

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Paul's CofE Junior School			
Address	Hawcoat Lane, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. LA14 4HF		
Date of inspection	19/09/2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided
Diocese	Carlisle	URN	112406

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	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

St Paul's is a junior school with 82 pupils on roll. Most 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 above national averages. The school is in an urban area situated in a remote location on the edge of the Lake District National Park. The church has been without a vicar since June 2018.

The school's Christian vision

Our School vision is that all members of St. Paul's school family may thrive because they have life, life in all its fullness. John 10:10. Motto: A small school with a big heart.

Key findings

- The Christian vision for a learning community where all understand and experience the joy of life in all its fullness is worked out in the nurturing learning environment. It results in a determination to provide a rich variety of learning experiences. All leaders and staff explain with confidence how they root the school's practice in the Bible and the teaching of Jesus. The Christian vision was developed recently in discussions with a variety of stakeholders. However, sharing this vision is still at an early stage. Not all leaders are able to explain this recently-developed vision and its theological basis. The vision is not yet explained in policy documents, used as a spring board for school development planning or as the basis for self-evaluation.
- Inspiring and supportive Christian leadership from the headteacher is transformative for staff and pupils. As a result, there is a longstanding commitment to supporting all pupils and removing barriers to learning. Significant investment is made to support mental health and wellbeing. The school's Christian values make an impact on pupils' character. Pupils are compassionate, quick to stand up against injustice and value diversity.
- Spiritual development is a strength of the school. Creative arts and outdoor education enrich pupils' understanding of prayer, the way they value reflection and their concern to protect the planet.
- Collective worship enthuses and inspires pupils through exciting interactive prayer activities. Pupils make important contributions to its leadership. The partnership with local churches greatly enriches worship.
- Pupils make Excellent progress in RE. The highly effective RE co-ordinator ensures that assessment underpins planning and secures a high level of challenge. Teaching in RE is always Good and often Excellent. Pupils' learning is consolidated by creative projects and a programme of visits and visitors.

Areas for development

- Embed, share and further develop understanding of the school's Christian vision, so that it infuses practice across the school.
- Provide training for governors to further support them in their roles in a church school.

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 school has a longstanding commitment to educating the whole child academically, physically and spiritually, supporting all pupils in being the best they can be. Staff and governors aim to provide a Christian education which expresses the love of Jesus through decision-making and actions. Adults and pupils confidently explain biblical roots for their values and actions. Recently staff, governors and pupils have worked together to re-express the school's vision using the words of Jesus about the joy of abundant life on offer to all. However, the sharing and development of this vision is at an early stage. Not all members of the community are able to apply it with confidence to their work and practice. It has not been shared through school documentation or used in the school development cycle. Consequently it does not drive school development. Governors are highly supportive and have recently received training which has been very helpful in developing their practice. However, they have not received specific training regarding expectations for their roles in a church school. They have not challenged the school about the need to share and evaluate their Christian vision through documentation, reports to the governors, development planning or self-evaluation.

The caring and inspirational Christian leadership of the headteacher results in the school community operating as a loving family. Staff are highly appreciative, saying, 'She does not just support children to fulfil their potential, but supports us as well'. They love working in this productive environment where they feel trusted and able to thrive. They are supported by a range of professional development and the headteacher encourages staff to aspire to leadership positions. Parents talk about the way she and the staff have been transformative for their children. The vision for all to experience life in all its fullness results in significant investment being made to support mental health issues. Many pupils who have emotional needs have flourished on moving to this school.

In this caring environment, progress is evident. The curriculum's design offers life in all its fullness through access to a rich variety of opportunities. These help pupils to look beyond their community and often make use of the beautiful countryside nearby. The many extra-curricular clubs which enrich the curriculum include several supported by local Christians as a result of the partnership with local churches. Exceptional spiritual education is woven through the curriculum and further developed by collective worship. The school's woodland area is used for 'Welly Wednesdays' when pupils work together to develop skills, for example, by building dens and cooking over campfires. This contributes to the excellent relationships in the school and the way older pupils support younger pupils. Highly creative worship activities, including time for prayer and reflection, are regular features of Welly Wednesdays. Pupils bubble with enthusiasm about these activities which take place in the prayer shed or in 'pop-up prayer stations'. As a result, they value time for quiet reflection, are highly enthusiastic about exploring different types of prayer and have a mature understanding of the importance of prayer for Christians. Their love of the outdoors results in a strong sense of responsibility for the planet and the desire to take action to protect God's creation.

Collective worship is a key way in which the school's Christian foundation is shared and celebrated. It is engaging and relevant to pupils. They sing with joy and have a well-developed understanding of how to use silence productively. In one act of worship, pupils reflected on the value of service. They responded to a time of reflection by an activity where they committed to serving in a place of their choice. Pupils play significant roles in the leadership of worship. The RE Ambassadors plan worship regularly and think deeply to evaluate worship, playing a central role in its development. All pupils contribute to its leadership at different times of the year and this helps them to understand Christian worship. Pupils are highly appreciative of worship led by other pupils. They say their explanations help them to understand things better. The strong partnership with Christians from the local church has continued in the absence of the vicar. They and other churches make much-appreciated contributions to worship. Pupils contribute to leading the 'Open the Book' worship led by the local church. They prepare questions and prayers to add to these much-enjoyed dramatic presentations of the Bible. As a result, they gain a deep insight into Bible stories.

Collective worship inspires pupils to take action to make the world a fairer and better place. It helps pupils relate the idea of a small school with a big heart to Christian values and the teaching of Jesus. They readily link the motto to the need to show compassion. They are quick to speak out against injustice and some have been inspired to take action independently at home. The Archbishop of York's Award Scheme further develops their

sense of responsibility for their community. Global links, including a link with a school in Bethlehem, help them to gain an understanding of the need to work for global social justice.

RE is seen as central to the school's Christian vision. It is led by a highly effective RE co-ordinator who works tirelessly to ensure that all staff are equipped to deliver RE of the highest quality. Rigorous assessment procedures effectively underpin teaching, ensuring that lessons are planned to challenge pupils and support their progress. The curriculum is well-balanced, supporting progress in skills and concepts coherently through different year groups. Pupils gain sophisticated skills of questioning, critical thinking and biblical interpretation. Their learning is well-supported by a range of creative activities, including art work which expresses ideas and values, and also by activities in the woodland area. RE makes an excellent contribution to the way pupils value diversity. They gain a good understanding of the different faiths studied. This is enriched through a programme of visits and visitors, drawing on resources from families within school wherever possible. Pupils visit a variety of local churches to gain understanding of diversity within Christianity. They enrich their understanding of Buddhism by a visit to a Buddhist centre. Routine monitoring through lesson observations and work scrutinies ensures that support is targeted wherever it is needed. The partnership with the diocese has greatly enriched RE. The RE Ambassadors have shared the school's Excellent practice with other schools.

St Paul's lives out its Christian calling in all aspects of its work. It is constantly looking forward, seeking to enrich the lives of all members of its school family, so that all may experience the joy of life in all its fullness.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

Pupils across the school make Excellent progress in RE as a result of high quality teaching supported by very effective leadership. Teaching across the school is very Good and often Excellent. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils also make Excellent progress and many exceed expectations. This is because teachers provide work carefully matched to the ability of children and are committed to ensuring there are no barriers to learning. The rigorous assessment procedures contribute to Excellent teaching. They demonstrate the way in which individuals have progressed and exemplify the high standards achieved. They enable teachers to track the progress of groups of pupils in order to identify the need for support.

Headteacher

Ruth Webster

Inspector's name and number

Carol Berry 324