

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

### Elland Church of England (VA) Junior, Infant & Nursery School

Address Westgate, Elland, West Yorkshire, HX5 0BB

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

'May God give us the courage to try, the will to succeed and hope without limits.'

At Elland CofE we encourage and support our children to reach their full potential. With high aspirations for all, we help each other to learn through our core Christian values of kindness, resilience, and reverence. Our vision is underpinned by the story of David and Goliath from 1 Samuel 17.

#### Key findings

- The school's Christian vision underpins all aspects of school life and leads to the flourishing of pupils and adults. It is understood, loved, and lived out by all. This vision has inspired and encouraged the school community during the difficult times of the pandemic.
- As a result of the school's 'hope without limits' inclusion is a strength which has been transformational for members of the school community.
- Spirituality is an important part of daily school life. Pupils are keen to make the most of opportunities to reflect in a range of ways. However, proactive, systematic planning to increase opportunities for deeper spiritual development across the curriculum is not in place.
- Worship is a reverent and joyful experience; everyone participates with eagerness. However, pupil evaluations do not impact on the long term planning so their views are not fully taken into account.
- Religious education (RE) contributes significantly to the valuing of difference and diversity throughout the school. The well planned RE curriculum is valued by all. Assessment strategies are not yet fully in place.

#### Areas for development

- Ensure there are systems in place so that opportunities for spiritual development are planned across the curriculum. This is so that pupils and adults can confidently explore their own spiritual understanding and that of others.
- In order to extend their understanding of the importance of worship, develop the role of pupils in planning, leading, and evaluating collective worship.
- To fully refine the assessment of RE so that staff know how well pupils learn and pupils understand how to implement the next steps in learning.

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 Christian vision is the thread that runs through the whole school and inspires all its activities. Pupils see themselves as young like David (from the Bible story underpinning the vision), but able to take up big opportunities and have a big impact, as he did. Pupils refer to the story of David and Goliath naturally within their learning and to help them to flourish in everyday life. The school vision is visible in exercise books, displays, policies and through profound conversations with pupils and adults. To reinforce the importance of living out the vision and values, 'Values Tickets' are given when they are seen in action. Nominations for tickets can come from pupils and adults. The tickets empower the school community to identify and talk about their Christian vision in action. One member of staff described the vision as 'this is my job!'.

Open and transparent leadership is modelled by the headteacher and can be seen at all levels in the school including pupils. All have contributed to reviewing and updating the Christian vision. Hence everyone feels ownership and that its biblical basis is relevant to them. Governors are a highly valued presence in school and are well informed about the effectiveness of the church school community. During the pandemic they nominated one governor to provide in person support for the school to prioritise maintaining their relationships.

Quality positive relationships are evident throughout the school. Leaders have made strategic staffing decisions, to ensure the flourishing of all. Staff at all levels have access to appropriate training and development opportunities. Leaders have prioritised wellbeing including amending the school marking policy to reflect workload concerns. A staff member described the school as 'like being given a hug'. During lockdown they introduced wellbeing Wednesday which focused on 'screen free' learning. Parents welcome the regular, open contact they have with staff. These quality trusting relationships are the result of significant investment in time and are transforming life opportunities for pupils. Pupil behaviour is exemplary.

The school's vision for parental flourishing has a significant and inspiring impact through a programme of family liaison activities. Links with the local community are intentional, powerful, and extensive. For example, a recent trip to the Yorkshire Dales was organised with the local Early Action Police Team. This resulted in a widening of horizons, raising aspirations and opportunities for pupil success in ways not previously experienced. On their return to school staff and pupils debriefed and discussed the impact of their experiences; personally, physically, socially, and spiritually. This debrief enabled pupils to identify and talk about 'moments of ordinary grace' (MOG's). The regular use of MOG's helps all members of the school to recognise and begin to articulate moments of spiritual development. There is a shared understanding of spirituality in place, however, routine planning for spiritual development is not established.

Pupils feel safe and know that they are listened to with respect and fairness. The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils to understand and celebrate difference and diversity. For example, some pupils were involved in a local panathlon (a sports competition for pupils with additional needs). This was a joyful experience for them. This joy was shared by the rest of the school on their return as they modelled their medals and T shirts.

There is a strong focus on character development and parents state this as a reason for their choice of school. Pupils know they can make a difference, to others, their local community and in the wider world. The school has nurtured a culture of infectious 'making a difference'. Social action activities are pupil generated, for example a tinned food and toiletries collection for the homeless. Actions are not simply fundraising but also raise awareness of inequality and care for the environment. Through travel to school choices for example. Picture news is used sensitively and effectively to engage pupils in global thinking and asking big questions. Members of the school community link their social action to David in terms of starting small and having a big impact. This gives everyone the hope that they can make a difference.

Collective worship is central to school life and sung worship embodies a spirit of joy. Pupils say, 'worship affects my day and makes me more positive'. Adults worked hard to maintain inspiring collective worship during lockdown. A member of local clergy continued with face-to-face worship for class bubbles to counter their feelings of isolation. Virtual worship during periods of home learning was very significant to pupils. Lockdown saw an increase in them discussing its impact with their families. Pupils readily reflect on worship and are keen to develop this further and see their evaluations put into action. Links with the local churches are vibrant and treasured. All members of the school community are looking forward with great anticipation to returning to return to worship in the church building. Within school pupils pray and

reflect in a range of ways including using The Hub, the Prayer Pod, reflective spaces in classroom and journals. Prayer and reflection is important to them. They also recognise that worship provides opportunities for their own spiritual development. Collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements and are given a high priority by all within the school.

The RE curriculum is well sequenced and adults have engaged in a range of appropriately challenging diocesan training. This is then effectively cascaded to teaching staff and governors. As a result, pupils are developing their religious literacy and can engage in philosophical discussion at an age-appropriate level. Pupils value the fact that their RE curriculum fits their local context and prepares them for the wider world. They exhibit thoughtful and understanding attitudes to a range of religions and understand Christianity as a living world faith. Pupils also recognise that RE provides them with a safe space to explore their own beliefs. Governors demonstrate effective, sensitive, and supportive monitoring of RE and clearly value the conversations that they have with pupils.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

All pupils make good progress in RE regardless of their starting points because of a rich and engaging curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and progress is monitored by leaders both formally and informally. Assessment strategies now need to be refined so that leaders know how well and what pupils are learning with greater precision. This will continue to support pupils progress and their development of skills.

### Contextual information about the school

|  |  |     |                                  |
|--|--|-----|----------------------------------|
| Date of inspection                             | 8 December 2021  | URN | 107550                           |
| Date of previous inspection                    | 16 January 2015  |     |                                  |
| School status                                  | Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School with Nursery  | NOR | 174<br>(including 11 in nursery) |
| Name of MAT/Federation                         | NA   |     |                                  |
| Diocese  | Leeds  |     |                                  |
| Headteacher                                    | Louise Hartley   |     |                                  |
| Pupil profile                                  | The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national average.   |     |                                  |
|  | The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national average.   |     |                                  |
| Additional significant information (if needed) | There has been a new headteacher appointed since the last SIAMS inspection. She has been acting headteacher since September 2019 and headteacher since April 2020. |     |                                  |
| Inspector's name                               | Ruth Houston   | No. | 947                              |