

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Berwick St Mary's Church of England First School	
Address	Newfields, Berwick-Upon -Tweed, TD15 1SP
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
<p>'I can do this through him who gives me strength.' Philippians 4:13</p> <p>St Mary's uses the Christian values of endurance, service, compassion, justice and friendship as a shared light to create an inclusive community that realises the potential in all unique individuals.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders ensure that the Christian vision and values underpin policy and practice. This leads to good relationships within school and extending to school partners. • A rich programme of learning within school and including extra-curricular activities and visits, successfully enhances opportunities for all. This includes those who are vulnerable and have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Pupils have opportunities to develop their spirituality. However, this aspect is not yet fully identified and explored in all subjects. • Pupils character development is a strength of provision. It enables pupils to be hopeful and aspirational for their future. Leaders are strong role models and courageous advocates for the pupils in their care. This empowers pupils for their futures. • Collective worship is a joyful and highly respected aspect of each day. Worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. However, pupils do not regularly plan, lead or evaluate worship. • Well led, religious education (RE), provides pupils with a challenging, broad, balanced, sequential curriculum. It enables pupils to learn about Christianity as a living faith, and major religions and worldviews.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalise the shared definition of spirituality and explore ways of enhancing pupils' spiritual development through daily learning. This is so pupils understand that spirituality pervades all areas of life. • Enhance the opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship. This is so collective worship has a greater impact upon their lives.

Inspection findings

St Mary's Church of England First School is a good Church school. At its heart is its Christian vision which underpins and shapes school policy and practice. Through the vision of shared light, leaders have created a highly inclusive school community, with a strong focus on supporting individual needs. Parents speak about the love and care their children receive from every member of St Mary's family. Consequently, everyone is embraced and personally known within this small community. Leaders firmly uphold the Christian vision, serving their community with integrity and compassion. This includes through challenging times, when the school draws strength from the vision of 'I can do this through him who gives me strength.' Philippians 4:13. This enables pupils and adults to flourish, full of hope for their future, within their school community and beyond. All appreciate that they have a voice that is recognised and valued. Leaders provide a beacon to other schools by generously sharing their expertise in leadership, mental health and RE. Leaders, including governors, know and understand the school because they have robust systems of self-evaluation. These embrace all members of the school community and include evaluation as a Church school.

The Christian vision inspires the bespoke curriculum, which is ambitious, progressive, broad and balanced. Consequently, all pupils thrive because their learning needs are met. This includes through the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. The school's exemplary inclusion practice supports effective teaching. This enables all pupils to flourish in their learning. Recognised by the diocese, the school is commended for its work for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). Leaders nurture adult wellbeing, generously empowering staff in their personal and professional development. As a result, staff are optimistic and relish being part of St Mary's community. One member of staff remarked, 'People don't want to leave because they are part of a big family.' Effective systems and opportunities exist to encourage pupils to share their worries and concerns. Pupils value collective worship that greatly contributes to their spiritual growth. They regularly experience moments of spontaneous wonderment through being part of the St Mary's community. However, there are limited planned opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to develop their spirituality.

The school's Christian vision and values permeate school life and have a significant impact on pupils' character development. Pupils aspire to be the best that they can be and are respectful, polite, friendly and compassionate. Pastoral care and support for pupils with additional needs is highly effective. The inclusivity of the community is such that all are welcomed and can find their niche. The considerable experience of the headteacher drives inclusion and the successful integration of pupils who may find learning a challenge. Parents appreciate that their children can be themselves and that the school values everyone as special. Love and care for each other prevails in every relationship. Consequently, adults and pupils learn, work and play together in harmony. Pupils know how to be safe and happy because adults support them to be so. All learn how to express their opinions and to disagree well. When relationships break down, they are compassionately restored. Forgiveness and reconciliation are woven throughout the school's approach to behaviour management. Consequently, pupils behave very well.

The impact of the school's vision enables pupils to value diversity and to treat everyone as a unique individual. The school community engages in social action locally and nationally. Examples of this are the food bank collection and the Operation Christmas Child shoebox appeal. Community links are successful, and pupils proactively support initiatives supporting vulnerable people within the community. The school community speak enthusiastically about their partnership with Memory Laners, a local dementia friendly initiative. Pupils' inspiration to be champions of change extends to their social action at home. This includes litter picking on the beach and donating items to a local care home. Through their learning, pupils gain an understanding of inequality and injustice in society. The impact of the Christian vision encourages them in their service of those less able to help themselves.

Collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Pupils talk enthusiastically about worship. They welcome the time to come together. They look forward to celebrating their value-based achievements and being able to shine in the weekly Golden Book assembly. The compelling partnership with the local church impacts positively on the worship life of the school. Using the Bible, singing, candles, reflection and prayer, creates a daily opportunity for all to enjoy an invitational encounter with God. Varied worship successfully celebrates the breadth of Anglican traditions. The lighting of three candles, enables adults and pupils to appreciate God as the Father, Son and Spirit. The use of silence and stillness ensures worship remains a personal experience and an opportunity for spiritual growth. Time is given for prayer and thoughtfulness during worship, at lunch and at the end of the day. Pupils value worship and for some pupils, it encourages them to pray at home. Further opportunities for prayer in school would be welcomed by pupils. Planning for worship is based on the words and actions of Jesus and explores the relevance of his teaching in today's world. As a result, pupils develop their understanding of Bible stories and how they help to live out their Christian values. Pupils enjoy participating in worship however, there are limited opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship.

RE is particularly strong and has a pivotal place in the school's curriculum. A well-planned, creative and sequential curriculum strengthens pupils' understanding of Christianity and a range of world religions and worldviews. Pupils are challenged to think deeply during wonder days and in RE. As a result, pupils express mature and well-reasoned ideas and opinions. RE lessons are carefully tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. Targeted adult support and resources enable all to be fully included. Monitoring and evaluation by school leaders, including governors, is extremely rigorous and there is a relentless pursuit of excellence. The inspiring leadership, knowledge and expertise of the RE leader is shared throughout the diocese.

St Mary's is a loving community, where all live out the Christian vision, sharing light for their community.

Information			
School	Berwick St Mary's Church of England First School	Inspection date	16 May 2023
URN	122271	VC/VA/Academy	VC
Diocese/District	Newcastle	Pupils on roll	96
Headteacher	Gary Hilton		
Chair of Governors	Joyce Guthrie		
Inspector	Kirsty Harrison-Brown	No.	C.21/22