

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Kirk Fenton Church of England Primary School

Address	Main Street, Church Fenton, Tadcaster, North Yorkshire, LS24 9RF		
Date of inspection	27 September 2019	Status of school	Primary academy. Part of the Sherburn, Tadcaster and Rural Multi Academy Trust (STAR MAT). Inspected as VC.
Diocese	York	URN	146007

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	Good

School context

Kirk Fenton Church of England Primary School has 211 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. 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 is below national averages. The school became an academy and joined the STAR MAT in 2018. There have been recent changes to staff and leadership. The number of pupils on roll is increasing.

The school's Christian vision

Rooted in Christian belief, our vision for every member of this school community is to feel valued and respected, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, faith, belief or ability. Through developing a love of learning, each individual will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and aspire to become the person they were born to be.

Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven. (Matt: 5:14-16)

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision has recently been refreshed and has contributed to improved outcomes for pupils and to their all-round development as individuals. However, connections between the biblical narrative and the Christian vision and key values are under-developed.
- This is a warm, welcoming and inclusive school where staff have been drawn together into an effective and outward-looking team under the passionate, clear-sighted, and open leadership of the headteacher.
- Varied collective worship, enriched by a real enjoyment of singing, engages pupils and adults and encourages spiritual development.
- Religious education (RE) makes an important contribution to pupils' understanding of Christianity and other faiths. Pupils enjoy questioning and reflecting on religious ideas.
- Strong partnerships with local churches and, through the STAR MAT, local schools support and extend the capacity of school staff and governors.

Areas for development

- Enrich and further embed the renewed Christian vision so that all members of the school community understand its foundations in biblical teaching.
- Embed more rigorous systems so that governors systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a church school and the way the Christian vision shapes strategy, policy and practice.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to encounter world faiths in order to deepen their understanding.
- Extend pupils' awareness of global and social issues in order to enable them to have opportunities to take social action to make a difference.

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

After consultation with stakeholders, the school recently revised and relaunched its Christian vision and core values. The vision emphasises that each person should shine as a light through being valued, respected and the best they can be. The whole school community can express the vision succinctly and apply its chosen associated values in daily school life. The vision both reflects and shapes the school's priorities. As a result, this is a welcoming and inclusive school where pupils flourish. Implementing the school's vision is having a marked impact on improving pupils' outcomes. A parent described children as 'happy, thriving, well rounded individuals who feel safe.' However, other than in collective worship, exploration of the biblical foundations of the vision and values is under-developed.

The curriculum is balanced and meets the needs of pupils. The desire that each pupil should be valued and shine is at the forefront of decisions about provision. Outdoor learning through their Forest School nurtures all pupils' interest in the natural world around them and offers opportunities for personal reflection. Residential visits, including camping, enrich all pupils' educational experiences. The school ensures that every pupil is included in a sports team to represent school. Academically, pupils' progress is in line with national averages and shows continuing improvement. From their individual starting points pupils with additional needs are making good progress. Common assessment with other schools in the MAT and an effective tracking system are contributing to consistency in teaching and learning so that all pupils can learn well.

Following a period of significant change in the governance and leadership of the school, staff morale is good. Staff feel valued and respected. They work hard as a team, supporting each other with advice and encouragement. They are very well led by the headteacher who has rapidly identified and addressed key issues for improvement. Every effort is made to share professional development opportunities which are mainly provided by beneficial local partnerships with the diocese, the STAR MAT and teaching alliance. Governors on the local governing body increasingly provide important skills, experience and enthusiasm and are becoming more effective in monitoring its work as a church school. However, this is not yet systematic enough.

Relationships across the school community reflect the core Christian values. Staff, pupils and governors form a warm and supportive team. Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults and behave well. Older pupils care for others through roles as buddies and play leaders. Pupils understand and practise forgiveness in resolving difficulties. They are able to express different opinions respectfully. One pupil commented, 'Different views make you think much more.' Vulnerable pupils particularly benefit from the expertise that the staff have developed through mental health training.

A strong partnership with the local Anglican and Methodist churches goes beyond ministers' weekly leadership of collective worship. The curate regularly visits school, responding to the questions and needs of pupils and staff, and facilitating links between pupils and the congregation. In turn, the church benefits from this partnership which has contributed to the growth of the church's monthly family service.

Pupils support several national charities and the food bank. Prompted by kindness and a care for others, individual pupils often initiate fundraising themselves, for example, to help children with cancer. Pupils also take practical action on environmental issues. It was a pupil proposal that led to their regular collection of crisp bags for recycling at the village shop. They participate in gardening in the church grounds. However, there are few planned opportunities to engage in social action, either in curricular or extra-curricular projects.

RE is well organised and taught as a separate subject. The introduction of a new syllabus has been effectively supported through training in school and by the diocese. The school took a lead in developing an assessment framework within the diocesan RE network and co-ordinates the RE alliance within the MAT. As a result, standards and expectations in teaching and learning in RE have risen over the last year. Pupils' progress in RE is increasing and, especially for older pupils, is close to that in core subjects. Pupils enjoy RE. They find it thought-provoking and participate enthusiastically in discussion of theological issues. Pupils show a sound understanding of key theological concepts and terminology from their study of Christianity. The broad curriculum ensures that pupils also learn about other faiths. Although religious artefacts are shown in lessons, pupils have not been to visit places of worship except for local churches. Nor have they met visitors who can speak personally from different faith backgrounds.

Collective worship, whether it takes place as a class or all together, in school or in the church, is varied and engaging. It invites pupils to respond. 'They don't just tell the story but do something fun so that you remember', commented one pupil. Themes, including chosen values, are linked to biblical stories and verses to provide a balanced framework for collective worship and recognise the church's year. Worship supports pupils'

understanding of the Trinity. They are enthusiastic about weekly 'music worship' which gives them a memorable repertoire of songs and hymns. Led by the Headteacher, with regular input from local clergy, teachers work together to lead worship, exchanging ideas and helping each other. At the Faith, Hope and Lunch group, amongst other discussions, pupils give feedback on worship. Pupils regularly plan, organise and lead worship. This engagement has extended into Sunday services where, for example, a pupil gave the talk for Mother's Day. As a result, pupils' participation in worship is celebrated and partnership with the parish strengthened.

The school encourages spiritual development mainly through collective worship, informal discussion and the provision of reflection areas such as the Peace Garden. Pupils say that they feel better when they pray about what is on their minds. One pupil commented appreciatively, 'School has helped because they brought me into praying. I didn't pray before.'

Headteacher	Karen Williams
Inspector's name and number	Eleanor Benson 920