

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

## St Botolph's Church of England Academy

Address Primrose Vale, Knottingley, West Yorkshire, WF11 9BT

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)** **Excellent**

### School's vision

Our Christian Vision is to follow Jesus' teachings, helping us to strive for excellence in all that we do and flourish as unique individuals.

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

### Key findings

- The school's vision for every member of the school community to flourish as unique individuals is deeply embedded and underpinned by strong pastoral support. However, pupils are less clear about the teachings of Jesus on which the vision is based.
- Varied and inclusive collective worship is at the heart of the school community, enriched by partnerships with local churches.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is excellent. As a result, a rich and engaging curriculum inspires pupils to explore a wide range of religious and philosophical ideas.
- Governors and school leaders monitor and evaluate collective worship and RE but do not monitor intentionally the impact of the Christian vision on other key decisions.
- The school's vision inspires pupils to give to charities and act with kindness and respect to others. Pupils are keen to make decisions about charitable activities but do not regularly take the lead in initiating social action.

### Areas for development

- Ensure the biblical foundation of the vision is fully understood and leaders apply this within their work in order to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Christian vision more explicitly and comprehensively.
- Deepen the opportunities for reflection and questioning across the curriculum and in personal prayer in order to enable the spiritual development of pupils and adults.
- Build on pupils' current experiences of helping others in order to enhance their opportunities to become courageous advocates for change through their actions.

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 vision that every pupil should flourish and fulfil their potential is deeply embedded in St Botolph's culture. The result is a very welcoming and inclusive school community where pupils' individual needs are carefully considered. Parents appreciate the way that staff 'go out of their way to help' and communicate promptly in addressing concerns. After joining school mid-year with some nervousness, a pupil credited help from their peers and teachers for enabling them to feel 'part of our big family'. Leaders consulted staff, pupils and governors fully when they established the vision. Every year, staff and governors review and re-affirm their commitment to it. Senior leaders draw inspiration from the encouragement to do 'all things through him who strengthens me', that is through Jesus. Pupils know the summary of the vision by heart, but they do not have a clear understanding of the teachings of Jesus on which it is based.

Loving pastoral care, rooted in the school's vision, contributes to a very powerful sense of community in which all are valued. An experienced and skilled learning mentor works effectively to improve the wellbeing of pupils. The school is pro-active in identifying needs and tailoring support to individuals. Children and families have confidence that they will be listened to and supported appropriately. In addition to pastoral care, staff work well with a variety of partner organisations providing specialist services. For example, during the lockdowns, they ensured that weekly speech and language therapy continued on a virtual platform. As a result, pupils with additional needs have continued to progress despite the disruption of the pandemic.

Pupils respect each other and accept difference without question. Some older pupils show kindness and a sensitive concern for others' wellbeing by offering a 'worry box' to their peers. This contains activities such as mindful art which pupils who feel anxious may wish to do during lunch hour. Pupils have devised this on their own initiative and with the learning mentor's encouragement. Older pupils take seriously their responsibilities as named 'befrienders' and look out for pupils who may need encouragement. Pupils look beyond school to support a range of national and local charities especially the nearby food and clothing banks. Their global link with a school in Tanzania has been interrupted by the pandemic.

The vision that all should flourish as unique individuals shapes the way that leaders and staff work together. They experience positive relationships in which colleagues collaborate to make improvements for pupils and to help each other. Staff appreciate the school's commitment to their wellbeing. They benefit from the school's investment in varied opportunities for continuing professional development.

Pupils enjoy learning and experience a broad and balanced curriculum. In many subjects, this has been planned around key overarching questions, known as 'big questions', which stimulate thought and differing opinions. These questions help pupils to explore spiritual and ethical issues as well as to deepen their subject understanding. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this approach in fostering spiritual development across the curriculum.

The teaching of RE is exemplary in its use of big questions. Teachers of RE show confidence and flexibility in asking probing questions which challenge pupils to consider other viewpoints. Pupils join enthusiastically in lively discussion and say that, as a result, they change their minds on issues. One pupil commented, 'I enjoy talking about God'. Pupils understand and accurately use theological terms and concepts, for example, in discussing the Trinity. A pupil identified Jesus' incarnation as an interesting belief which they had encountered for the first time by studying RE. Pupils are challenged to achieve well in RE. Leaders' decisions, for example about the presentation of written work in RE, give pupils freedom to express themselves. As a result, pupils of all abilities flourish in their learning. The high quality of pupils' oral and written responses reflects their creativity and individuality in this subject. The highly effective leader has developed a team of committed and competent class teachers who enjoy teaching RE. Teachers share good practice and receive ongoing professional development, giving them confidence and expertise in RE.

During the challenge of change in school leadership, Enhance Academy Trust has provided staffing and resources. Peer networks within the schools in the trust assist leaders. A strong partnership with the diocese provides effective training for staff and governors to build up their understanding of Church school education. As a result, the school is well supported by the trust and diocese.

Engaging and invitational collective worship is central to the school. The school made sure that live collective worship continued to be offered online during the lockdowns. Key stage and whole school worship is varied, including high

quality music, liturgical responses and visual materials that engage pupils. School is refreshing pupil leadership of worship after the restrictions during the pandemic. Pupils on the collective worship committee set up and help with the running of collective worship in the hall. Pupils contribute their own ideas. For example, two pupils devised a presentation about creation and climate change to share with other classes. Each year, every pupil has the opportunity to write their own prayer which may then be used in class worship. However, few pupils say that they pray or reflect personally outside collective worship. Staff feel confident in leading collective worship and also value the time to participate and be still.

Close links with local churches enrich pupils' experience of worship at festivals in the church's year and build community bonds. The strength of the partnership with the Methodist church was seen when they produced videos of Bible stories during the first lockdown. Pupils experience Christmas and Easter services in the parish church and Harvest Festival in the Methodist church. The strong partnership with the Methodist church benefits both the congregation and the school. Church members particularly value the pupils singing at the Christmas Fair and at lunch for the elderly. Collective worship is strengthened by the regular visits and contribution of the Methodist children's worker and congregation members. In this way church and school join together to benefit both communities.



**The effectiveness of RE is**

Excellent

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is excellent. A carefully sequenced and demanding programme of study ensures that pupils build on secure foundations in learning. Pupils meet challenges posed in RE with confidence and achieve very well. There is a very effective monitoring schedule based on joint planning and teaching, book scrutiny and pupil and staff feedback. The school ensures that all pupils, including the disadvantaged and vulnerable, make good progress and flourish in RE. The school meets the expectations for RE in church schools extremely well.

**Contextual information about the school**

Date of inspection	2 December 2021	URN	145576
Date of previous inspection	6 October 2014		
School status	Academy inspected as voluntary aided	NOR	350
Name of MAT	Enhance Academy Trust		
Diocese	Leeds		
Headteacher	Donna Adams		
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 in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	Recently there have been significant staffing changes as members of the senior leadership team have taken on new roles and responsibilities. Enhance Academy Trust have appointed an interim headteacher.		
Inspector's name	Eleanor Benson	No.	920