are able to confidently articulate how these impact on their lives through their behaviour and relationships. The school has recently transitioned from a first school to a primary school. This provided the chance to revisit the vision and values with all key stakeholders so that it was truly reflective of the current community. The vision and values are now grounded in Christian theology and are used to shape the direction of school policies and development plans. Mutually beneficial and supportive links, valued by all members of the community, have been established between school and local church. This is in major part due to the tireless determination of the local vicar who refers to her work with school as 'mission on a plate.' A supportive relationship has been maintained with the Diocese, with the headteacher, in particular, taking part in a range of training events. The benefits of which are then reflected in practice across the school. Staff are extremely complementary of the importance which governors and the headteacher attach to professional development. Time is given for the small group of staff to share good practice, for example in relation to 'Understanding Christianity' and the 'Thrive Approach', which is then rolled out across the school. The school is also outward facing with the headteacher regularly feeding good practice into the Alnwick Church Schools' Partnership. The governing body holds the headteacher to account to ensure that all aspects of school life reflect the vision and values. Termly governor meetings place the vision and values at the heart of all issues, providing continuous self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness as a Church school.

Staff strive to achieve the best for all pupils and enable the exceptional flourishing of individual talents. This is generated by inspirational leadership from the headteacher. Staff see it as their Christian duty to support all learners, especially the most vulnerable, in meeting their academic and spiritual needs. Consequently, from their starting points, pupils make outstanding progress in Early Years and Key Stage 1. Lessons have been learnt from the school's first Key Stage 2 (KS2) results with the development plan containing effective improvement strategies that are already bearing fruit. Pupils' spiritual development is highly evident, they ask questions and are curious about the world around them. This stems from well-designed curriculum opportunities that allow pupils to explore the knowledge and spiritual aspects of each subject.

School leadership recognises both the benefits and challenges that living in a rural community can pose. Close proximity to the church has allowed for pupils to become responsible and respectful citizens and courageous advocates for change in their local community. This means that the vision is being lived by the pupils. The school works proactively with the church to support the '#iwill' campaign designed to involve young people in social action to make a difference to their communities. Initiatives with Stonewall and Show Racism the Red Card are interwoven within the RE curriculum. This enhances pupils' understanding of injustice and what life can be like in the wider community, fostering a sense of aspiration and resilience. Through positions such as school councillors and members of the health and wellbeing group, pupils take on positions of responsibility helping them to further develop the value of resilience.

Pupils regard school as being a big family and as a result behaviour is exemplary and relationships between pupils are supportive and loving. Pupils, staff and parents talk animatedly about the '3 F's' (forgive, forget and fresh start). When disagreement arises, pupils use these to work 'hand in hand' to focus on a solution. Pupils emphasise how Jesus' teachings, such as 'love your neighbour as yourself' and the Parable of the Good Samaritan, are used to consider how they should act towards others. Pupils model these values by being respectful, responsible and resilience citizens of their community. The headteacher is a passionate advocate for supporting good mental health in both children and adults. She is a qualified 'Thrive' practitioner and has put effective strategies in place to support pupils' mental health. This has been shared within the local schools' partnership with the aim of benefitting others. Staff feel supported and listened to and appreciate how they are an intrinsic part of the school community.

The effectiveness of the vision is best seen through the exciting and innovative partnership that has grown with an ethnically and religiously diverse regional primary school. Through the RE curriculum and mutual visits, pupils' understanding of the importance of respect for others and of actively celebrating diversity has been significantly enhanced. The benefits from this address an area for development from the previous SIAMS. Engagement with

Christian Aid's 'Global Neighbour's scheme' and Unicef's 'Rights Respecting Schools' encourages a deep understanding of global injustice. This has led to overseas links, such as uniform donations sent to a school in Uganda.

Significant priority has been given to collective worship so that it has become the school's heartbeat. Worship provides a myriad of opportunities for pupils to learn about and demonstrate their understanding of the Christian vision and values. Friday worship is used to celebrate pupils' achievement. It is characterised by a sense of pride in recognising how pupils have worked together to be resilient, respectful and responsible citizens of their community. Consequently, worship has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual development allowing them to flourish as individuals of God. Worship is planned and led by a range of partners, including pupils, and clergy, leading to a rich mix of styles ensuring that engagement is high. Importance is placed on pupils evaluating their experience of worship. This helps to enhance the quality of provision and addresses an area of development from the previous SIAMS. The school works proactively with the local church so that pupils are regular visitors and see it as their church. Through termly services, attendance at 'Messy church' and vicar led lessons in church, pupils encounter the teachings of Jesus, the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the importance of the Eucharist. Pupils speak with understanding about the purpose and value of prayer. Time is given across the day for pupils to pray and reflect. This is done as individuals, as a group and as a whole school, to give thanks and to reflect on the difficulties and issues of life.

The school follows the Northumberland locally agreed syllabus for RE and has introduced elements of 'Understanding Christianity'. This allows for pupils to engage further with Christianity, by exploring big questions and concepts, as well as engaging with the Bible. Through the RE curriculum, bolstered by visits to places of worship such as a gurdwara and religious visitors to school, pupils develop a secure understanding of major world religions. RE provides the space for pupils from Early Years up to KS2 to critically reflect on their own and others' beliefs, contributing significantly to their spiritual development. The RE lead attends diocesan training with time given to share this good practice to all staff. Consequently, a simple yet effective assessment system has been established within RE that accurately assesses progress.

Headteacher	Belinda Athey
Inspector's name and number	Richard Goodman 889

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