

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Oak Church of England Primary School

Address Dryclough Road, Huddersfield, HD4 5HX

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

Good

School's vision

Our school values are love, respect, endeavour and joy which we weave through our vision for our school. By endeavouring to work and play together, love and respect will flourish. We find joy in loving, serving and respecting each other as we grow and learn.

Together, we continue to 'Be The Best We Can Be.'

This vision is underpinned by the parable of the mustard seed. Matthew 13: 31-32

Key findings

- The school's vision permeates all aspects of the school's daily life. Its theological underpinning, however, is not clear. Therefore, the focus on the essential features of being an effective and developing Church school are not fully evident.
- Collective worship is a priority, and the school's vision is clearly shared with everyone as they gather together. It enables all members of the school community to develop their spirituality through prayer and time for reflection.
- Monitoring and evaluation are evident for both religious education (RE) and collective worship. However, it is not clearly focussed on the impact and outcomes of the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- The RE curriculum supports pupils to develop age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation. There is a deep respect for all world faiths.
- Staff have not received training to help them understand their roles in a Church school. This means that there is an inconsistent approach to promoting a Christian vision.

Areas for development

- To review the school's vision and values, ensuring they are underpinned with a clear theological narrative that can be appreciated by all and help develop the school.
- To ensure monitoring is focussed on the impact and outcomes of the school's Christian distinctiveness so that progress is more effective.
- To provide staff with relevant training so that they can improve their knowledge of their roles in a Church school.
- To provide wider opportunities for pupils to express their understanding of justice and equality, so that they can support social action locally and abroad.

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

Oak Church of England Primary is an inclusive school where staff, parents and pupils value the application of the school's vision. This vision meets the aspirational needs and challenges of the pupils and is understood as a Christian vision for the community. The vision is explicitly evident through presentation within the physical environment of the school. This supports and celebrates the school's identity and has been instrumental in the successful amalgamation of three local schools. However, its theological underpinning is not clear and therefore cannot be widely appreciated and applied. Pupils do not always grasp how their school vision, and its associated values, are rooted in the Christian and biblical narrative. Because of these limitations, monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders and governors has not been sufficiently focused on ensuring the decisive features of Christian distinctiveness. Staff have not received appropriate training in understanding their roles in a Church school. Therefore, they are unable to support each other in developing this essential aspect of school life.

The school's vision informs the approach to behaviour management as children are encouraged to 'be the best that they can be'. Staff draw upon values to help pupils reflect upon their choices. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible for their own behaviour and are given opportunities to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. As a result, there is a clear reduction in the number of adverse behavioural incidents. The values of love, respect, endeavour and joy, clearly express the way the school seeks to treat all its members.

Support for the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is a strength. It relates directly to the school's vision and its commitment to love all members of the school community. Relaxation techniques are successfully used, and a safe space is available for children who need to regulate their emotions before returning to the classroom. One child was keen to share that the staff 'really care about you as a person'. Provision for those with additional learning or personal needs, and those who are vulnerable, is also strong. The vision for a community filled with love, drives investment in this area. Families are encouraged to have high expectations for their children. Pupils are able to articulate the importance of aspiring to always be the best version of themselves.

Through a well-established curriculum, pupils enjoy learning and are able to share new knowledge with confidence. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities ensures that each pupil is recognised as a unique individual and well-supported. Several aspects of the curriculum seek to develop the spiritual development for all learners. In the context of the school, an oracy project has had a positive impact on pupils' ability to articulate learning and communicate more effectively. Pupils' awareness of diversity is enhanced through the quality of the texts that are chosen for both literacy, personal, social and health education. This enables them to understand and accept the differences that exist between one another.

There is a powerful sense of community within the school. Staff and governors have an in-depth knowledge of the local area and engage well with the local Community Hub. Every opportunity is taken to teach pupils about current issues, and external resources, such as 'Safer Kirklees', are well used. There has been a good partnership with the local church, although this has been adversely affected by the challenges of the pandemic. There is also a good relationship with the local mosque. The school involves itself in a variety of charity work both locally and abroad. This valuable work supports pupils in developing compassion, but does not extend to their being courageous advocates for social justice.

Pupils are taught the importance of perseverance which helps build resilience. Forest school provides pupils with opportunities to take risks and help develop stamina. They are excited to learn in this environment and they are keen to share their learning with adults. Learning is eagerly celebrated which, in turn, encourages pupils' progress. There is a determination to offer hope and aspiration through faithful service. The caring and supportive work of the school ensures that the needs of families and individuals are effectively identified and met. Staff exceed in what is required of them in order to provide hope in difficult circumstances. Throughout the pandemic considerable support was provided to families, and both parents and pupils express gratitude for this. Many pupils had the opportunity to attend school daily. Others were supported at home through remote learning.

Collective worship is invitational and inclusive, and the school's vision is clearly shared during this time together. It provides a place for all to consider their lives and others. Lighting a candle provides a clear focus for worship. This focal point allows the community time to reflect upon the presence of God. Many pupils can explain its symbolism as 'representing Jesus, the light of the world'. All pupils participate in collective worship and there are many opportunities for members of the school to reflect upon what they have learnt. Prayer and time for reflection are used effectively and daily. This enables the development of spirituality for adults and pupils alike. Worship helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of important Christian beliefs about God. This is achieved with sensitivity towards other faiths that are respected by all. Collective worship remains a priority for the school community. As a result, the school has successfully adapted worship to take into account the risks associated with Covid-19. Monitoring and evaluation informs the development of worship, although the process is hindered by the limitations of the vision. There is little opportunity for pupil participation in planning, leading, and evaluating collective worship.

RE is given a high profile. Statutory requirements are met and the subject is in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The RE curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis, and interpretation. Assessment systems provide sound support for pupils' progress. Pupils responded thoughtfully to a lesson exploring the importance of rules and the consequences of making bad choices. Pupils are able to demonstrate an informed and respectful understanding other major world faiths. The school's vision is evident in RE curriculum planning. Staff seek to meet the needs of all learners through challenge and support where required.

There are considerable strengths of leadership evident at Oak Church of England Primary and it is clear that pupils are encouraged to 'be the best that they can be'. However, due to the lack of Christian distinctiveness in the vision and its associated values, the school is hampered in developing further as a Church school.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	1 December 2021	URN	142418
Date of previous inspection	No previous inspection		
School status	Voluntary Controlled Primary	NOR	541
Diocese	Leeds		
Headteacher	Mr David Bendall		
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)	Oak Church of England Primary School is a larger than an average-sized primary school. It opened in May 2016, when three schools were amalgamated. Over 35 different languages are spoken in school. The school has experienced some significant challenges in recent months.		
Inspector's name	Anna Brooksbank	No.	974