

Strand 2: Wisdom, knowledge, and skills

Focus questions

- How well the school's staff and leaders apply their Christian vision wisely and sensitively to ensure that the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities meet the academic and spiritual needs of all learners.

Grade descriptors

- The school has a broad and balanced ambitious curriculum which is shaped by its Christian vision, an understanding of its context and a recognition that each pupil is a unique individual. This ensures the rounded development of the whole child through academic achievement and spiritual development. Leaders use ethical arguments to justify making bold curriculum decisions to that ensure pupils experience an exciting and relevant curriculum that enables them to flourish.
- School leaders and teachers explain how the Christian vision underpins curriculum and assessment decisions and illustrate the positive impact that these decisions have on children and young people's learning and development. This includes pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and the most able. As a priority, the school is enabling its vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who experience barriers when accessing remote learning, to flourish.
- The school has a clear and secure understanding of and approach to the spiritual development of all that is distinguishable from social, moral and cultural development. Equally rich spiritual opportunities regardless of age exist across the curriculum and these enable the development of curiosity through questioning that helps adults and pupils to explore and articulate spiritual and ethical issues. Pupils value learning and enjoy questioning, listening and responding creatively across a range of subjects.

Points to note

Opportunities

Judge how far leaders have acted wisely and sensitively in offering opportunities. Are they available for all? Are they context-appropriate and ambitious? Do leaders consider the opportunities to be wisely selected for both the taught and hidden curriculum?

Curriculum: The knowledge, and skills gained through the curriculum is the way pupils flourish academically. It should provide a model that sets out how leaders expect pupils to progress. Explore the curriculum as a whole with leaders:

- How do they consider it ambitious?
- How, given the context of time and place, does the curriculum recognise the needs of the community? How does it fit their vision?
- How has the vision informed curriculum decisions?
- How have leaders decided to assess pupils' progress through the curriculum? The impact on learning is not about progress from point A to point B. It is about how far pupils' learning has been fostered (their education widened) and they know more. It is NOT about published or school data but about learning.
- What information is the school using as a basis for its claims about pupil progress?

Priority must be given to the vulnerable and how the school enabled them to flourish in difficult times.

Spiritual development

- How does the school define spiritual development? How do they know how pupils are developing spiritually? How well do staff understand this?
- Pupils' questioning of all around them is key and whether they have a sense of there being a wider dimension to their lives.

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Possible LOE

Possible questions to pursue LOE in the context of the school:

LOE: The extent to which the school applied the Christian vision in devising its curriculum

- How far has the curriculum been tailored to the context of the school at this time?
- How do individual subject curricula take the vision into account?
- How does this apply to extra-curricular activities?
- In what ways is the curriculum ambitious, wise and sensitive?

LOE: How the school is enabling its pupils who are vulnerable and those with SEND to flourish

- How does the vision support vulnerable pupils to flourish academically?
- How does the vision shape the curriculum for pupils with SEND and those who are vulnerable?
- In what ways is this wise and sensitive?
- When pupils struggle, how do teachers help them?

LOE: How the school encourages and supports the spiritual development of both pupils and adults

- How did the school arrive at its definition of spiritual development?
- How is the school's approach explained to pupils and staff?
- What sort of impact does it have on pupils/adults and how does the school know?
- How do deeper opportunities exist as pupils mature? – how does the school define deeper?

Suggested activities to pursue LOE

Discuss with governors:

- who sets the strategic direction for the curriculum.
- how they know it is implemented and having intended impact.

Discuss with senior leaders:

- what they intended for the curriculum, role of the vision and how this has played out in individual subjects.
- how they have planned an ambitious curriculum that enables pupils to make progress through it

Discuss with curriculum leaders:

- their understanding of the vision and how it plays out in their own curriculum.

Discuss with pupils:

- how they see the vision (which you may have to tell them) translated into what they learn over time.

This is critical especially for the vulnerable.

Discuss with SENCO, EWO, LSAs:

- how the vision is directing their work, how they see its impact and where they wish to develop it further.
- how the school has enabled its vulnerable to flourish (ask for relevant and recent examples).

Discussions with adults

- Ask parents how school has enabled children to flourish and how they define 'flourishing'.
- What staff understand by spiritual development and how school has fostered their own development.