

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Whittington Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Station Road, Whittington, SY11 4DA
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	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Good

School's vision
<p>Living and learning with God by our side.</p> <p>Living each day 'in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Learning in truth with an appreciation of the diversity of intelligence and the whole person. With God by our side, we are guided and accompanied by the highest good, as God's children, in all that we do.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's Christian vision is firmly rooted in the Bible. It strongly infuses all areas of the life, mission and work of the school. This creates a positive, caring environment in which pupils and adults flourish. • Opportunities for reflection are woven into the daily life of the school, enabling staff and pupils to grow spiritually. However, planned activities to explore the language and meaning of spirituality are not widely evident. • Whilst pupils have some knowledge of difference and diversity, opportunities to extend their experience and develop their understanding is not sufficient. • Excellent collective worship is invitational, vibrant and highly impactful. A thoughtfully crafted programme is integrated into daily worship. This gives a richness of experience and enables reflection and opportunities for deep understanding. • Religious education (RE) is skilfully and enthusiastically led. Pupils gain significant knowledge of Christianity and world faiths and have a strong vocabulary to support their learning. However, there are limited opportunities for them to develop a sufficient depth of understanding about the effect of faith on believers.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend opportunities in which pupils can explore difference and diversity. This will underpin the knowledge and skills needed to prepare them for life in modern Britain and beyond. • Develop and embed ways in which pupils can build connections and make sense of the impact of faith on believers. This will enable pupils to understand and critically reflect on religious practices and traditions. • Promote in the curriculum, a deeper, richer understanding of spirituality. Further enhance this by cultivating a shared vocabulary to enable everyone to articulate its meaning and impact on themselves and others.



Inspection findings

Whittington school's deeply embedded Christian vision establishes and promotes a warm, caring community in which all thrive and live well together. The vision is soundly underpinned by key biblical teaching and principles. It is embraced by all. This cultivates a happy, family atmosphere which is highly inclusive. The vision is strongly reflected in policies and practice and its impact is carefully evaluated by leaders and governors. As a result, meaningful development plans are in place with their effectiveness being regularly monitored at governors' meetings. Beneficial relationships with the church, community, local authority and diocese are well established. The school's passion for living the vision and for inclusion is evident in many ways. A key example is The Hub, the school's dedicated provision for pupils requiring significant support for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Staff and governors have relevant and up to date training. This enables the school to continue to grow and develop its Christian distinctiveness effectively.

School leaders have ensured that their ambitious curriculum is shaped by its vision and meets the learning, emotional and spiritual needs of pupils. This has resulted in provision which motivates and engages pupils who enjoy school and achieve well. Pupils who attend The Hub, and others with SEND, benefit from high quality support from a dedicated team. All are fully integrated into the life of the school in an environment that embraces difference. This underscores the school's firm foundation, based on dignity and respect, where each individual is valued as one of God's Children. A broad range of extracurricular activities has a strong uptake by pupils. This enriches their experience and helps all to grow academically and spiritually. There are many opportunities for reflection within worship and in lessons. Pupils appreciate these times for quiet contemplation and thinking about their own and others' lives. Further openings for spiritual development enable them to explore different mindsets and respond creatively. However, a planned approach for pupils to foster a depth of understanding about the language and meaning of spirituality is not widely evident.

Wellbeing and strong emotional and mental health is a key priority for pupils and adults. The vision-inspired atmosphere, which pervades the school, promotes this through strong, caring, mutually supportive relationships which are abundantly evident. Well-targeted pastoral care and interventions ensure that no one who may be struggling goes unnoticed or unsupported. Staff value and appreciate the effective ways in which leaders and colleagues encourage and look out for one another.

The school is a calm place where behaviour is good, and the community lives and works well together. Forgiveness and reconciliation have a strong place throughout the school. Where problems arise, they are effectively resolved and relationships are restored. This reflects the vision and helps pupils to feel secure. Teaching about safe and appropriate connections supports pupils, enabling them to value themselves and others. It helps them to understand and prioritise dignity and respect as they establish and maintain healthy relationships. The school is located in an area which has very low ethnic diversity. In supporting pupils to prepare for life in a diverse world, the school ensures that a broad and representative range of resources are used. This includes literature and displays as well as work relating to historical and contemporary individuals. Because of this, pupils demonstrate a tangible understanding and celebration of difference. There are very limited opportunities for pupils to deepen their first-hand experience of more diverse areas and places of worship.

The vision and values promote positive choices about living, learning, and dealing with difficulties. As a result, there is a culture in the school of aiming to be the best you can be. This blends seamlessly with pupils seeking to live out the Christian idea of being the person God intended. The development of character, resilience and overcoming barriers are




emphasised in the school. This equips pupils to look beyond themselves, make positive choices and build perseverance. In exploring issues beyond their own area, everyone is encouraged to think globally and to consider issues affecting those who are disadvantaged. Support for the local foodbank is a particular focus for the school. Through this and other charitable work, pupils hear about issues and concerns in relation to disadvantage and injustice. This is developing their understanding about courageous advocacy for social change, and helping them to make their own response. Pupils of all ages demonstrate their reaction to the exploitation of God's world through a variety of actions within and beyond the school.

The school's invitational collective worship is exceptional because it is well crafted to be relevant, vibrant and engaging. The vision, and its associated values, are woven into a programme which follows the Church year. Worship is relevant as it responds to events which are happening within and beyond the school. Because content is shared, and very well received by parents via social media, it has much impact throughout the community. The school loves to sing together which enhances the spiritual flourishing of adults and pupils. The innovative use of sign language by all demonstrates the profoundly inclusive nature of worship. As each week's theme is explored day by day, there are opportunities for pupils to respond through discussion, reflection and prayer. The use of liturgy, the Bible, teachings of Jesus, and a focus on festivals, brings variety. This enables pupils to understand different ways in which Christianity is a living and diverse faith. Local clergy and a Christian youth worker are regularly involved in leading and following up worship. This helps pupils' development of their personal beliefs and supports the mutually beneficial links which have been established with the church and community. Pupils have gained an age-appropriate understanding of what Christians understand as the Trinity. This is acknowledged through the lighting of candles and in the words of the Grace.

RE is enthusiastically led, well-resourced and is firmly established as a core subject in the school. It meets local requirements as well as those of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The carefully structured plan for the subject, and appropriate training for staff, means that pupils gain a clear knowledge of Christianity and world faiths. They have an especially strong subject vocabulary. Because lessons are interesting and varied, they are motivated in the subject and enjoy the work. Pupils show a limited understanding of the impact of faith on followers. This holds back their ability to critically reflect on ways in which faith impacts the lives of believers. The use of big questions provides opportunities, which pupils enjoy, to explore philosophical questions and responses.



	The effectiveness of RE is		Good	
	<p>All pupils, including those who have SEND, respond well to RE lessons. They make good progress and enjoy their studies. This is because the curriculum is up to date and relevant. Monitoring highlights that RE is consistently taught well. Consequently, pupils, including those considered to be vulnerable, find the subject lively and engaging and flourish in RE. They are particularly motivated by opportunities to engage in discussion. Staff are regularly trained by the well-qualified subject leader.</p>			
Information				
School	Whittington Church of England VA Primary School	Inspection date	13 February 2023	
URN	123549	VC/VA/ Academy	Voluntary aided	
Diocese/District	Lichfield	Pupils on roll	228	
Headteacher	Carl Rogers			
Chair of Governors	Mark Fosbrook			
Inspector	Peter Coates	No.	937	