

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

Overthorpe Church of England Academy	
Address	Edge Top Road, Thornhill, WF12 0BH
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

School's vision
<p>Overthorpe is more than a school - we are the heart of our community. In our family, we nurture the courage and skills to fly higher than the flock, whilst always providing a nest to come home to. But those who hope in the Lord, will renew their strength.</p> <p>They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:30</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior leaders and governors, with the unwavering support of the Enhance Academy Trust (MAT), are totally committed to making the Christian vision a lived reality. The implementation of the vision is so deeply integrated into everyday language that it transforms the lives of pupils, staff and the local community. They are elevated and transformed as they 'take wing and soar'.</li> <li>• Strong relationships between the school, church and local community are firmly rooted in Christian values of respect and friendship. Faith and love abound in acts of kindness and service. The school is constantly seeking creative ways to further explore the theological roots of the vision with its community.</li> <li>• The schools creatively planned, innovative and personalised curriculum and environment are designed so that every pupil can flourish and soar. It enriches pupils' academic outcomes. It facilitates even the most vulnerable to become independent, resilient learners.</li> <li>• Collective worship is invitational and far-reaching in its spiritual nourishing of the school and wider community. Pupils show an excellent understanding of their roles as leaders of high-quality transformational worship.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) of the highest quality is a strength of this reflective community. Pupils develop an exceptional level of understanding about world faiths and beliefs. It is significantly enhanced by highly effective teaching within an embedded culture of curiosity and questioning.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the impact of the school's distinctive and theological Christian vision continues to drive and shape the school's strategic direction.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

Inspirational and dynamic school leaders and the Enhance Academy Trust (MAT) have created a culture of love, respect and relentless compassion at Overthorpe. They provide the lift that enables everyone to fulfil the Christian vision and fly like an eagle. Powerful images of birds that the entire staff, pupils and their families have created, with the text from Isaiah, lead to the nest in the hall as a physical and visual representation of the vision. The nest reinforces that the school will always provide love and trust and a place to return to. Leaders at all levels are committed to ensuring that the school's distinctive Christian vision is lived out daily so that the school community can enjoy life in all its fullness. Creating confident, articulate and respectful pupils who link the vision and values to their daily lives. The school's vision and values are integral to the bold strategic decisions that leaders make about school development. Leaders use the vision placing it firmly at the centre of the community it serves. A free breakfast club in the Neighbourhood Nest community cafe provides hot food and food parcels from Fareshare, and is greatly valued by the community. Inspired by the vision to show unconditional love within the local community. Letters were written and sent to those living locally who were isolated. This had a significant and positive impact on those who received them.

Opening and funding the Neighbourhood Nest, in the old Sure Start building on the school site, was a courageous decision. Starting just a few months before the pandemic, it has been hugely successful, enabling intergenerational and other meetings. This support has been life-changing for pupils and families. Families comment that the vision embedded in the Neighbourhood Nest has supported some of the most vulnerable in the community. Innovative practise is demonstrated by weekly clinics at the Neighbourhood Nest to help parents, supporting the whole family. The 'knock out depression group for males' is known to have saved lives. Grandparents and the senior citizens group now feel they are at the heart of Overthorpe.

Parents recognise that school values are lived out because their children speak of them as part of everyday life. 'My child says we have to rise above any negative attitudes', for example, demonstrates an understanding of hope, trust and forgiveness. An embedded and mutually supportive relationship between the church and school extends and deepens the school's Christian vision. Parents feel part of the church family due to this exceptionally strong bond between church and school.

Pupils value their school as a Christian school. They speak of everyone belonging and are proud that they welcome everyone unconditionally. They have a very well-developed understanding of the meaning of Jesus' teachings about love and care and apply these by playing games with the senior citizens. Pupils have opportunities to discuss big questions. Using the value of forgiveness, pupils explore whether Guy Fawkes should have been forgiven for his behaviour for example. The vision drives the bespoke curriculum. It is creative and engaging with topics taught through challenging questions such as 'what makes you, you?' It supports pupils to know where they are going and what and why they are learning.

Woodland Friends is a strength and pupils speak about how it helps them show the values. One pupil said, 'God would be pleased with us for looking after the world'. Values are integrated into the personal and social curriculum as well as powerfully supporting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This convincingly enhances respect for difference and diversity. High quality enrichment activities are accessible to all. Behaviour is exemplary, with dignity and respect for all at the core. Pupils have an impressive range of opportunities to take responsibility, as school councillors, worship council and team, digital leads, sports leaders and play buddies. The different groups create certificates and award them in

collective worship. The play buddies award the 'good shepherd' certificate to pupils who embody the values.

Links with the wider community are exemplified by the successful bid for inter-faith funding. This brought different communities together to share in the inter-faith cooking project. This further built on the strong foundations of 'The big Iftar' which united communities with a mosque visit, including parents and the senior citizen group from the Neighbourhood Nest. This visit linked senior citizens groups from both communities through sharing memories of the past and finding similarities rather than differences.

The passionate staff see each other as 'one big family' who live, learn and love together. Staff benefit from a wealth of training opportunities which enable them 'to do and be the best for each other'. Their well-being is taken seriously by the MAT, leaders and governors, aided by an open-door policy and wise decision-making which takes workload into account. Pupil voice is exceptionally strong and they have regular opportunities to give their views. Staff listen and respond. An example of this is enabling pupils to use their own prayers in collective worship.

Collective worship at Overthorpe is transformational and is widely recognised by pupils, parents and visiting clergy as being excellent in its practice. The school's values, deeply rooted in biblical teaching, are promoted exceptionally well. The bringing of individual toy owls into the nest at the beginning of collective worship represents and celebrates how these values are lived out in each class.

The pupil members of the worship team are highly respected and admired as inspirational role models across the school, along with the vicar. The vicar serves the community with joy, imagination and compassion. They meet with the school's pupil worship team to develop ideas for collective worship. Together they share planning and find ways to help everyone understand a Christian value such as peace, compassion or justice. A child-friendly, yet highly reverent, act of worship in church is then led by the vicar and the worship team. It is appreciated as a precious time which contributes richly to spiritual development. Pupils know an impressive number of Bible stories from daily acts of worship and many use these to inform the choices that they make in life.

The school has an exceptionally deep understanding of spiritual growth. Spirituality statements, created by the children, are painted as birds on the walls throughout the school. This binds all aspects of the school's vision, values and spirituality together. Pupils articulate how, like the birds, they grow in the love of God and fly to pass that love on. Interactive opportunities for prayer and reflection, both private and collective, exist throughout the school and in all classes including outdoors and are well used.

Skilful class teachers create a sense of awe and wonder in RE because teaching is inspirational. As a result, pupils enjoy learning. Pupils often choose their own way of expressing their understanding of what they have learned. Therefore, everyone is able to achieve. Learning is made memorable because of carefully considered lesson-by-lesson self-assessment questions and repetition. Pupils are curious, discuss issues and explore connections to their lives, ethical issues and world events. As a result, they articulate an impressive knowledge of faiths and worldviews. Pupils engage deeply with the mysteries of life and develop sincere respect and understanding for all people. Regular visits to places of worship bring learning about faith alive. They reinforce the school's commitment to preparing pupils for life in a diverse society.

Information			
School	Overthorpe Church of England Academy	Inspection date	9 November 2022
URN	138979	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Leeds	Pupils on roll	291
MAT/Federation	5196 Enhance Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Matthew Birkett		
Chair of Governors	Paul Else		
Inspector	Elaine Bowers	No.	960