

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Cockerton Church of England Primary School	
Address	Newton Lane, Darlington, DL3 9EX
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
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Requires Improvement

School's vision
We work together, building a community which lives within, and shares God's love. We aim to offer an education which allows everyone to be inspired to raise our eyes, open our minds and explore the world God created, within his mission of love and to live fully as global neighbours.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision of building a community, living within and sharing God's love, ensures that this is a welcoming school, where staff know the pupils well. Personal development is given priority with all members of the school community treated with dignity and respect. • The school vision drives leadership decisions, including the recent decision to join the Melrose Learning Trust. Local governors informally monitor church school effectiveness but do not evaluate the impact of the vision across all aspects of school life. Strong leadership within the trust has plans to ensure this is more formal and strategic. • Pupils enjoy collective worship and can give examples of how it can help them lead their lives. Worship reflects the vision and gives the pupils an understanding of faith and community. However pupils do not have opportunities to contribute to planning and leading worship. • This school has a clear understanding of moral, social and cultural development. Although there are opportunities for spiritual development throughout the school day there is no shared understanding and approach to spiritual development. • Pupils enjoy aspects of the learning in religious education. However the quality of teaching and learning and pupil progress is not consistently good across school. Consequently not all pupils are flourishing in this subject.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that teaching and learning in RE is consistently good so that all pupils learn and progress well. • Develop a shared understanding and approach to spiritual development in order that all pupils flourish spiritually. • Involve pupils more fully in planning, leading and evaluating worship in order that they can contribute to the spiritual development of the school community.



Inspection findings

This school is a warm and welcoming church school. The Christian vision and its biblical underpinning as a rationale for the school's life and work is known. Leaders and governors talk about 'being the hands and feet of Jesus'. Pupils and parents understand how the vision enables pupils to flourish. Governors informally monitor worship and other elements of church school effectiveness. However, they do not evaluate the impact of the vision across all aspects of school life. There is currently no formal monitoring of RE. Work to address this, drawing on the support from the Melrose Learning Trust, which the school has recently joined, is at an early stage. The decision by the school to join this trust is strongly driven by their vision and their desire to enable pupils and staff to flourish more fully.

Inspired by their vision of 'working together, building a community', this school is highly inclusive and values all pupils and families. All are treated with dignity and respect. Personal development is given high priority at St Mary's. Staff relationships are strong, caring and supportive. All staff consider that their mental health and wellbeing is given high priority by leaders. Leaders prioritise support for the most vulnerable pupils. Parents value the support given to vulnerable pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.


The school's Christian vision underpins an imaginative approach to the curriculum. Each year group focuses on a different continent as they 'journey around the world', wearing their Christian values as they 'raise their eyes, open their minds and explore the world God created'. Opportunities for the development of pupils' social, moral and cultural skills are apparent. There are opportunities for spiritual development in worship and throughout the school day. However, the school lacks a shared understanding and approach to spiritual development. This limits the rounded development of the whole child, as some opportunities for spiritual development are missed. Pupils' actions in going above and beyond are celebrated. They talk with pride about seeing their work displayed in the corridors and classrooms.

The school's emphasis on living together as a community, drives its approach to positive behaviour strategies. Staff, parents and pupils talk about 'this is how we do it here' and 'be safe, be ready, be responsible'. Bullying is rare and any problems are dealt with quickly to resolve differences. Consequently, pupils feel safe and supported. The curriculum for personal, social and health education has a positive impact on pupils' development. Pupils have the opportunity to take on responsibility in school through membership of groups such as house teams, 'Reading Champions' and the 'Think Global, Act Local' group. Consequently pupils live well together and relationships across the school community are good. Pupils' have a good understanding of the unique value of every individual. As one child said 'don't judge a book by its cover, it's what we are like inside that matters'. 'Think Global, Act Local' has widened the pupils' perspective to consider the needs of others. Pupils engage in social action, identifying some issues themselves. One child told how she and her friends organised a healthy snack stall in school to raise money for Ukraine. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how they are going to mark the forthcoming 'World Toilet Day' and raise money for Children in Need. The 'Think Global, Act Local' group recently contributed significantly to the village Remembrance service.

Worship is valued by the whole school community. Strong links with the parish church enhance this. An understanding of prayer is promoted by regular use of the school prayer and grace at lunchtime, as well as the school prayer post box. Bible verses and stories are considered in worship and linked with current issues locally and globally. Pupils participate in worship but do not have the opportunity for planning or leading. They show enthusiasm for greater involvement. They talk of how they wear their values in worship and have the

opportunity to think about what Jesus would do in certain circumstances for example when they learned about the Ten Commandments. Whilst there are reflection areas in every classroom as well as a 'school chapel', these areas are not consistently recognised by the pupils as areas for spontaneous prayer or personal reflection. The impact of worship is discussed by pupils in the class and results shared with the worship lead. Pupils valued the online worship during the recent pandemic.

Religious education (RE) expresses the school vision. Pupils value the safe space to reflect on some big questions. They enjoy opportunities to explore aspects of Christianity and learn about the life of Jesus. However, pupils do not have a significant, accurate and lasting knowledge about a range of religions and worldviews. They sometimes struggle to talk with confidence and clarity about the aspects of Christianity studied, and its diversity within the UK and globally. There is not an effective system in place to enable teachers to know how well pupils learn in RE. As a result it is not possible for leaders to see how much progress pupils make.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Requires Improvement	
	There is currently no formal monitoring of RE as a core subject. Teaching and learning requires improvement as a result of inconsistencies in both teaching and staff subject knowledge. Consequently, progress requires improvement for all groups of pupils including those who are vulnerable.			
Information				
School	St Mary's Cockerton Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	14 November 2022	
URN	142962	VC/VA/Academy	Academy	
Diocese/District	Durham;Newcastle	Pupils on roll	192	
MAT/Federation	Melrose Learning Trust			
Executive Principal	Wendy Aitken			
Chair of Governors	Myfanwy Eyres			
Inspector	Susan Thackray	No.	979	