

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Northill Church of England Academy	
Address	Bedford Road, Northill, SG18 9AH
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)	Good

School's vision
<p>Aspire, Believe, Together we Achieve!</p> <p>Shine...like stars! (Philippians 2:15)</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northill's journey is driven by an embedded Christian vision and underpinned by associated values. Leaders at all levels are relentless in supporting the unique needs of every pupil at Northill. Pupils and adults flourish within the aspirational culture created. • Leaders have wisely and sensitively selected a new curriculum. The way it is shaped by the school's theologically rooted Christian vision is not fully developed. • There are opportunities for spiritual growth across the life of the school. However, the absence of a clear definition of spirituality sometimes limits the opportunities for pupils and adults to grow spiritually. • Collective worship celebrates and promotes Northill's vision effectively. Pupils enjoy leading and evaluating aspects of worship. There are missed opportunities for pupils and adults to develop their understanding of the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. • Religious education (RE) ensures that pupils develop knowledge and an understanding of major world religions and worldviews. Leaders accurately judge teaching and learning in RE to be good.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape the curriculum to enhance learning opportunities for all pupils that are rooted in the school's Christian vision. This is to further embed the Christian theologically rooted vision throughout the curriculum. • Establish a secure understanding and definition of spirituality to enhance the opportunities for pupils and adults to grow spiritually. • Develop provision in collective worship, so that pupils and adults can fully encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

Inspection findings

The leadership team at Northhill have ensured that the 'Aspire, Believe, Together we Achieve!' mantra is fully embedded. The inclusive, theologically rooted, Christian vision is embraced by the whole school community. This small school has a big heart. A true sense of belonging is harnessed for people to flourish together. Strong partnerships exist between the multi-academy trust (MAT) and governors. Consequently, their monitoring of the school is effective and leads to improvements in provision as a Church school. Leaders have cemented action plans that strive for everyone to flourish. The whole school community has high aspirations for the future driven by the vision. Pupils can articulate what they aspire for academically, as well as in their friendships and lives outside of school. Everyone aspires to live by the school's values. The new headteacher fully embraces and embodies the vision. All leaders model aspects of the vision at every opportunity, acting as positive role models for staff and pupils.

With skilled support from the MAT, leaders have recently selected a new curriculum. Choices have been made carefully to ensure that the curriculum meets the learning needs of all learners. However, it is not fully shaped by the vision. Leaders rightly identify this as an area for development. Pupils and adults experience spontaneous opportunities to develop spiritually throughout the school year. Reflection spaces in each classroom and around the school support this. However, teachers do not share a secure understanding of spirituality. Consequently, there are some missed opportunities to harness spontaneous and planned experiences for the spiritual growth of pupils and adults.

The school's Christian vision supports the character and moral development of all pupils. Aspiration is central to the school's vision. Subsequently, pupils use this ambitious language confidently in school and at home. They believe in themselves, and this positive attitude has supported everyone through recent challenging times. Staff demonstrate perseverance together as a well-established and impactful team. The school's Christian vision inspires the whole school community to engage in charitable works that make a difference in their local, national, and global communities. The curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to learn about the exploitation of the natural world and they are beginning to be advocates for change.

Pupils identified as vulnerable are relentlessly supported by dedicated and well-trained staff. Each pupil is known inside and out. Consequently, the provision is tailored for individuals. Pupils are nurtured exceptionally well. Pupils joining from other schools have made rapid progress socially, emotionally, and academically. This is because of careful consideration of the provision that is put in place. Staff aspire for every pupil to believe in themselves. Families know that teachers believe in their children. Behaviour across the school is good. Policy and practice are rooted in a strong culture of forgiveness and reconciliation. Leaders encourage good mental health and put in place support to enable all to flourish and live well together.


Leaders are conscious of the almost entirely mono-cultural ethnicity of the school community. Consequently, the schools' provision harnesses regular opportunities to explore diversity. Pupils access accurate depictions and real-life experiences of the multicultural society they live in. Differences are celebrated and ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Leaders ensure that the vision and its supporting values are developed to reflect this. The value of tolerance has recently been replaced by acceptance. Leaders chose to implement this change to enhance pupils' age-appropriate understanding of their differences. Strong practice in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education supports this. For example, 'sunshine circles' are used each Monday to nurture pupils socially and emotionally following the weekend. Trusting relationships are developed and restorative conversations are used to support good behaviour. Relationships education is planned to create a safe

space for pupils, where they can ask and explore the big questions of life.

Collective worship develops pupils' opportunities for aspiring to be the best they can be and to shine like stars. The Christian vision is woven into planning for worship by leaders. Pupils engage actively in leading and evaluating aspects of worship. This ensures that pupils take ownership of worship and enjoy it greatly. Adults leading worship have engaged with training from the Diocese to enhance provision. Currently, partnerships with the parish church are maintained by the dedicated work of the churchwarden and other volunteers from St Mary the Virgin. This enables pupils to lead services in church and attend extra-curricular Christian-themed clubs run by the congregation. Singing is a favourite part of worship across the school. Moments of prayer and reflection are woven through the school day. Prayer is invitational and meaningful for pupils and adults. Pupils lead spontaneous prayer throughout the school day. The school's vision and associated values are used to plan acts of worship. However, the teachings of Jesus and the Bible are not utilised effectively enough in the process. Consequently, pupils have a limited understanding of a range of Bible stories and their relevance today. Christian festivals are celebrated and understood by pupils. During worship, pupil leaders light three candles and use a gathering and response set of words to welcome everyone. As a result of these routines, pupils have developed an age-appropriate understanding of the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity. All members of the school community value the time to worship together in school and at the church. This adds to the sense of belonging that permeates Northill.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for RE. It is effective in ensuring pupils flourish through the provision of good RE. Therefore, it reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The curriculum effectively ensures that RE expresses the school's Christian vision. This gives clarity of vision and supports pupils' exploration of theology, philosophy, and human science. Subsequently, pupils develop age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis, and interpretation. Training is cascaded to all teachers. Effective partnerships with the Diocesan Board of Education and MAT impact the quality of RE provision positively. The RE leader has selected units of work to fit the school's mixed-year group classes. Class RE books are used to showcase the knowledge acquired by pupils. Interactive displays promote critical thinking, celebrate diversity, and magnify the vision. Older pupils understand the importance of studying world religions and how their learning will help them in the future. Recently developed assessment systems enable teachers to scaffold learning so all can flourish in RE.

Pupils and adults are enabled to shine like stars and flourish at Northill. Leaders have created an environment where all aspire to be the best they can be. The strong sense of belonging and community ensures that everyone at this small village school can flourish and achieve together.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Good	
	Through monitoring, leaders' assessment of RE teaching and learning is accurate. In lessons, pupils make good progress and work is of a good standard. Tailored support enables vulnerable pupils to achieve well in RE. Units of work on world religions are detailed and enable pupils to flourish in their learning. Leaders take account of up-to-date thinking and developments in RE and select parts of this to improve RE provision.			
Information				
School	Northill Church of England Academy	Inspection date	20 January 2023	
URN	148411	VC/VA/ Academy	Academy	
Diocese/District	St Albans	Pupils on roll	53	
Headteacher	Michelle Sleath			
Chair of Governors	Mark Woodman			
Inspector	Toby Long	No.	896	