



# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## Low Furness Church of England Primary School

Address Church Road, Great Urswick, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 0TA

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**

**Requires Improvement**

**The impact of collective worship**

**Requires Improvement**

### School's vision

Learning together through faith. Through our Christian ethos and core values, the school's mission is to provide each unique child with an enriched education so that they become well-rounded, caring and confident individuals who live life in all its fullness within their community and God's world.

### Key findings

- The Christian vision for supporting 'life in all its fullness' for each valued, unique individual results in a caring community where pupils and their families feel loved. The headteacher models care and compassion in her relationships with pupils. Support for vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength. However, some aspects of leadership, including governance, require improvement.
- In recent years, the school has not accessed training to support the implementation of their Christian vision. There has not been recent training to support the improvement of collective worship, religious education (RE) or spiritual development. As a result, leaders do not always understand expectations for church schools and staff are not equipped to develop the Christian ethos effectively. Consequently, although systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's Christian vision, evaluation has failed to recognise some significant issues for improvement.
- Collective worship does not always adequately reflect the school's Christian foundation. It is, however, valued as a celebration of the school community and its values. The partnership with the church greatly enriches worship.
- The Christian vision for exploring God's wonderful world informs the curriculum and results in a range of rich experiences. Pupils are beginning to develop as courageous advocates of social justice.
- The passionate RE leader enthuses pupils. RE makes a strong contribution to pupils' respect for diversity and ability to disagree well. However, staff do not always understand how to support pupils in developing RE skills.

### Areas for development

- Provide training to improve the effectiveness of staff and governors in carrying out their roles in a church school, including support for the development of collective worship and RE.
- Embed more effective systems for monitoring and evaluation of the way the school's Christian vision, including collective worship and RE, results in the flourishing of pupils and adults. This is so that effective evaluation feeds into development planning.
- Ensure that collective worship consistently reflects the Christian foundation of the school, to enable the school community to share in exploring a range of Bible stories and important Christian beliefs.

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's longstanding Christian vision results in a compassionate and inclusive community. Each loved individual is valued as being made in God's image. Positive relationships result in very good behaviour. A governor drew on the words of Rowan Williams to sum up the essence of the school, 'Everyone is held in the singular, loving gaze of God.' The vision results in the school readily embracing those who are vulnerable. A significant strength is the strong support for pupils with SEND. A parent of a child with SEND spoke movingly about the way in which her child was supported, saying, 'Everyone is celebrated for themselves.' As a result of this inclusive approach, pupils respect diversity. A Buddhist family spoke warmly about the way their children are accepted and their reasons for choosing the school. The impact on character development of living and learning within this inclusive and supportive community is profound. Pupils are kind, quick to respond with compassion and readily take action to ensure no-one is ever left out. They feel cared for and therefore aspire to care for others. Parents say that the impact of the school's values is evident in the way pupils interact with others in the village. They say their children take these values with them to high school.

The Christian vision for ensuring that each unique individual is equipped to lead life to the full drives decision-making. During the pandemic, leaders and staff took action to support wellbeing. They provided pastoral support for those who had suffered bereavement. They responded to the mental health needs of pupils and distributed 'buddy bears' to all pupils as a token of support. Financial decisions were made to secure access to remote learning for all, including the most vulnerable. The vision drives the commitment to supporting the wider community. The school made use of their kitchens during lockdowns to provide food for those in need.

Although there are many strengths to leadership, overall, leadership requires improvement. Leaders have not identified and addressed some significant issues. Systems for monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and RE are in place and involve a range of stakeholders. Monitoring of collective worship takes place regularly. RE work scrutinies are routine. However, in recent years, most staff have not received training for their roles in a church school. Offers of training and support from the diocese have not been accessed. As a result, leaders and staff do not fully understand expectations for a church school. This means that their effectiveness is limited.

Governors are very supportive and have undertaken some training for their roles in a church school. Immediately prior to the pandemic, they engaged in some helpful monitoring activities, including a learning walk around school with the pupils' visions and values Crew. The RE lead routinely meets with her link governor and finds this very supportive. Governors regularly discuss issues relating to the Christian vision, collective worship and RE. However, the analysis of this evaluation is not shared and therefore does not inform effective development planning.

Collective worship requires improvement because it does not always reflect the Christian foundation of the school. The school's worship policy, although accurately outlining much of the school's current practice, is not appropriate as a policy for a church school. Planning does not secure consideration of a range of Bible stories and important Christian beliefs. As a result, pupils do not have a good understanding of how Christians relate the Bible to life. Nevertheless, collective worship is important to the school and effectively supports personal development. It is invitational and inclusive. Pupils sing with joy. The partnership with the church greatly enriches worship. The vicar's huge scroll, which demonstrates a journey through the Bible, is helping pupils to begin to put stories in context. Many pupils recognise the importance of prayer and create their own prayers. Staff and parents value the prayerful support of the school at times of crisis. Pupils are enthusiastic about leading worship. They enjoy planning drama which is much appreciated by other pupils. Recently, Year 6 pupils used the school's values bags to lead a values afternoon for the whole school. This enhanced understanding of the importance of the school's values and made a valuable contribution to character development. However, there was little explicitly Christian input to this and most pupils struggle to link the school's values to the Bible.

Spiritual development is effectively supported by the prayer space. This is planned and operated by the vision and values crew at breaktimes. It provides a much-valued opportunity for pupils to be quiet, reflect and deal with challenging circumstances. However, staff do not have a shared understanding of spiritual development. As a result, planning to support pupils' spiritual development within the curriculum is not always effective.

The vision for providing rich opportunities to explore God’s wonderful world drives the provision of rich learning experiences within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy interacting with the school hens as they roam the playground. Use is made of the wonderful Lake District environment for outdoor learning. Pupils gain an understanding of global issues and the recently developed link with a school in Ghana contributes to this. The courageous advocates group undertakes fundraising and makes decisions about supporting charities. There are some opportunities within the curriculum for all pupils to explore injustice and speak out for what they believe is right. However, this is at an early stage and the school is keen to develop this further.

RE effectively supports pupils’ enthusiasm for exploring diverse faiths and cultures. A visit to a Buddhist temple supported this positive attitude to exploring diversity. RE provides an inclusive learning environment. Pupils are confident in sharing different beliefs and RE helps them learn to disagree well. The RE co-ordinator is passionate about her role. Parents enjoyed engaging with their children on RE work provided as remote learning during lockdowns. However, there has been no recent staff-training for RE. This means that staff do not always understand expectations for RE and are not fully equipped to help pupils to develop high level RE skills.

The vision for equipping each unique individual to live life to the full has helped the school to navigate the recent difficult circumstances of the pandemic. It provides direction as they seek to move forward as a church school.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	24 November 2021	URN	112299
Date of previous inspection	12 November 2014		
School status	Voluntary Controlled Primary including nursery	NOR	150 including 12 in the nursery
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese	Carlisle		
Headteacher	Sue Little		
Pupil profile	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.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector’s name	Carol Berry	No.	324