

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christ Church, Church of England Academy

Address Deighton, Huddersfield, HD2 1JP

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) Good

School's vision

Our vision, rooted in the words of Jesus (Matthew 19:14), *"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these,"* is to provide a safe, happy, caring environment where all pupils are nurtured and valued within a Christian ethos.

Key findings

- The distinctly Christian vision, which invites and welcomes all, is deeply embedded and lived out in the work the school undertakes to be of service to its whole community.
- Strong, vision-driven, school leadership enables all to flourish by living well together in joyful harmony.
- Spiritual development opportunities are evident in many aspects of school life, including in religious education (RE).
- Collective worship is inclusive and invitational. Pupil leadership in collective worship, as in many other areas of school life, is strongly embedded.
- Strong leadership in RE, together with intentional investment in staff development, enables many pupils to achieve well. High expectations of pupil achievement, however, are not consistent across all year groups.

Areas for development

- Embed spiritual development opportunities within the whole curriculum to enable depth and richness in learning and reflection in all subjects.
- Provide a breadth of opportunities for pupils to challenge injustice and take social action in order that they begin to see how they can have a positive impact on others.
- Ensure that high expectations of pupil achievement, which lead to strong and effective learning in RE in many year groups, are applied consistently across 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

Christ Church is a warm, caring school where everyone is nurtured and valued. The distinctly Christian vision of welcoming all is deeply embedded and permeates every aspect of school life. This has a tangible impact on the flourishing of every child and adult. At the root of all flourishing is school leadership, which is a significant strength. Leaders are passionately committed to living out the school vision in their service to the whole school community. This devotion to serving others is evident in the work of every member of staff. Their loving concern for every child and family is palpable. The children, their parents and the wider community place their trust in the support the school offers. Christ Church helps families in many ways, including through its food and clothing store, run in partnership with the local church and Fair Share Yorkshire. Governors are closely involved in the work of the school. They have robust systems in place to evaluate the impact of the vision on pupil and adult flourishing. These ensure that they target resources carefully to meet identified priorities, which are driven by the school vision. Governors' succession planning, supported by the multi-academy trust (MAT), has ensured that newly appointed leaders are having considerable impact in developing their area of responsibility in school. For example, the leader for Early Years has developed the Reception class base and outdoor area to provide a wealth of rich, focused learning opportunities. Staff flourish in their varied roles as a direct impact of leaders' considered investment in continuing professional development opportunities. Thorough induction processes ensure that staff new to school are well equipped to meet new challenges. Leaders at all levels are proactive in providing support to ensure the well-being of all staff.

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum and pupils are eager and enthusiastic learners. Pupils are very clear about how they learn. They know that careful questioning and scaffolding by the teacher 'pushes' them on when they find a concept particularly challenging. Pupils are hopeful for their future because they know staff in school are always there to nurture and value them. Relationships are particularly strong at Christ Church, fostered by the care each member of staff displays for every child. Pupils see this and emulate it in their interactions with each other. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is exemplary. They speak politely and conduct themselves well. Pupils are clear that children who need additional support to manage their behaviour receive help from staff. Exclusions are used only as a last resort and often trigger further external, necessary support for the child. The Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation underpin behaviour management. Older pupils explain confidently how they ask thoughtful questions of younger pupils when they fall out with friends. This discussion leads younger pupils to an understanding of their actions. Considering how another child might have felt, ensures that they can make a better choice in the future. Learning in the forest school effectively supports pupils to develop positive behaviours. This ensures dignity and respect for all. It also provides children with considerable opportunities for spiritual development in their experience of the natural world. Pupils do not often learn about social injustice therefore their understanding is limited. As a result, courageous advocacy is not well-developed.

During partial school closures resulting from COVID, the school provided considerable support for families. Leaders were quick to prioritise visits and telephone calls according to need. The school decided that remote learning, including in RE, would be recorded, rather than live. This enabled families to fit in lessons to suit their circumstances. It is an example of how well the school knows and understands the community it serves. The school also provided packs of work for children, and 'creative bags' of resources to enable pupils to continue flourishing. Pupils are keen to meet new challenges in learning and in life, and strive to become pupil leaders. Myriad opportunities to take on roles as pupil leaders, is another significant strength at Christ Church. It stems from the Christian vision to nurture the whole child and value them. Pupils sense this and know that staff and other children value their contributions as leaders. They are proud to be appointed to their roles and conscientious in carrying out their duties. Such opportunities enhance pupils' development, enabling them to flourish personally and socially. Pupils leave in Year 6 with important life skills such as knowing how to make a good choice. Staff emphasise these aspects of learning in order to equip pupils for the challenges of life beyond school.

Collective worship is another aspect of school where pupil leadership is well-established. During lockdown, leaders prioritised virtual worship opportunities. They recognised that continuing to welcome families, although virtually, would positively affect well-being. Since schools fully reopened, Year 6 pupils have once again had the opportunity to lead worship. They have benefitted from training facilitated by the Diocese and from collaboration across the MAT. Worship in school is welcoming, inclusive and invitational. Children listen well to pupil worship leaders and engage with the thought-provoking questions they ask. Pupil leaders plan and deliver worship but

do not have the opportunity to evaluate and develop it. There is good understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God. Children and adults know the school prayer well and many choose to recite it with energy and conviction. Reflective areas in classrooms and outside invite pupils to extend reflection and prayer beyond gathering for worship. Some pupils use these opportunities. Pupils benefit from visits to church and the close relationship between school and members of the congregation. School leads regular services in church, enabling pupils to experience Christian liturgical traditions. The school is developing a good relationship with the new incumbent.

Pupils flourish in RE because of strong subject leadership and the ambitious, well-planned curriculum, which includes deep, thought-provoking questions. This provides good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually. Many children are enthusiastic when explaining how they explore varied beliefs. They find it fascinating to learn about a variety of world religions and views. Most pupil's individual books and class books demonstrate good progress and high achievement. However, high expectations are not always evident in all year groups. Governors have effectively supported the development of RE by investing in training. Leaders have provided focused professional development to improve teachers' expertise and increase confidence. An effective partnership with the Diocese has also driven improvement. This has enabled teachers to develop pupils' philosophical and religious understanding, including core theological concepts. Assessment systems are effective.



The effectiveness of RE is

Good

Progress and achievement in RE at Christ Church is good because pupils follow a rich and challenging curriculum. Teachers create a safe space where all children can respectfully share their views. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply about a range of theological and philosophical questions, which enables them to flourish in their learning. Expectations for many children are high; however, this is not consistent across all year groups.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	15 March 2022	URN	138584
Date of previous inspection	10 June 2015		
School status	Academy inspected as voluntary aided	NOR	193
Name of MAT/Federation	Enhance Academy Trust		
Diocese / Methodist District	Leeds		
Headteacher	Lisa Walton-Thorpe		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Melanie Barratt	No.	C1803