



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ripon Cathedral Church of England Primary School

Address Priest Lane, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 1LT

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

Excellent

The impact of collective worship

Excellent

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Excellent

School's vision

Our vision is for all members of our school family to be:
Aspiring to be the best that they can be (Ezra 10:4)
Flourishing in all aspects of their development; spiritually, mentally, physically, and academically (John 10:10)
Loving themselves and others as children of God (John 15:12).

Key findings

- The school's deeply embedded vision of aspiring, flourishing and loving for all underpins decision-making at every level. It makes a transformational impact on the wellbeing of staff, pupils and their families, including the most vulnerable members of the school community. The aim for the whole school family to 'have life in all its fullness' led to exceptional support for pupils, parents and carers during periods of lockdown. In Early Years, a bespoke version of the school's vision ensures that pupils get off to the best start possible. It encourages them to 'love themselves and others as children of God'.
- The range of ways in which pupils' characters are developed, in all areas of school life, is impressive. Every opportunity is taken to support and nurture pupils as young leaders. They play an important part in strategic decision-making. Pupils of all ages think deeply about concerns, both within the school community and the wider world. They recognise and independently challenge injustice. Pupils at this school are agents for change.
- Collective worship is at the centre of school life. There is a rich balance of adult and pupil-led worship. This is supported by the strong partnerships with the Cathedral and a range of other local churches. Spiritual development is powerful. The innovative use of the school's chapel by pupils, their families and staff for reflection and spiritual development contributes significantly to the flourishing of all.
- Religious Education (RE) has a pivotal place in the school's curriculum. The highly effective approach to teaching RE, including the use of 'digging deeper' questioning, contributes significantly to the flourishing of pupils. They are challenged to think deeply and, as a result, express mature and well-reasoned ideas and opinions. Pupils reflect on their emotional responses to what they are studying. Monitoring and evaluation by school leaders, including governors, is extremely rigorous and there is a relentless drive for further improvement.
- Excellent practice in RE has shaped the approach to teaching across the curriculum. As a result, opportunities for reflection and emotional development are intentionally planned into all subjects. A shared understanding of and detailed whole-school planning for spiritual development reflects the school's vision. This enables progressively deeper, rich opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually as they progress through the school.

Areas for development

- Share the excellent, vision-based practice at Ripon Cathedral School to support other schools on their journey.

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 deeply embedded vision of aspiring, flourishing and loving makes Ripon Cathedral School a transformational place to attend or work. The aim for every member of the school community to have 'life in all its fullness' is at the heart of decision-making. One parent explained, 'Our children go to the school but we're all part of the family'. Leaders, including governors, model the aspirational vision to 'rise up, take courage and do it'. For example, governors recognised that, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of the school community, increased expert support was required. As a result, the school's inclusion and wellbeing lead has moved to a non-teaching role. Staff members, pupils and their families all benefit from the exceptionally high-quality time and help now available from her in supporting their spiritual and wellbeing needs.

Positive relationships, flowing from Jesus' instruction to 'love others as I have loved you', are key to the success of the school. Staff support one another in inspirational ways which both promote wellbeing and lead to continued professional development. Staff at all levels benefit from well-planned in-house and external training. Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary. Pupils flourish thanks to the openness of staff members who share, appropriately, their own vulnerabilities. This results in an exceptionally safe and loving environment in which difficulties can be aired, knowing that support will be offered. The school's positive approach to behaviour management fosters a culture of forgiveness and reconciliation. It also develops loving and mutually respectful relationships between pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), English as an additional language, or who are new to the school, are nurtured and cherished by their classmates.

The vision of enabling all to flourish resulted in exceptional support for pupils and their families during lockdowns. Parents who were struggling were offered a school place for their children. Remote support for pupils was innovative and highly effective. Whenever staff had concerns about a pupil, he or she was invited to stay online for some wellbeing time. Pupils with SEND were regularly invited to one-to-one or small group teaching sessions online. Mindful of the negative impact of too much screen time, the school introduced 'no screen Fridays'. Pupils were set creative mindfulness and wellbeing challenges which resulted in them spending time outdoors or engaged in activities which promoted spiritual development.

The range of ways in which pupils' characters are developed is inspirational. Leaders are determined that pupils should influence how the school is run. Several forums ensure that pupils' voices are reflected in strategic decision-making. There is what one pupil described as an 'ask and you get' culture. Any pupil, whether or not they belong to one of the pupil forums, will be heard if they have an idea for developing school life. During lockdown, a group of friends who are passionate about environmental issues founded a group, 'Love Your World'. They now regularly prepare and lead acts of collective worship to inspire their schoolmates. Equally, Spiritual Council members take an important role in stirring up the school community, including staff, with their 'key questions'. These 'big' life questions appear in classrooms and on lunch tables, prompting rich discussions.

Collective worship is a special part of the day. Thanks to the school's close relationship with the Cathedral and other local churches, pupils experience and learn about different styles of Christian worship. Through these partnerships, pupils also benefit from creative worship sessions led by a range of visitors. Every pupil in school is supported to 'find their voice' and develop as a leader through the class-led collective worship rota. Pupils, parents and staff all speak passionately about the deep impact a recent session led by Year 2, linked to 'rising up', made on them. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is rigorous and involves the whole school community. Deep dives and pupil voice exercises enable pupils' feedback to shape planning. It was in response to pupils' views that the use of the school chapel was re-developed.

The chapel is now an impressive place of sanctuary, not just for pupils and staff members, but for parents and carers too. Staff, including non-teaching staff, and pupils are enriched by timetabled reflection opportunities in the chapel. Current reflection stations, devised by pupils in Year 5, focus on the plight of refugees. They provoke deeply empathetic and prayerful responses in pupils and staff. It is a safe place for parents and carers to seek specialised support from the school's inclusion and wellbeing lead. Staff members value the opportunities afforded, via the chapel, to reflect on

difficult situations. The innovative use of this space contributes significantly to the spiritual development and wellbeing of all.

The school's well-balanced RE provision is highly effective in equipping pupils to make sense of the world around them and to develop as loving and respectful global citizens. The school's strong partnership with the Diocese resulted in the development of a transformational curriculum. It facilitates deep theological, sociological and philosophical debates between peers, encouraging pupils to disagree well. Through their comparative studies of a well-selected range of world faiths, pupils develop an excellent understanding of cultures and religions different from their own. RE lessons contribute to the school's respectful ethos in which diversity is celebrated. RE lessons also provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own personal convictions. The headteacher's relentless drive for improvement is reflected in development plans which outline how RE teaching will be even further enhanced. The approach taken in RE has acted as a 'driver' for the re-development of the wider curriculum. The successful 'digging deeper' questioning, introduced in RE, is now used as the approach to feedback and development for all pupils in all subjects. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social, health and economic education across the curriculum. Spiritual development and wellbeing opportunities are intentionally planned into all lessons. The curriculum 'pillars' reflect the school's vision. As a result, pupils are challenged in their deep thinking, questioning and analytical skills and encouraged to be agents of change in all lessons.

The bespoke Early Years vision has a transformational impact on the lives of the school's youngest pupils. A focus on 'loving' helps to get relationships off to the best start possible. The impressive development of language skills also plays a key part in developing character and relationships at the earliest stage. Through the use of lively, named role-model characters which are meaningful to the children, growth mindset and emotional intelligence are developed extremely effectively. The youngest pupils quickly become resilient, able to persevere and accommodating of the needs of others.



The effectiveness of RE is

Excellent

The well-balanced teaching and learning in RE is excellent. The curriculum is made memorable for pupils, who can recall prior learning and make comparisons between faiths studied. The consistent approach to teaching RE across the school enables pupils' knowledge to build seamlessly in a progressive way. Thoughtful use of pupil groupings enables all pupils, including those with SEND, to successfully access the curriculum. Innovative use of personalised feedback enables all pupils to make excellent progress.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	30 March 2022	URN	121581
Date of previous inspection	9 June 2015		
School status	Voluntary Aided Primary including nursery	NOR	210 (230 including Nursery)
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese	Leeds		
Headteacher	Steven Holmes		
Pupil profile	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.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Charlotte Tudway	No.	C1817

