

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Gilsland Church of England Primary School	
Address	Gilsland, CA8 7AA
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

School's vision
<p>Luke 10:27 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'</p> <p>Our values of Thankfulness, Hope, Wisdom, Compassion, Resilience and Friendship are central to everything we do; we are committed to developing every child to reach their full potential by instilling a love of learning, developing pride in our school, fostering creativity, following Christian values, developing understanding of faith and engaging with families, community and environment.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly ambitious school leaders, working strategically with the multi-academy trust (MAT) and diocese, have reignited the distinctively Christian character of the school. • The Christian vision and its associated values are lived out in exceptionally positive relations. They form a culture of togetherness where adults and pupils are known and cared for as unique individuals. • The Good Shepherd MAT provides a robust oversight of the school. This supports local governors and leaders and significantly enhances the effectiveness of Gilsland as a Church school. • Collective worship provides valued moments of reflection and stillness for pupils and adults. Opportunities for pupils to further enhance worship through their own planning and delivery are underdeveloped. • Religious education (RE) is enthusiastically led. Pupils value the safe space it creates to reflect on their own convictions and the thoughts of others. Opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of Christianity and worldviews within the new RE curriculum are underdeveloped.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a shared understanding of spirituality exists. This is so explicit opportunities for spiritual flourishing enhance curriculum planning and pupil-led worship. • Embed the recently implemented RE curriculum so it deepens pupils' understanding of Christianity and biblical text. This is to enhance opportunities for theological and philosophical reflection, and extended writing, on Christianity, world religions and worldviews. • Enhance opportunities for pupils to engage in social action and be active advocates for change. This is to widen opportunities to live out their vision to love thy neighbour beyond the school.

Inspection findings

Gilsland is a small school with big ambitions for staff, pupils and its impact in the local community. Joining the Good Shepherd MAT has been transformative for the school, providing valued support, guidance and professional development. Partnerships with the North Cluster schools significantly strengthen curriculum leadership and learning opportunities for pupils. Close collaboration with Carlisle Diocese enhances the school's Christian distinctiveness, including the teaching of RE and provision of collective worship.

Everyone knows the distinctively Christian vision. Leaders speak with clarity and purpose about the way the vision supports the school's eagerness to engage with its partners. The vision of loving your neighbour creates a sense of togetherness within the school and the MAT. Leaders describe the school as being on a journey. The Christian vision and its associated values provides a moral compass which directs and guides the choices they make. With accuracy and integrity, leaders identify the areas of strength within the school and those areas for further development. Looking beyond the school to the MAT and Carlisle Diocese, leaders ensure the journey they are on is a joint one. This is grounded, by all partners, in a shared Christian theology of wanting all to experience life in all its fullness. Humility and openness from leaders ensure their ambitious drive for the school is enhanced through working with others. The values of resilience and hope are modelled by leaders, creating a culture of positivity and growth. The MAT's vision of life in its fullness dovetails seamlessly with the Gilsland vision. This crucially strengthens the capacity of the school to ensure that adults and pupils flourish. Professional development opportunities for staff enhance leadership and teaching skills. This impacts positively on the curriculum and the provision of collective worship. Leaders have actively, yet unsuccessfully, tried to enhance the governing body by appointing foundation governors. Membership of the MAT significantly enriches governors' self-evaluation of the school. The MAT provides accountability and robustness in monitoring Gilsland's effectiveness as a Church school. The positive impact of the MAT cannot be underestimated in the flourishing of all.

Every adult and pupil is known, and cared for, as a unique person. This is evident in warm and genuine relationships where acceptance transcends tolerance. Through this, pupils and adults ensure that the vision to love your neighbour is lived out in actions rather than merely words. Behaviour is good throughout the school and based on mutual respect. Pupils understand the importance of forgiveness. They demonstrate how this is linked to the school value of compassion. Pupils and adults celebrate achievements together and delight in the success of others. This gives all a sense of personal aspiration. Pupils, including those deemed vulnerable or disadvantaged, have opportunities to thrive. School and MAT leaders work collaboratively to ensure the wellbeing and positive mental health of adults and pupils. They are clear how this work stems from the Christian foundation of the school and from a shared drive that all should flourish.

Leaders, guided by the ambitiousness of the vision, enhance learning through the implementation of a new curriculum. This inspires pupils and instils a love of learning. Reading books richly complement the curriculum. They provide significant moments for pupils to engage positively with difference and diversity. The well-resourced library widens the horizons of pupils' experiences beyond their school. This allows them to consider who is their neighbour outside Gilsland. Opportunities for pupils to live out their vision in their community work benefit both the school and their neighbours. Pupils' understanding of how they can be social agents of change, globally and nationally, is underdeveloped. Leaders are motivated to enhance the role of the school in the local area even further. This is inspired by the teachings of Jesus which underpin the vision to, 'love your neighbour.'



Adults and pupils treasure collective worship as a special time to come together. Parents value opportunities to worship with pupils in church at Christmas, Easter and other services. Moments of stillness allow all time to reflect on their values, on Bible stories and on how they live out their vision. Pupils and adults engage well in responding to the welcome of the worship leader. Prayer is invitational, including the opportunity to say the Lord's Prayer. Pupils light three candles at the start of worship which creates a sense of focus and stillness. They understand the candles represent the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although there are class worship committees, pupils have limited opportunities to lead and plan worship. Worship is enhanced through partnerships with the local church and Northern Inter-Church Christian Union (NISCU). Weekly worship, led by the vicar, provides an important bond between the school and local church. This enhances the breadth of worship. Activities led by NISCU provide meaningful moments for pupils in local schools to come together. This supports older pupils in their transition to secondary school. A recent RE week reflecting on the parables of Jesus extends pupils' understanding of the Bible.

Highly valued training provided by a partner school and Carlisle Diocese powerfully impacts on the provision for collective worship. Worship and the use of reflective areas allows some moments of spiritual development. Planned provision for spirituality within the curriculum and worship are underdeveloped. Leaders accurately acknowledge that enriching spirituality further is a key part of their development journey. This is because there is not a secure whole school understanding of spirituality.

RE is enthusiastically led. Leaders' bold decision to adopt a new RE curriculum enhances teaching and learning. Pupils accurately understand Christianity to be a living world faith. RE provides pupils with some opportunities to learn about a variety of faiths and worldviews. As the RE curriculum has been recently implemented, evidence of its full impact is limited. Leaders' monitoring of the effectiveness of the new curriculum is in place but at an early stage. RE provides pupils with some opportunities for theological and philosophical reflection and is regarded by the school as an academic subject. Opportunities to further develop religious literacy through joint work with local schools are valued and valuable learning experiences. The Diocese provides vital professional development to enhance the teaching of RE.

Leaders at Gilsland accurately, and humbly, acknowledge the strengths of the school and their development areas. Inspired by the vision, they want the very best for all the staff and pupils. Strategic partnerships energise and drive the ambitious plans of leaders as they work together to ensure all at Gilsland flourish.



Information			
School	Gilsland Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	20 January 2023
URN	138159	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Carlisle	Pupils on roll	24
MAT/Federation	Good Shepherd MAT		
Executive Headteacher	Rob Blake		
Chair of Trust Board	Jane Clarke		
Inspector	Paul Rusby	No.	938