

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Old Hutton Church of England Primary School	
Address	Old Hutton, Kendal, LA8 0NQ
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>Life in all its fullness is about living a varied life full of learning, growing, helping, reward, joy, excitement, love and caring for each other. At school we help each other learn how to do this. As a Church School we also look to Jesus to help and guide us.</p> <p>'Learning for life in all its fullness' John 10:10</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision drives an ambitious, exciting curriculum. Character development is a strength. Although spiritual growth is prioritised, a shared understanding of spirituality is not established. • The Christian vision is powerfully expressed in the sensitively, tailored support provided to pupils with additional needs. • Collective worship consistently inspires pupils to put the school's Christian values into action. Involvement from the local church enriches worship and deepens pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions. • Warm, harmonious relationships are a strong feature of this happy, loving Church school. A process of Christian forgiveness and reconciliation is embedded. However, this is not explicit in written policies. • Religious education (RE) contributes to pupils' understanding of diversity. Leaders are ensuring that the curriculum is well sequenced. However, assessment is not precise enough to track the key knowledge and skills that pupils are learning.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the assessment system in RE. This is to enable teachers to know precisely how well pupils are learning. Plans can then build on what pupils already know and can do. • Agree an approach to spirituality that is understood by all teachers. This will allow deeper spiritual experiences to be planned across a range of subjects. • Ensure that the Christian vision explicitly shapes all school policies. This will strengthen the impact of the vision and help to sustain the school's Christian distinctiveness.

Inspection findings

Ambitions are high at this small Church school. The deeply embedded Christian vision 'learning for life in all its fullness' steers every aspect of school life. Pupils flourish as happy, confident individuals who engage fully with all that the school offers. Inspired by the vision's biblical roots, there is a shared determination for every pupil to thrive. This includes having the skills to cope well with life's ups and downs. One governor voiced, 'We aim for each pupil to live a life in colour, not in black and white.'

This Church school's journey of improvement has been revitalised since the appointment of the headteacher. Leaders have ensured that parents, governors, pupils and staff all understand the Christian vision and support its aspirations. The governing board offer an appropriate level of support and challenge. They are knowledgeable about Church school education and are actively involved in the life of the school. Evaluations of Church school effectiveness are undertaken and new systems to sharpen the self-evaluation cycle are being introduced. The enthusiastic local vicar ensures that a mutually beneficial partnership exists between the church and the school. This strong relationship helps the school to sustain its Christian distinctiveness.

The Christian vision has shaped an ambitious, exciting curriculum. Pupils fully engage with a wide range of learning experiences, exciting visits and extra-curricular activities. Character development is prioritised. Across a range of subjects, pupils explore issues linked to disadvantage, deprivation and exploitation of the natural world. This inspires pupils to show compassion to others and challenge injustice and inequality both locally and globally. The school has strong international partnerships. For example, pupils have successfully taken action to improve the lives of students at a school in Senegal. Through involvement in the Kendal Mountain Festival, pupils were inspired to start a boot recycling scheme for the disadvantaged. Pupils are vocal about their aspirations to make the world a better place.

Pastoral support is exemplary. The Christian vision is powerfully expressed in the sensitively tailored support provided to pupils with additional needs. Teaching assistants go the extra mile to support the most vulnerable pupils. Their support is compassionate and loving in nature. Pupils assessed to have special educational needs and/or disabilities access the full curriculum. Parents are lavish in their praise for the school. One parent commented, 'This isn't a tick box school, staff really care.'

Pupils strive to live out the school's Christian values. These are acted on daily and bring the Christian vision to life. The result is a happy, loving school where pupils build strong friendships and show care and respect to each other. Difference is celebrated. A sense of belonging and togetherness are key features of the school community. When friendships fracture, pupils forgive readily and are keen to engage in restorative conversations. This practice of Christian forgiveness and reconciliation is embedded practice although not explicit in related policies.

Provision for pupils' mental health and wellbeing is a strong feature of the school. Issues are quickly identified and specialist support provided. For example, an emotional literacy support assistant and a counsellor offer interventions. Walk and talk sessions defuse situations and enable pupils to share their problems and worries. Staff feel highly valued by strong Christian leadership. The information, support and training provided to new members of staff means that they settle quickly. Staff report being treated with compassion, patience and care.

RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of difference and diversity. The curriculum marries together the Understanding Christianity Resource and the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus. This ensures that pupils learn about Christianity and a range of world

religions. Through a big questions approach pupils are challenged to reflect and be curious. Visits from faith representatives and involvement in festival celebrations and multi-faith days bring learning to life. For example, pupils have a good knowledge of Muslim prayer traditions following a talk from a school parent. RE is on a journey of improvement. The subject leader and senior leadership team are currently improving curriculum sequencing. This is to ensure that knowledge and skills build cumulatively across the school. Leaders are aware that the assessment system is not well matched to curriculum expectations. This means that teachers lack clarity about how well pupils are learning.

Collective worship is a special part of each day and highly valued by all. It is a time when pupils are consistently inspired to live out the school's Christian values. They explain how this changes their behaviour and attitudes. All gain from collective worship. Some parents express a wish to be invited on a more regular basis. Those leading worship are aware of the need for it to be consistently invitational in nature. The local clergy team lead worship weekly. Their involvement deepens pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions. The Christian vision is brought to life through music, singing, drama and the Bible. The church building is located next to the school. This provides a spiritual setting where the whole school can gather together as a family. There is a good balance between pupil and adult led worship. In Key Stage 2, pupils take turns to independently plan and lead worship each week. Their planning drives the school's values. It does not always encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. The elected collective worship committee have a key role in planning and leading church worship and special services. Pupils are involved in evaluating worship but it is unclear how this consistently leads to improvement.

The learning environment supports spiritual growth. Pupils have access to class reflection areas and are proud of their wellbeing garden. Within each day, lives are enriched through regular times to meditate, pray and respond to deep questioning. Pupils access spiritual experiences across each day and within collective worship. However, there is no shared approach to spirituality. Spiritual experiences are not planned across the breadth of the curriculum. This means that chances to deepen spiritual growth are missed.

With the Christian vision as their guide, pupils live life to the full at this small Church school. The Christian vision has shaped an ambitious curriculum and drives a culture of love, compassion and belonging. As a result, pupils flourish and develop a toolkit for an abundant life. As one pupil simply observed, 'This school teaches us how to be.'

Information			
School	Old Hutton Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	9 March 2023
URN	112263	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Carlisle	Pupils on roll	114
Headteacher	Nick Turley		
Chair of Governors	Nicola Hills		
Inspector	Alison Lloyd	No.	2141