

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wheldrake with Thorganby Church of England Primary School

Address	North Lane Wheldrake York North Yorkshire YO19 6BB		
Date of inspection	23/05/2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VA. South Yorks Multi Academy Trust
Diocese	York	URN	144712

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
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Wheldrake with Thorganby is a primary academy with 216 pupils on roll, serving two villages. 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 in July 2018, a founder member of the South York Multi Academy Trust (MAT), a small MAT of both church and community schools.

The school's Christian vision

Working together to be the best that we can be theologically underpinned through 'Love your neighbour as yourselves.' Matthew 22:39 and 'Let us encourage one another,' Hebrews 10:25. Our school Christian values of faith, hope and love underpin everything we do and are an umbrella of other values.

Key findings.

- The welcoming and inclusive ethos lives out the core values of faith, hope and love underpinned by the theological roots of the vision 'love thy neighbour' and encourage one another'.
- Every child is valued and cherished as a Child of God through the compassionate pastoral care, which is a strength of the school.
- Partnerships between school and families are highly valued and enable everyone to flourish within a culture of mutual respect.
- Collective worship is inclusive and inspirational, with varied opportunities for pupils to engage and respond. Pupils and adults are supported to live out the vision and values through worship at the heart of the school day
- Pupils value the opportunities that religious education (RE) gives them to explore, in a safe environment, their own views and different opinions. The high level of respect for difference and diversity is supported through the strong global education.

Areas for development

- To ensure the theological roots to the vision have a more prominent role, including in the curriculum and policies, so that they can more explicitly deliver the aims of the school as a distinctively Christian school.
- To review RE across the school so that expectations are consistently high and assessment becomes more rigorous and accurate.
- To deepen the understanding of pupils, particularly those in key stage I, through first hand learning experiences that raise expectations and increase knowledge in RE and in 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 headteacher and governors, in consultation with staff, developed the theological rooting of the school's vision of 'working together to do the best we can'. Collaborative working and strong partnerships with families and highly positive relationships between staff and pupils live out these messages from the Bible. Governors use the core values of faith, love and hope to influence their decision making. Governors monitor aspects of school life, including distinctiveness, through visits and the MAT format of school on a page. However, the impact on pupil outcomes of leaders monitoring of RE is unclear. The headteacher has a strong role within the MAT and this ensures that their Christian vision and values are upheld and nurtured. Partnerships with the diocese, other local schools and the church are mutually beneficial. Policies are in the process of being reviewed and linked more closely to the Biblical roots of the vision. Staff have a good understanding of distinctiveness expressed by the vision and values. They know that wellbeing of staff, pupils and families is a priority for the school. The curriculum recognises each child as a child of God and the school clearly engages with the philosophy of 'Valuing All God's Children,' demonstrated every day in high levels of respect for difference and diversity. Parents are highly supportive and positive about the school and its Christian ethos. New parents appreciate how they are made welcome and all value the way the school cares about the whole family. This extends into the local community and they speak positively of the strong, supportive presence; use as venue for a monthly church service, pupils reading with and playing games with elderly, supporting fund raising projects. They praise the way values are shared with them and the activities that school provides for them to do with their children around each value.

Whole school themes facilitate pupils working together and supporting each other. Attainment and progress in core subjects for all pupils, including vulnerable, are in line with or above national averages. Pupil progress meetings are based on the whole child and their needs, including spiritually. They know they are expected to do their best every day. The varied opportunities for pupils to take responsibility: school council, worship group, peer mentors and buddies ensures a high profile for pupil voice, involving them in decision making and their views and ideas are welcomed and respected. The positive behaviour system, developed with pupil input and using a restorative approach of forgiveness and reconciliation, is highly effective in ensuring respect and equality. As a result, incidences of poor behaviour very low. Pupils with social and emotional issues are exceptionally well supported through the effective welfare and pastoral support system. Pupils make links with the strap line and their own behaviour. They readily talk of perseverance and how that helps them in school; justice and service are current prominent values as well. The latter were explored in the collaborative work on social injustice. Pupils say their school is special as everyone loves one another and they spend time worshipping God.

There is a difference in the understanding of pupils, taking into account age appropriate expectations, in relation to RE and collective worship. Key stage 1 pupils, spoken to during the inspection, have some gaps in their understanding of concepts and Christian faith and practice. They can discuss the meaning of a Bible story; for example the story of the vineyard workers. 'God wanted them to all have a share, so told Jonah what to do'. However, this was not linked to choices about their own behaviour and the values in school. They are not yet confident about Christianity as a world faith. The school uses Understanding Christianity, together with the Diocese of Leeds and York agreed syllabus. Pupils enjoy and value RE contributing to displays. Older pupils feel RE allows them to have their own thoughts, the question of whether you can be a Christian and a scientist exemplified this. They can talk simply about other religions, being more knowledgeable about Christianity as a world faith. The impact of being an accredited Global school is clear in the good understanding of global issues especially from older pupils. Issues such as homelessness, refugees and lack of education, including for girls are freely discussed. The school supports other local schools to achieve this accreditation. Pupils have the confidence to suggest social justice projects to adults in school and to be proactive in supporting them.

Collective Worship is central to the school day and is often led by the pupil worship group. Themes on the Trinity, festivals and the message from Bible stories are well supported by the vicar and other church visitors, helping pupils make stronger links about Christian faith and practice. The role of the worship group includes providing feedback. Displays showing links between Bible stories and the values support pupil understanding. Daily worship follows the gather, engage, and respond format and pupils readily share the liturgical greeting and sending. Pupils have a developing age appropriate understanding of the Trinity as a three in one and that symbols can be used to represent this. The younger pupils are not as yet aware of the role of the Holy Spirit but articulated this as a dove, a message from worship. They could relate this to the dove in the story of Noah.

Older pupils discussed showing how you have the Holy Spirit in you by how you behave. Pupils explain the Eucharist as part of a church service; the bread is the body of Christ and the wine the blood.

Prayer is considered a vital part of worship and is often led by pupils. They have opportunities to write their own prayers. Pupils show a developing understanding of why people pray, supported by prayer and reflection spaces in every class and in a communal area. This understanding is stronger at key stage 2, mainly due to a difference in expectations. They explain people pray to be closer to God, ask forgiveness, reflection, to worship God. Younger pupil's awareness is about saying sorry. Pupils know they can use these spaces in both class and social times. One pupil used their class prayer space at playtime to help them deal with a recent family bereavement. Although there is no formal outdoor spiritual/prayer space, pupils use the benches if they want to be calm, quiet and pray and this is respected by pupils and adults.

The school is well placed to continue to develop as a caring Christian community.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Following a two-year implementation, progression through the age related expectations of the agreed syllabus and Understanding Christianity is still developing. A specialist RE teacher teaches the majority of lessons. Discrete RE is supported by effective links across the curriculum and with collective worship themes and values, exemplified by the collaborative working on global injustice. Pupils enjoy learning in RE and value this time for discussion and sharing their thoughts and beliefs. This is supported by age-appropriate questioning. Older pupils have knowledge of major faiths, including their sacred texts and this has been enhanced through visits to places of worship. There are fewer opportunities for visits in key stage one. Pupils speak positively about activities in RE but it is not always clear how these activities are informed by prior assessment and feedback. Pupils' views are actively sought through questionnaires, in 'big-books' and some extended writing opportunities. Evidence in individual books is currently limited, often worksheet based and there are fewer examples of pupils critically engaging with biblical/religious texts. Foundation Stage pupils have an appropriate experience in RE.
Additional inspector Simone Bennett 949

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Inspector's name and number	Pat George 485