

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Norham St Ceolwulf's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Address	West Street, Norham-on-Tweed, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 2JZ		
Date of inspection	13 February 2019	Status of school	VC First School
Diocese	Newcastle	URN	135064

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

School context

Norham St Ceolwulf's Church of England Voluntary Controlled School is a small rural first school serving Norham village and its surrounding area. There are 27 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. The headteacher and her two teaching colleagues (one full-time and one part-time) have joined the school since the last SIAMS inspection.

The school's Christian vision

A loving, caring, learning community, growing in truth, forgiveness and hope in which children and adults work together to achieve their best for the benefit of the individual, the school and the wider community.

Key findings

- The school is led by a headteacher whose vision and values are rooted in her Christian faith.
- The support given to each pupil enables all pupils, including the most vulnerable, to flourish.
- Pupils' behaviour and relationships are of a very high standard and are attributed by them to the school's Christian values.
- Collective worship is invitational, inclusive and distinctively Christian and makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness and development.
- Religious education (RE) makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of Christianity as a living global faith and to their understanding of, and respect for, religious diversity.

Areas for development

- To clarify, at all levels, how the school's vision and values are rooted in a distinctively Christian narrative, so that the whole community has a fuller understanding of its Christian foundation and character.
- To develop the provision of areas for prayer and reflection, so that the opportunities given to pupils for spiritual development are enriched.
- To embed the developing system of assessment in RE, so that all pupils are able to understand their attainment and progress and to know what they need to do to improve.
- To extend the opportunities given to pupils to visit a range of places of Christian worship, so that their understanding of the diversity of Christian worship is developed.

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

This small rural school is led by a dynamic headteacher whose vision and values are rooted in her Christian faith. She leads a school which remains on its journey from community school to Church school status. Helping all members of the community to understand that its vision and values, which are widely shared, are grounded in the Christian story is at the heart of this journey. Very considerable progress has been made. Deeply committed governors speak of the school's Christian ethos 'becoming its beating heart'. They take advantage of opportunities provided by the diocese to develop their understanding of Church school education. This enables them to be effective in giving both support and challenge. Groups of governors regularly visit the school to review all aspects of its life and work, including its effectiveness as a Church school. Reports from these visits lead to school improvement. For example, as policies are reviewed, the school's vision and values are stated more clearly and implemented more explicitly.

The school's broad and balanced curriculum is shaped by its vision. The love and care which are shown to each and every pupil, including the most vulnerable, expresses the school's commitment to meeting their needs and enabling them to flourish. This commitment extends to the rich extra-curricular opportunities which are offered. For example, a recent 'jobs fair' introduced pupils, at this early age, to a wide variety of careers. This raises aspirations and reflects the school's determination to encourage all pupils to aim high. Assessment data reveal that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. Regular reviews result in effective interventions and illustrate the school's individualised approach to teaching and learning and its commitment to the academic flourishing of all in its care.

The school's Christian vision of being a loving, caring and growing community underpins its support of pupils' character and moral development. Pupils are deeply aware of belonging to a domestic family, to the school family, to the family which is their local community, and to the human family. This awareness is reflected in their concern for the welfare of others – locally, nationally and globally. They speak of their charitable projects – planting bulbs in the village, supporting a local food bank, and preparing boxes of gifts for Operation Christmas Child – as expressing the love which is one of their school's values. 'We may be one of the smallest schools, but we have some of the biggest hearts.' Pupils are helped to develop an understanding of disadvantage and deprivation in a way which plants the seeds of courageous advocacy. Their appreciation of the school's commitment to their flourishing results in their concern for the flourishing of others.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and relationships between them are mutually supportive. They attribute this to the school's Christian vision and values, which help and encourage them to make positive choices. 'We look out for each other, because we are taught to love, to care and to be kind.' They speak with pride about the 'buddy bench' in the playground, where someone who is feeling lonely or left-out can sit and who will soon receive the supportive attention of one of the playground leaders. Pupils report that there is no bullying in the school. When disagreements occur, they seek first to resolve them among themselves – not least through the offering of forgiveness. This reflects how well the school's vision of growing in truth and forgiveness is lived out in the daily life of the community. Pupils are listened to and given opportunities – through the school council, for example – to contribute to school decisions. Adults in the community, including parents and carers, also speak of being able to express their views, of being listened to, and of being able to contribute to decision-making.

The school is an inclusive community where all are welcome and treated with dignity and respect. Pupils are given regular opportunities – not only in RE but across the curriculum – to learn about difference and diversity. They respect each other, and this results in their respecting difference and diversity among others who, like them, are part of the human family.

Collective worship is of a high standard and enriches pupils' spiritual awareness and development. It is invitational and inclusive. For example, pupils are invited to respond to the saying of a prayer if they wish to make the prayer their own. This ensures that all can attend with integrity. Worship is also distinctively Christian, drawing on the Bible and on Christian teaching. For example, the lighting of three candles at the beginning of worship, and the explanation for doing so, nurtures pupils' understanding of Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Worship has considerable variety. Pupils engage very well and enjoy contributing – through speaking, singing and drama. Worship has a significant impact on their behaviour, values and attitudes. 'It changes our behaviour, makes us grateful, and helps us to love each other.' They understand that prayer is about saying 'thank you' and 'sorry' as much as it is about asking for things, and they speak of using prayer outside of worship in school. The provision of areas for prayer and reflection is at an early stage, but pupils are actively involved in the creation of an outside area for this purpose. Worship is linked to the school's Christian values. The inclusion of a challenge at the end of worship encourages, among pupils and adults, both reflection and an appreciation of the relevance

of faith in today's world. Worship is led regularly by members of the local Anglican church. Partnership with the church is mutually beneficial. Worship in church includes a Eucharist each half-term. Visitors from different Christian denominations lead worship, but the limited opportunities to visit other churches restricts pupils' understanding of the diversity of Christian worship. Pupils are actively involved in the planning, preparation, leadership and evaluation of worship. Their evaluations are shared with staff and result in improvements.

Curriculum time given to RE is in line with the *Church of England Statement of Entitlement*. The subject is well resourced. Careful questioning promotes reflection and helps pupils to develop the skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation. The programme of study enables pupils to develop an appreciation of Christianity as a living global faith and to study other faith traditions. They develop a respectful understanding of the diversity of religious faith and enjoy having their thinking challenged and enriched. The new system of assessment enables pupils to gauge more accurately their attainment and progress, and to know what they have to do to improve. This system is not yet embedded across all year groups. Good practice is shared within the school, and staff access continuing professional development in the subject.

The community of this good Church school has embraced its Christian vision and the task of embedding this vision in all aspects of its life and work.

Headteacher	Sarah Jones
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Canon Steven Harvey - 891