

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Norley Church of England Primary School			
Address	Hough Lane, Norley, Frodsham, WA6 8JZ		
Date of inspection	23 January 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Chester	URN	111249

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
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Norley Church of England Primary School has 99 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. 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 (SEND) is below national averages. The chair of governors has been in post for a term. The parish is currently in a period of interregnum.

The school's Christian vision

'The love of God shines through us by the work of our hands.'

'You are the light of the world.' (Matt. 5:14 – 16)

We are a church school where education is nourished through the teachings of Jesus Christ, enabling each child to fulfil their potential. Every individual is cherished.

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision and values are central to relationships, behaviour and learning in this very welcoming and caring school. Every pupil is known and nurtured as an individual.
- The strong partnership with local churches, the significant leadership of pupils and the thoughtful commitment of staff create engaging collective worship that fosters spiritual development.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is taught creatively, leading to good achievement for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds.
- Religious education (RE) is well led and taught, enabling pupils to understand key biblical and theological concepts in Christianity and key beliefs in other world religions. Pupils enjoy RE and make good progress.

Areas for development

- Plan and develop opportunities in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities so that pupils gain an understanding of deprivation and injustice. This will enable them to engage in social action.
- Develop links with the worldwide church so that pupils are encouraged to think globally and gain an understanding of Christianity as a vibrant, multi-cultural faith.

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

Central to the school's Christian vision is the desire that every pupil should shine as an individual nourished by the teachings of Jesus. A thorough review since the previous inspection has ensured that the school's vision is clearly articulated and firmly rooted in biblical teaching. Whole school theme days develop understanding of the biblical and theological basis of the vision. Relationships within the school community are shaped by chosen Christian values which enable every member to flourish.

Pupils' exemplary behaviour springs from the school's vision. Pupils recognise the influence of the values in the way they behave towards others. Difficulties between pupils are uncommon as they know how to talk about issues and apologise and forgive. Personal, social and health education incorporating Christian values promotes resilience and character. Pastoral care includes emotional learning support for vulnerable pupils through a trained member of staff. This helps improve pupils' well-being and capacity to cope with challenge. Parents value their easy, open communication with staff and say that close knowledge of their children as individuals means the school is able to intervene early where necessary. An environment is created in which pupils care for each other, show a lovely confidence in expressing themselves and are valued as individuals. This contributes to attendance above national averages and to excellent behaviour.

The vision inspires school leadership decisions about the curriculum and its teaching. Subjects such as science, history, geography and art are taught through cross-curricular topics. These are planned to give a rich variety of creative experiences and activities, including visits, which engage and develop pupils of all ages and abilities. Outdoor learning as well as opportunities for movement help pupils who find sustained concentration difficult. The teachings of Jesus and the school's values are woven through all subjects. The reward system encourages the identification of chosen Christian values across all aspects of teaching and learning. For example, literacy work on the topic of the Great Fire of London was rewarded for showing compassion and empathy. Taught as a separate subject, RE develops pupils' theological and biblical understanding, enabling them to talk about concepts such as the Trinity. Pupils are enthusiastic about RE and say it helps them understand what God is like. The carefully considered curriculum, shaped by the school's vision, enables all pupils to make good progress, flourish and achieve well.

Engaging worship, highly valued by pupils and adults alike, is at the heart of the school community. School and church leaders have worked hard to fully involve pupils in planning, leading and enjoying collective worship. Through the weekly Believe in God (BIG) group run by the headteacher, pupils regularly take full responsibility for whole school collective worship. A significant proportion of pupils are involved in the BIG group and their skills have matured over the last three years. Pupils love preparing and leading worship. They choose, write and deliver every part including appropriate music, prayers and a Bible passage. Pupils talk reflectively about the impact of worship. They say that younger pupils think it is fun when they lead because 'it's easier to speak kid to kid'. One pupil commented, 'I like to get the message over to reception because it's for everyone.' Although the Eucharist is not part of school worship, pupils can explain its importance. Pupils' enthusiasm for worship is striking. Their wide-ranging and thoughtful suggestions, coupled with regular evaluation by governors and the headteacher, have greatly improved worship. For example, increased time for quiet reflection in collective worship came at the request of the school council. Irrespective of faith background, staff value worship as helping them to become more reflective.

Individual prayer is fostered through an excellent range of opportunities for reflection. The prayer board in school and the newsletter invite prayer requests. The attractive reflection areas in each classroom are well used and include prompts for thought written by pupils. Story books are also provided to get pupils thinking about diversity. Pupils appreciate the annual prayer day as helping them to think about God. Prayer is a very natural part of the school day and is underpinned by pupils' contributions. Pupils from families of faith and of none say they value prayer. 'Praying helps me if I'm worrying,' was a typical comment.

A strong partnership with the three local parish churches and the Methodist church makes a powerful contribution to the spiritual development of pupils and adults. Anglican and Methodist youth workers and ministers regularly lead collective worship, bringing engaging variety. Pupils experience different styles and traditions by attending the parish church for whole school services and the Methodist church for an annual prayer day. By pooling resources, the church partnership supports the school in overcoming some of the issues of being in a small village. For example, Methodists and Anglicans jointly hold a transition day at a conference centre to support pupils in their move to far larger secondary schools. Both the school and the churches benefit substantially from their collaboration.

Pupils have a keen concern for others and show initiative in charity fund-raising. They enjoy participating in 'random acts of kindness' in the village. However, they do not have regular opportunities to participate in social action or to challenge unfairness. Occasions are not identified in the curriculum to explore injustice and deprivation and to debate or act on the questions raised.

The headteacher cares passionately about the school's Christian vision and has moulded a strong team of governors and staff. Staff are valued and well supported personally and professionally. School leadership is developed through attention to current educational thinking and continuing professional development which is enhanced by diocesan networks and training. Leadership is further strengthened by the informal collaboration between three local schools in which the headteacher takes a lead. The governors have worked hard to express and apply the school's vision in strategic planning. They implement effective systems of monitoring and evaluation and regularly visit school. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. The recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed effectively.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Led by the headteacher, RE is taught by class teachers. Their expertise is developed through diocesan training and a local network of RE teachers. The progressive RE curriculum ensures that pupils deepen their theological and biblical understanding in ways appropriate to their age. Although there is a lack of religious diversity in the area, the school ensures that pupils gain some direct experience of world faiths by welcoming Jewish, Muslim, humanist and Buddhist visitors to talk about their beliefs. However, pupils have little awareness of Christianity as a global, multi-cultural faith. Book scrutiny, learning walks and moderation of work ensure consistency in teaching and learning. A well organised assessment system enables progress and attainment in RE to be securely measured. Pupils make good progress in RE which is similar to that in history and English. The quality of teaching and learning is at least good, with particular strengths in careful and challenging questioning.

Headteacher

Helen Kelly

Inspector's name and number

Eleanor Benson 920