

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Raughton Head Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address Raughton Head, Carlisle, Cumbria CA5 7DD

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

School's vision

'Trust ourselves, trust one another, trust God'

Using Jeremiah 17: 7-8 as our Biblical inspiration, everything we do is built on trust.

Everyone has ultimate worth, we let nothing falter us or stand in our way to ensure we always bear fruit that is plentiful and healthy.

Key findings

- The school's vision is lived out, creating a safe and happy, caring environment rooted in Christian love.
- Christian values are an integral part of the daily life of the school. As a result, pupils are intuitive in showing others respect.
- The new curriculum is underpinned by the school's Christian vision and is effective in enabling pupils to flourish.
- Pupils enjoy collective worship. They are very keen to take an active role as participants, and where appropriate, as leaders.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is well planned and outward looking, ensuring that pupils learn about faith and religion in a global context.

Areas for development

- Deepen and refresh governors' understanding of the specific expectations for church school education to further equip them in supporting the school's future development.
- Extend pupils' engagement in social action through a broader focus that continues to support local concerns, whilst embracing global issues.
- Support pupils' deepening spiritual development through greater independence in planning and delivering collective worship.

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 school identifies the Christian value of trust as fundamental to their Christian vision. 'Trust ourselves, trust one another, trust God' is lived out across the school on a daily basis. A verse from Jeremiah, describing a thriving tree, is very effective in illustrating how the vision enables everyone to flourish. Key Christian values, such as respect and justice, work in tandem with the school's vision. Values posters personalised to the school are clearly visible around the building and are utilised by staff and pupils alike. As a result, they weave a thread through the life of the school and this was articulated by a pupil as helping 'guide them through their life'. Similarly, in demonstrating their understanding of the school vision, pupils described trust as the 'number one value'. The vision is at the heart of strategic decisions. The vision has enabled the headteacher to lead on the bold decision for a new curriculum whilst empowering staff in its implementation. Likewise, the Christian foundation underlies the school's policies and long-term development plans. This is exemplified in the governors' focus for the school to provide the best for its pupils. Therefore, they have a rigorous approach in monitoring school performance data across the curriculum. With a clear understanding of the nature of small pupil numbers, governors are successful in providing appropriate challenge to secure continued school improvement.

The school is at the heart of the community. Governors are keen to emphasise the caring, family feel that this creates. However, they were less specific when expressing the impact and nature of the school's Christian foundation. The school's vision embraces positive engagement with both well established and revitalised church partnerships. Therefore, staff access targeted professional development opportunities from different providers including the local diocese, which heightens their understanding of church schools. Inter-school activities enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum. Likewise, the school is highly proactive in establishing positive links with the local church. For example, they are hosting a Mothers' Day Lunch in school after the Mothering Sunday service. Staff are aware that some families had no church contact prior to their child attending the school. Staff are equally as keen to support the renewed church links and attend key family services alongside many school families. As a result, church attendance has risen considerably for all-age services.

The school's vision and values underpinned the bold decision to introduce a recent new curriculum which required a different teaching approach. As a result, pupils flourish, achieving improved outcomes through enriched learning activities that meet the needs of each individual. The impact could be seen when parents spoke of staff knowing their children well and confirming evidence seen that specific learning needs are quickly identified. The school swiftly actions support strategies for identified pupils.

The whole school community is exceptionally compassionate. Pupils are well-informed on local and global matters and can articulate their concern for international issues. They work with staff to make informed decisions about charitable giving. For example, the school council substituted Children in Need activities for a hospice fundraiser which was more pertinent to their context at the time. Pupils also follow up on key themes, empowered to undertake social action projects locally. For example, they distributed 'seed bombs' to local households to encourage bees and discussed speed safety by the school with the police and local councillors.

The school's vision and values have a significant impact in the way in which the school flourishes because it is steeped in Christian love. Christian values support this pocket of excellence, resulting in high attendance. One parent quoted their child asking, 'when can I go back to school, the holidays are too long?' There are exceptional levels of positive pupil behaviour and one parent attributed this to their children 'all feeling part of a big family'. Pupils are encouraged to practise forgiveness and reconciliation. For example, older pupils often support younger pupils in sorting out the occasional minor disagreement. A teacher also cited the time a child wanted to pray for forgiveness after doing something wrong. Strong relationships across the school support staff and pupil mental health and well-being.

New staff quickly recognise the exceptional bond they feel as a result of the school ethos. Parents also speak of how the care extended to quickly dealing with children's concerns, with prompt referrals when appropriate. The school is conscious of its isolated geographical location and therefore does much to support pupils in gaining a greater world view. An annual 'Culture Week', visitors and a regular residential to Liverpool immerses pupils in activities focusing on celebrating diversity. Therefore, pupils develop a desire that everyone should be treated equally and with respect, combined with a genuine understanding of difference and diversity. Christian values support pupils in their knowledge that everyone is unique and to be cherished. This was exemplified by some pupils choosing to be at school early to welcome a new pupil into the school community.

Pupils and staff relish coming together and sharing in varied and interactive collective worship as well as having space for reflection. Worship is fully inclusive. For those gathered, staff ensure that their participation is however they feel most comfortable. Collective worship is rooted in Christian values and biblical teaching. Worship introduces pupils to church traditions and prayers. The lighting of three candles and the use of key words reinforces their knowledge of the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is clear that pupils recognise the importance of prayer in their lives and how it helps them. There is thorough evaluation of worship with evidence of pupils' ideas being introduced. Older pupils enjoy leading worship and currently use materials provided by staff.

Pupils are enthusiastic about RE. The subject is well planned and provides pupils with a good variety of topics that embrace Christianity and other worldviews. Pupils flourish in the subject as they are given time to explore theological and philosophical ideas through a 'big questions' approach. Pertinent links are made with the school's Christian values, for example considering justice at Easter time. 'What does sacrifice mean?' and 'Why did Jesus die?' are two examples of pupil-led ideas being explored currently. Good use of quality resources support pupils in their understanding of Christianity across the world. For example, a film extract of two Christian children sharing Easter traditions, one living in Jerusalem, the other in Liverpool. The school meets the statutory requirements and expectations for Church of England schools in both RE and collective worship. Assessment is effective in evaluating standards and progress in RE.

The school's vision and Christian values permeate throughout the whole school community ensuring all flourish. One member of staff helpfully summarised the evidence seen as, 'we all grow, we're all the fruits, not just the children.'

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	11 March 2022	URN	112257
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled primary school	NOR	048
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese / Methodist District	Carlisle		
Headteacher	Alison Dickinson		
Pupil profile	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.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. Also, an additional classroom has been built to accommodate the school's rising roll.		
Inspector's name	Jo Williams	No.	863