

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

<b>Coniston Church of England Primary School</b>	
Address	Shepherd's Bridge, Coniston, LA21 8AL
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>'Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' Joshua 1:9</p> <p>Coniston Church of England Primary is a welcoming, supportive school rooted in faith and love where everyone flourishes through the Christian values of service, stewardship, respect and perseverance.</p> <p>Learning together within our school family, our community and God's wider world, we draw inspiration from our beautiful, awe inspiring, Lakeland setting.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Christian vision is clear in its aspirational aims for its community. Associated values, such as stewardship and service support the realisation of the vision. The school community draws succour from the vision and its biblical roots.</li> <li>• Christian love and trust form the basis for effective relationships. This makes a significant difference to the everyday lives of the whole school community.</li> <li>• Collective worship is engaging and inclusive and opportunities to reflect are valued by adults and pupils alike. However, there are limited times or places beyond worship in which to have moments of quiet spiritual reflection during the school day. Likewise, there are few occasions for pupils to plan and lead worship.</li> <li>• The introduction of a new religious education (RE) syllabus supports pupils' use of big questions in a safe and supportive environment.</li> <li>• Pupils are well-briefed about challenges effecting the wider world and fundraising is a regular feature in the life of the school. However, pupils have few opportunities to engage in in social action that challenges injustice and champions pertinent causes.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase pupils' involvement in planning and leading collective worship to support their spiritual development.</li> <li>• Extend opportunities for personal prayer and reflection to strengthen pupils' wellbeing and spirituality.</li> <li>• Facilitate pupils' engagement with social action activities in order for them to become effective global citizens.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

The Christian vision works well within the context of this small, rural school. The vision is clear in its desire for all to flourish. It is strongly supported by four carefully selected Christian values. These values of service, stewardship, respect and perseverance are key themes running through the life of the school. Consequently, the vision is at the heart of encouraging this school community to be aspirational. The associated Bible verse resonates with pupils. They selected the verse and they draw upon it for strength in times of need. Therefore, pupils recognise the difference the vision makes to them, using words such as 'braver', 'stronger' and 'confident'. One pupil accurately described the vision's impact, commenting 'You're never alone because God is with you'.

The vision is a thread that weaves through the daily life of the school. It is evident in policies and informs strategic plans, which in turn are lived out in practice. As a result, the school thrives through mutually beneficial partnerships across the community. There are strong links with the both the local Anglican and Methodist churches. Likewise, the school's federation with the local community high school brings significant benefits. The school's Christian foundation is both respected and encouraged through the federation, hence collaborative working is exemplary.

Governors and senior leaders secure continued school improvement through robust systems for self-evaluation. This includes assessing the school's effectiveness as a Church school. The vision regularly drives bold financial decisions, responding to specific pupil needs, enabling them to flourish. The curriculum reflects the vision's goal. For example, pupils thrive through thoughtfully planned, enriched learning experiences, such as a residential visit to Manchester. Leaders are committed to developing the staff and governance and they access regular training, including specific sessions run by the local diocese. As a result, staff, governors and church wardens understand the nature of Church school education.

The vision's aspirational theme is highly supportive of pupils. Hence staff use the Christian values to empower pupils in being courageous. For example, a soft toy, that is associated with key values, is used to give pupils reassurance in overcoming challenges. This demonstrates the impact of the vision in growing pupil resilience. Pupils are motivated to look outwards and take action. There are examples of pupil-initiated fundraising activities. The school also facilitates pupils in providing support locally, through initiatives such as litter picking and helping at community lunches. Weekly news sessions ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of current world events, such as a recent earthquake. However, pupils have few opportunities to respond to these issues, so that they can champion a cause, locally or globally.

The school's vision embodies love and trust, resulting in exceptionally strong relationships. Parents, staff and pupils correctly speak of how they feel cared for. Parents give poignant examples of the school staff going above and beyond expectations during the pandemic. Staff are approachable and the inclusive ethos is successful in ensuring that no one feels judged. This extends to the approach to behaviour, which is rooted in dignity and respect and achieved through listening and understanding. Hence, forgiveness and reconciliation are effective on the rare occasions where there is conflict. The school has well-established links with a school in Ghana. This is one aspect of how the school supports pupils in their knowledge of the lives of others. Respect is modelled by staff and expected to be mirrored by pupils. The phrase 'we're all the same on the inside', is used by pupils to explain how everyone should be treated. For this reason, pupils have a good understanding of diversity and are respectful of difference.

Collective worship is a precious time for the whole school community. One member of staff rightly commented that she ‘values the time to sit and be, and watch and just think’. Worship is well-planned around the church year and Christian values. As a result, worship deepens pupils’ understanding of the vision and values and how they can apply them to their own lives. Pupils enjoy the variety of worship and the school is well-supported with weekly visits from clergy. Consequently, pupils have a growing familiarity with church language and traditions. Worship strives to be invitational and the weekly routines make it accessible for all. Within worship there are opportunities for prayer and reflection, including pupils being invited to share spontaneous prayer. Pupils spoke of using prayer at bedtime to talk to God about their day and any worries they may have. However, there are a few opportunities for personal reflection beyond worship. This and a lack of planning for spiritual development within the curriculum hinders opportunities for pupils’ spiritual growth. Leaders value feedback on worship provided by pupils. Nevertheless, they have limited opportunities in which to plan or lead worship.

Pupils enjoy RE, resulting in good levels of engagement with the subject. RE is effective in embedding the vision. Consequently, the newly adopted curriculum ensures that pupils are appropriately challenged when exploring big questions. The well-planned curriculum meets the requirements outlined in the Statement of Entitlement for RE. It also assists pupils in their learning about Christianity, major religions and worldviews. It builds on prior knowledge, enabling pupils in recalling key facts from lessons in previous years. As a result, pupils make pertinent connections, for example linking Holocaust Day to earlier work in RE. Lessons provide a safe place where pupils know that their opinions are valued. Therefore, they are confident and enthusiastic in delving deeper into theological and philosophical ideas. This was exemplified in how pupils reflected upon the biblical context of parables. When studying the parable of the mustard seed, they shared thoughtful ideas and questions whilst contemplating their own growth and nurture. Regular monitoring and assessment secure rigour in the subject. Staff have access to regular training, as well as effective support from the subject leader. Equally, they are confident in teaching the subject, ensuring good quality provision.

Coniston is a good Church school, where the Christian vision is lived out on a daily basis, making a tangible difference. One parent accurately reflected Coniston school’s positive impact on the community. They stated that it did not just have the label of being a Church school but ‘followed it through and used it’.

Information			
School	Coniston Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	13 February 2023
URN	112279	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Carlisle	Pupils on roll	61
Headteacher	Danielle Fitzsimons		
Chair of Governors	Joyce Hallam		
Inspector	Jo Williams	No.	863