

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Gomersal St Mary's Church of England VC Primary School

Address Shirley Avenue, Gomersal, Cleckheaton, United Kingdom, BD19 4NA

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

Excellent

School's vision

By being the best we can be, we all shine brightly making our world and school a better place. The Bible quote that underpins our vision is 'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16

Key findings

- The knowledge, commitment and determination of governors, and the passion of the headteacher and other leaders ensures that Gomersal St Mary's is a caring, deeply Christian community. Adults and pupils are nurtured to be aspirational and achieve their full potential. This is driven by the school's rich, widely shared, clearly understood and highly effective Christian vision.
- This is a welcoming, inclusive and harmonious community where love, respect, friendship, forgiveness and resilience, are biblically understood, and immediately evident. Promoting a culture of care, support and guidance for all, including, the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, enables all to flourish. However, the school does not yet share this expertise as widely as it might.
- The talented leader for religious education (RE) ensures that pupils experience thought provoking, interesting, challenging, creative and appropriate programmes of learning. Pupils relish and retain their learning although, they do not always have sufficient opportunity for personal reflection and extended writing.
- Collective worship is excellent. It is the heartbeat of the community. Reflecting the calendar and pattern of Anglican worship, it is prayerful and relevant. It offers the whole community a time of reflection and unity because it is inviting, inclusive and inspiring. During periods of Covid related remote learning, collective worship nurtured and bound the wider school family bringing a sense of hope and wellbeing to all.
- Through an imaginative, carefully crafted curriculum, pupils become sensitive to the needs of the local and global community and act as courageous advocates for individuals, communities and the environment. Visits and visitors broaden their horizons so that pupils are encouraged and challenged to be the best that they can be.

Areas for development

- Explore ways to share more widely the expertise that is enabling disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils to shine and to flourish so that the effectiveness of the Christian vision has extended impact.
- Embed the recent revisions to the RE curriculum so that more able pupils have additional opportunities for personal reflection and extended writing.
- Develop further, the school's outside areas so that adults and pupils have even greater opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection.

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

Gomersal St Mary's is a good Church of England primary school. At its heart is its Christian vision underpinned by the call to 'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16. Carefully and collaboratively developed, it ensures that both adults and pupils can shine brightly making their 'world and school a better place'. The headteacher leads with compassion, humility and integrity. She is supported by committed governors and colleagues who are passionate about the wellbeing of pupils, adults and the extended school family. Consequently, leaders make careful and courageous decisions, confident that they are in the best interests of all and faithful to the vision. Leaders and governors are accurate in their understanding of the school because they reflect, and have in place, regular and robust systems of self-evaluation. This embraces all members of the school community and includes evaluation as a Church school. All appreciate that they have a voice that is recognised, valued and effective.

Within the school community, adults are effective role models and educators to pupils and each other. Carefully crafted, exciting and engaging, the curriculum focuses on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as being equally important as academic achievement. This is expressed through the 'five steps to success'. These are love, respect, friendship, forgiveness and resilience. They are the basis for the approach to learning, behaviour and spirituality. Pupils, including the disadvantaged and vulnerable, demonstrate their progress because they are known as individuals. They receive support and challenge appropriately matching their ability and potential. Pastoral care, especially important during periods of remote learning, is a strength. It ensures that all are nurtured as a valued part of God's creation. Additional support and provision, rigorously provided, ensure barriers to learning are successfully addressed. Leaders have a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise that has not yet been shared to the benefit of other schools. Adults and pupils remain grateful for the school's sensitive, realistic and practical approach to wellbeing and progress during the Covid pandemic.

Character and moral development are impressive. They make everyone hopeful for the future and able to take moral and ethical decisions with certainty. Pupils speak of their school responsibilities with pride. An international programme for global citizenship, adapted to the school's unique context and vision, empowers pupils. Providing skills, knowledge and motivation, it is the framework for pupils' advocacy for positive change for themselves and the world. Taking responsibility for different issues, pupils can grow into exceptionally well informed and caring global citizens. Leaders and members of the pupil leadership team, eco-club, gardening club and other extra-curricular opportunities, including sport, develop self-esteem and confidence. Contributing to the Queen's Green Canopy, supporting Water-aid initiatives and fundraising for members of their own community reflect the determination of all to challenge injustice and inequality. Awards, including the Fairtrade Fair Active Award and the Green Flag Eco-Schools Award recognise the sustainability of pupils' actions and the positive impact of the school's vision.

Relationships are a palpable strength of this harmonious school community. Deeply respectful and affirming, they encourage and enable adults and pupils to 'let their light shine'. Older pupils show interest in, and care for, the wellbeing of younger pupils. They are proud to be buddies in this school where no one is invisible. Pupils know how to be safe and happy because adults support them to be so. Systems and opportunities exist to encourage pupils to share their worries and concerns. All learn how to express their opinions and to

disagree well. When relationships break down, they are restored with compassion. There is a biblical and practical understanding of reconciliation and forgiveness. Parents appreciate the accessibility of school leaders, their determination to improve outcomes for pupils and their positive impact. A weekly coffee morning provides parents and carers with social engagement but also, when required, access to additional support and guidance.

Gomersal St Mary's is a community of individuals bound together by the highly effective Christian vision. There is a clear appreciation of difference and diversity as part of God's plan. Relationships education is very well developed so that even the youngest pupils recognise how to care for their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Pupils have a strong sense of equality and justice and can reference this to the teaching and example of Jesus as well as of other role models. They understand and celebrate cultural differences because activities and learning expose them to new experiences. One example of this is visiting a local care home to chat and play games with residents. The ambitious programme of visits and visitors, re-established since the pandemic, contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development and understanding of differing roles in society. The myriad of residential and cultural experiences offered are educational, enjoyable, memorable and accessible to all.

RE is at the core of the curriculum. Using the locally agreed syllabus and the Understanding Christianity programme, it meets the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The talented leader for RE successfully ensures that learning challenges and excites pupils. It presents opportunities to investigate, understand and reflect upon Christianity, major world religions and worldviews. Pupils' thoughts, engagement and interactions are wonderfully captured in exercise and floor books. However, some pupils, including the more able, do not always record their reflections in greater depth. The revised scheme of assessment needs time to embed so that pupils are better informed about how well they are learning.

Rich, inspiring collective worship is the beating heart of this deeply prayerful, spiritual community and expresses the Christian vision. Carefully and creatively planned and evaluated by adults and pupils, it reflects the cycle of the Christian calendar. Using prayers and traditions of the Anglican Church, it enables those of different faiths and beliefs to have cherished daily moments of peace, joy and reflection. Successfully using drama and music brings the word of God to life. Consequently, it is meaningful and accessible. Allowing pupils to meet in different groupings, worship encourages spontaneity and enthusiasm. Pupils and adults confidently lead varied, age-appropriate and inspiring gatherings. During periods of remote learning, worship brought a sense of unity, belonging and hope. Links with the local church are excellent, forming a rich and prayerful partnership. Pupils visit the church regularly to celebrate key feasts and festivals and each class leads worship in church. Prayer and reflection spaces are treasured and accessible to all. The new, and already well used, relaxing prayer shed adds another dimension to private worship and reflection. It is the exciting first step towards using outdoor areas even more creatively in this wonderfully caring Christian community.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	15 June 2022	URN	107747
Date of previous inspection	10 June 2015		
School status	VC	NOR	207
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation			
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Leeds		
Headteacher	Jane Barker		
Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged	In Line with National Average		
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Above National Average		
Additional significant information (if needed)			

Inspector's name	Fiona Ashton	No.	0860
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