

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Skirlaugh Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Dorset Avenue, Skirlaugh, HU11 5EB
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>A caring Christian learning community where everyone is valued.</p> <p>Jesus said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' Luke 10:27</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision, based on the words of Jesus 'to love your neighbour as yourself', results in a deeply welcoming school. Here all pupils and staff are loved, nurtured and supported to succeed as well-rounded individuals. • Leaders' bold decisions create an ambitious and relevant curriculum. This ensures pupils have spiritual opportunities to explore and articulate ethical and diverse issues. • Well known school values help pupils make positive changes about how they live and behave. However, they are not secure in their understanding and confidence in themselves as leaders of change. • Worship plays a key part in pupils' understanding of the relevance today of the school's Christian vision and associated values. Opportunities for pupils to plan worship are less developed, as is leaders' evaluation of worship. • The religious education (RE) curriculum has recently been revised to ensure pupils explore religions through the lenses of believing, living and thinking. Pupils are developing age appropriate skills of enquiry and critical thinking. This however is not always reflected in their books.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship and for governors to monitor its effectiveness. This is to widen the sense of ownership of collective worship within school. • Broaden opportunities for pupils to engage in meaningful social action and to challenge injustice. This is to inspire them to make a difference to the world in which they live. • Embed recent developments in RE. Further develop systems for assessing RE. This is to enhance the way teachers know how well pupils are doing and their next steps for learning.

Inspection findings

The strong sense of Christian community shines out at Skirlaugh School. The school is a loving, caring and welcoming place. This springs from the Christian vision for the school founded on the Bible message 'love your neighbour as yourself'. Care and support is fundamental to relationships at all levels. The school's Christian vision encapsulates deeply embedded principles that have characterised the school over many years. The vision and its associated values have remained a golden thread during recent changes in leadership.

The senior leadership team ensure that the Christian vision drives decisions and policies. This means pupils have opportunities to broaden their horizons. Bold decisions by leaders ensure that the curriculum has the school's vision and context at its heart. This provides rich opportunities for pupils to learn about the diverse world in which they are growing up. Pupils are provided with a range of resources and text to support their learning. They are encouraged to think about world events from different viewpoints, for example when Year 6 pupils investigated the Treaty of Versailles. The curriculum is enhanced with a wide variety of visits and extracurricular activities. This creates a culture of ambitiousness for all, using many varied gifts. These include choir, a wide range of sporting activities and forest school, which inspire enthusiasm and engagement. The school has a clear understanding of spiritual development. Subject leaders ensure that rich spiritual opportunities are built into all curriculum plans. Calm working environments mean that all pupils, including those considered to be vulnerable flourish both academically and spiritually.

Inspired by the vision, highly effective pastoral care and wellbeing is given high priority. Every child is welcomed and nurtured as an individual. Those with additional needs are treated with love and respect and nurtured to make good progress. Pupils' talk excitedly about the activities they took part in during 'World Mental Health Week'. They know the importance of sharing their feelings with a trusted adult or friend. They value the work of the school emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) when they have a problem. Leaders' decisions to prioritise additional ELSA training impacts positively on ensuring good mental health throughout the school. Attendance, and the engagement of pupils identified as vulnerable, has improved through a daily early morning sports club. Older pupils thrive with leadership opportunities to help to run the club. They value this opportunity to support younger pupils and talk about how friendships made continue into the playground. Good playground behaviour further demonstrates the strong family ethos of this school. In response to the vision, any behavioural difficulties are reflected upon with pupils, so that they develop an understanding of forgiveness.

Well informed governors work in close partnership with the headteacher and leaders to enhance the effectiveness of Skirlaugh as a Church school. The distinctly Christian vision drives governors' strategic decisions and the way they support the school leadership team. Plans are in place to further improve governor monitoring of the impact. Leaders have clear priorities for developing further as a Church school. They have made financial decisions to reduce class sizes and move to single year classes. This has had a positive impact on pupil progress and staff work load. Staff at all levels value the way school leaders prioritise good mental health and wellbeing for all. Strong links with the diocese support the ongoing development as a Church school.

Opportunities for pupil leadership are underdeveloped and limited to small groups of pupils. School council talk of how they organise charity events that have been chosen by staff, such as Children in Need. Pupils do not have meaningful opportunities to select charities for themselves. They would however value the challenge of suggesting ideas for themselves to support local and global issues they learn about. The school has recently engaged with the

Global Neighbours Scheme to further support pupils' work as advocates of change.

Worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision and values and is a central part of each day for both staff and pupils. It is invitational, offering everyone the opportunity to engage. It provides time for togetherness, reflection and moments of stillness that are valued by all. Worship is a valued opportunity for pupils and adults to grow spiritually. Prayer and reflection are regular parts of the school day. Pupils make effective use of the reflection areas in the classrooms and the outdoor reflection space. They understand that lighting three candles helps them to understand what Christians believe as God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although there is a Church team of pupils, their involvement in leadership of worship is underdeveloped. Pupils are not regularly involved in planning, leading or evaluating. Worship is well supported by the local vicar and foundation governor who take a lead on a weekly basis. Parents and pupils value the opportunities offered by holding the main Christian festivals in Church. The partnership with the parish Church is strong. Sunday services are currently being held in school as building work takes place at Church. Friday celebration worship is held in high esteem by the whole school community. It is well supported by parents, who join in celebrating the way pupils demonstrate the school values during the week. There is no formal monitoring of worship, consequently leaders are not clear of the impact it has on pupils and staff.

There is a clear focus on improving the standards in religious education. The new RE lead works closely with the diocese and local faith leaders to improve her knowledge. Following the results of staff surveys, plans are in place to improve their knowledge and confidence. The curriculum has been developed to ensure a good balance of theology, philosophy and human science. This is explored through the lenses of believing, living and thinking. Although only recently introduced, there are effective and ambitious curriculum plans in place. RE lessons provide pupils with a safe space to explore a range of ideas and to learn to disagree well as they consider the viewpoints of others. For example in discussion about whether Mother Theresa should have been made a saint. Pupils demonstrate an informed understanding of the religions and concepts they have covered. Some of the marking in books does not enable pupils to extend and deepen their learning. There is often too much focus on written outcomes as an indication of progress rather than capturing practical activities and discussions. Systems to assess how well pupils learn are in the early stages of development.

Information			
School	Skirlaugh Church of England VC Primary School	Inspection date	9 March 2023
URN	117993	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	York	Pupils on roll	146
Headteacher	Philip Hardcastle		
Chair of Governors	Phil Wright		
Inspector	Susan Thackray	No.	979