

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Barkston and Syston Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Church Street, Barkston, Grantham, NG32 2NB
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
We seek to spark curiosity, develop wisdom and encourage all to know they can make a positive impact in the world. Through our shared Christian values we journey together towards the flourishing of all 'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works.' Matthew 5 v16
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deeply embedded Christian vision is central to the school. It impacts positively. As a result, adults and pupils journey together empowering each one to 'let their light shine', fulfil their potential and flourish. • Relationships and partnerships are a palpable strength of this deeply Christian and happy school. Everyone understands the importance of advocacy. They make courageous decisions to support others, leading to a mature understanding of selfless service. Whilst there are strong partnerships with the local parish church insufficient opportunities are taken to share the work of the school more widely in the local community. • There is a nourishing understanding of spirituality and wellbeing that permeates the school community. A focus on big questions significantly contributes to this. Whilst prayer does take place, opportunities for pupils to contribute personally to the prayer life of the school are less developed. • Collective worship is a joyful and enlivening moment in the school day. It supports the school community in their understanding of how everyone can 'shine their light'. Insufficient opportunity is given to focus on the cycle of traditions in the Christian calendar. • Religious Education (RE) is well- led and well-resourced. Pupils enjoy the subject and are clear of its benefits as citizens of a multicultural and multi-faith world. They are less secure in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a worldwide religion.



Areas for development

- Facilitate opportunities with the local community to enable pupils and adults to 'shine their light'. This is to further develop their role as courageous agents for change.
- Increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cycle of traditions in the Church year. This is so they develop a deeper awareness of what it means to be part of a worldwide Christian Church.
- Consider ways in which pupils can more actively participate in the prayer life of the school, to further support their spiritual development.

Inspection findings

This is a Church school where everyone journeys together and all can flourish. Pupils are delightful young citizens with a mature desire to let 'their light shine'. They, along with the adults in this school community, are passionate about their work for and with each other. 'Filling each other's bucket' is one of the ways the vision is made real. Pupils and adults look for opportunities to commend one another. The vision's often-repeated associated values, which include kindness, respect and responsibility, are the foundations of this nourishing environment. Pupils are awarded gem points for 'shining their light'. Those achieving the most gem points choose to organise events to help others rather than a reward for themselves. A fund-raising event for Ukraine being a recent example. All this sets a strong foundation for academic, personal and spiritual growth.

Leaders live out the vision with commitment and demonstrable impact. Staff are nurtured to develop their skills and interests. This is highly valued and leads to their flourishing. Professional development is a priority. Good practice learnt is shared for the benefit of all. Leaders ensure that staff are supported in their personal lives and in return staff are warm in their praise. One commented 'Since starting work here I feel like a different person and a different teacher'. The vision of helping all to shine is transformational. It helps pupils and adults alike to overcome barriers and flourish.

The vision inspires curriculum developments. Adults and pupils explore with curiosity and learn from one another. Pupils develop as world citizens, building their resilience and become respectful communicators. Alongside times of quiet and reflection, responding to weekly 'big questions' significantly contributes to pupils' and adults' spiritual development. Questions such as 'Which value is most important and why?' enable everyone to reflect deeply and share ideas in a respectful way. One pupil responded, 'love is the most important to me because in showing that value you show all the values at once.'

The school enjoys effective relationships with its key partners. Foundation governors are active in school. They provide input to collective worship especially through weekly 'Open the Book' sessions. Governors know the school well. Their monitoring brings both encouragement and challenge. The school is currently not actively involved with other local community partners. The relationship with the diocese is beneficial. Recent developments in RE result from specialist support provided. Pupils benefit from the partnership with KYRA, a voluntary alliance of schools in Lincolnshire. They attend alliance events, meeting with pupils in other schools. Learning about the wellbeing benefits of having school pets resulted in guinea pigs being introduced to the school.

Pastoral care and support for pupils with additional needs are highly effective. As a result of staff expertise, pupils who have struggled to cope in other schools engage well and flourish. The considerable experience of the staff team drives inclusion and the successful integration of those who might find learning challenging. Parents affirm this. They speak positively of the ways in which their children 'can be the best version of themselves'.


Relationships across all ages are founded on respect and kindness. There is a palpable sense of harmony and mutual respect. Many pupils see kindness as a key value enabling them to see the needs of others and respond. They say this is a way to show respect. Carrying out acts of service without expecting reward is deeply understood. Pupils regularly go into the neighbouring parish church to clean it without making known what they are doing. They say that carrying out actions like this means they 'shine their light'. A range of issues are championed from the environment to



food banks, demonstrating pupils are agents of change. Both at home and at school, pupils are enthusiastic advocates to improve the lives of others. Volunteering to litter pick in a local park and arranging a collection of toothbrushes and toothpaste for a food bank are examples. The role of pupils as leaders is strong. This includes collective worship, school council and the environment. They are clear that their leadership skills will be of benefit in the future. Living well together is seen at every turn. This is a direct result of pupils' deeply held belief that they 'shine' when they support others. Attendance is very good because pupils look forward to the challenge and creativity of each day. They appreciate that disagreements may occur but understand how to resolve them. There is a rich appreciation of forgiveness and reconciliation. The need for which is understood in school, family and broader contexts.

Acts of worship unite the school. They express the vision of a thriving community. Worship equips everyone to 'shine their light'. It is well-planned and has relevant Bible links. Pupils are well grounded in biblical stories applying the messages to their own lives. This contributes to a deep understanding of the values. 'Stories in the Bible help us to know how we can live by our values' typifies comments made. The structure of worship involves greetings, time for reflection and joyful singing. Whilst there is some acknowledgement of the cycle of traditions in the Church year this is not well developed. Everyone is offered opportunity to engage with worship which is fully inclusive. Pupils assist with the planning and monitoring, as a result of this they feel involved. Prayer is important in the life of the school. An invitation to pray is offered at lunchtime, in collective worship and the end of the school day. These add to the ethos of love that surrounds everyone. As yet pupils do not have regular opportunity to contribute their own reflections to the prayer life of the school.

Pupils enjoy RE. The sensitive approach to teaching a range of religions and worldviews enhances their appreciation of difference and diversity. Knowledge and understanding of how these beliefs are lived out is strong. They say that RE helps them to 'think about and be respectful of others.' Pupils awareness of Christianity as a diverse global religion is not so well developed. Lessons are thought-provoking and based on enquiry. Teaching is skilful and draws out profound responses from pupils. When reflecting on the Christmas story one pupil commented 'when God came down as Jesus it was to improve the relationship he had with mankind'.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Good	
	<p>The quality of teaching and learning is at least good and is informed by local and national thinking on the subject. This is evidenced by school leaders and verified during the inspection. Work is well matched to pupils prior learning. As a result of this, and the engaging curriculum, pupils of all abilities thrive in RE and make good progress. Work in books and on displays confirms pupils flourish in the subject.</p>			
Information				
School	Barkston and Syston Church of England VA Primary School	Inspection date	27 April 2023	
URN	120689	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	
Diocese/District	Lincoln	Pupils on roll	89	
Headteacher	Rebecca Lyon			
Chair of Governors	Cora Townson			
Inspector	Jane Lewis	No.	27	