

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ambleside Church of England Primary School			
Address	Vicarage Road, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 9DH		
Date of inspection	27 June 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VA. Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust.
Diocese	Carlisle	URN	141978

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 Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context
Ambleside is a primary school with 100 pupils on roll. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. The school is now part of the Good Shepherd Multi-Academy Trust and was judged to be good by Ofsted in September 2018.
The school's Christian vision
Learning to be the best we can be together with God's love. 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Matthew 22:39
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school community is united and strengthened by the inclusive and distinctive Christian vision, which enables pupils and staff to be nurtured, loved and inspired to flourish. Relationships at all levels are founded on Christian values and rooted in love. Pupils have a high sense of social justice and care deeply about each other, the wider school community and natural surroundings. The seamless partnership with the church and the parishioners' engagement in the daily life of the school enriches the Christian vision of the school, in particular with regards to supporting vulnerable families. The unique curriculum inspires pupils to be advocates of change and a centre for environmental action for the community. Collective worship provides opportunities to pray, reflect, encounter God and develop spiritually. However, it does not strengthen the pupil's Biblical knowledge or understanding of Anglican traditions. Religious education (RE) provides pupils with a deep understanding of world faiths, but teaching about Christianity is less secure so pupils have limited knowledge of the Christian faith.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve teaching in RE, so that pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is strengthened, in particular Biblical knowledge. Increase pupil engagement with planning, evaluating and leading collective worship in order to increase participation and improve the quality of worship. Strengthen understanding of Anglican traditions and the Bible through collective worship.

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

The unique Christian vision unites the school community under the ambitious, compassionate and dedicated leadership of the headteacher. The school has been strengthened and reenergised since the last inspection, through the membership of the Good Shepherd MAT. This provides effective support and challenge. The local governing board is highly effective and ensures that the vision is lived out through clear strategic planning and robust self-evaluation. This was an area for development from the last inspection. Foundation governors are passionate about securing the Christian foundations of the school and providing practical and prayerful support for the school and families that it serves. For instance, the weekly 'Crumpet Church' service is very well attended by families and strengthens the partnership between church and school. Parishioners regularly volunteer in school to support teaching and learning in all classes.

The dedicated staff team have worked tirelessly to live out the Christian vision and improve provision in the school and outcomes for all pupils. This has raised the profile of the school at the centre of the community that it serves. Staff have embraced opportunities for professional development and talk with confidence about the impact that this has had on school improvement. The staff feel well supported and valued. They are determined that every pupil becomes the best that they can be.

Pupils are proud to be part of the school and have a heartfelt responsibility 'to be the best they can be with God's love.' Their love for each other as unique individuals is exemplary. The golden rules and core Gospel values are deeply rooted in the Christian faith and provide a strong sense of purpose. Pupils have a good religious vocabulary and are able to articulate the vision with confidence. They are respectful and inclusive when articulating their own beliefs and those of others. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss and learn about social and environmental issues. This knowledge has enabled them to be advocates for change locally, nationally and globally. Environmental projects such as the recycling crisp packet campaign has inspired the local community. Partnership with the Knamba Nursery in Rwanda has taught the pupils how their support can change the lives of others.

Due to robust school improvement, pupils now make good progress with their learning across the curriculum and outcomes are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils who speak English as an additional language perform particularly well. Spiritual development is strengthened and celebrated through high quality artwork, which enhances the learning environment. School attendance has improved significantly through support for families and reward systems organised by the local governing board. The unique curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors. Pupils talk passionately about experiences such as a residential visit to a Buddhist retreat. Partnership with other local schools has improved provision further with shared curriculum experiences and an opportunity for pupils to work with those from other settings. The outdoor learning space is used at every opportunity to improve environmental knowledge, inspire creativity and to promote positive wellbeing for all. For instance, pupils in early years regularly practice yoga. Pupils value the prayer spaces and reflection areas in the school building and grounds. Prayers, often written by pupils are prominently displayed around school. Pupils in the early years were eager to use the talking tins to say prayers. In religious education, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of world faiths but knowledge of Christianity is less secure.

Parents speak very highly of the school and recognise the improvements that have taken place and the impact that this has had on pupils. They value the profile that the school now has in the community. Parents recognise how partnership with the parish has improved and the positive impact that joint events such as 'The Evergreen Club' have on the pupils. Parents are particularly proud of the significant impact that the schools core Gospel values have on their children's development.

The Christian vision creates a truly inclusive community where everyone is cherished and loved. The school's approach to equality is unwavering and celebrated. All pupils are treated with dignity and respect. All achievements are celebrated by the whole school community.

Collective worship unites the school and parish community. It has been instrumental in enriching the prayer life of the school and embedding the core Christian values that underpin all aspects of school life. It celebrates the vision and Christian foundations of the school. Members of clergy and parishioners often lead worship, which is a key development since the last inspection. However, opportunities to strengthen knowledge and understanding of Christian teaching and Biblical knowledge are limited. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to engage in planning, leading and evaluating worship.

Pupils enjoy RE and are challenged to think deeply through questioning and discussion. Approaches to RE are often creative and inspire spiritual development. Christian artwork is a particular strength throughout the school. Visitors to school together with visits to places of worship are particularly inspiring for pupils. Pupils have a secure knowledge of world faiths, but are less confident with Christian traditions or Biblical knowledge. RE provides a platform to develop spiritually and pupils value reflection areas especially those in the school grounds.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

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RE teaching throughout the school is effective and provides pupils with an age appropriate understanding of world faiths. It is less effective in teaching about Christianity. Pupils are respectful of the views of others and are able to consider philosophical and theological concepts with confidence. Pupils have a good religious vocabulary that enables them to debate and challenge views with confidence in a safe and respectful environment. Pupils have a good understanding of Gospel values and are able to connect these to British values. Assessment procedures are effective and identify academic progress and the next steps of learning, in line with the diocesan syllabus. The moderation of RE work with other schools is not sufficiently embedded to secure further improvements.

Headteacher

Sarah Carrick

Inspector's name and number

Kathryn Pym 726