

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Helen's Church of England Primary School, Hemsworth	
Address	Highfield Road, Hemsworth, Pontefract, WF9 4EG
School vision	
<p>Our school, together with family, church and community, offers a stable rock for learning, resilience and aspiration as we travel through life.</p> <p>We commit to create a dynamic environment, with Christian values at the heart, where the unique nature of each individual is respected and nurtured to enable life in all its fullness.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision is deeply embedded and lived out across all aspects of school life. This results in an exceptionally compassionate, supportive and professional community defined by its Christian distinctiveness. Senior leaders and governors, with the unwavering support of the Academy Trust (MAT), are totally committed to making the Christian vision a lived reality. • The school's creatively planned, innovative and personalised curriculum, extracurricular offer and environment are designed so that every pupil can flourish. It facilitates even the most vulnerable to become independent, resilient learners. • Spiritual development is intrinsic to the curriculum. Adults and pupils are encouraged to explore the uniqueness of themselves, each other and the wider world. • Worship is the heartbeat of St Helens' and is a strong expression of the vision. It is fully inclusive and offers people a safe and place to worship, reflect and pray. • Religious education (RE) has a pivotal place in the school's curriculum. The highly effective approach to teaching RE, including the use of 'digging deeper' questioning, contributes significantly to the flourishing of pupils. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop pupils' opportunities to make meaningful contributions during worship. Thus, extending the ways in which it is inclusive and inspiring. • Expand the role of pupils within the existing monitoring systems of Christian distinctiveness. This is so pupils contribute further to improving the life of the school. • Extend opportunities within the curriculum for all to develop as agents of change, for national and global communities. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The vision 'to be the strong foundation and stable rock to all who are fragile, vulnerable and have traumatic lives' is central to the life of this vibrant school. Leaders, including governors and the MAT articulate the vision's theological foundations. This motivates all of the school community to flourish. As a result, love and kindness characterise this school where the vision drives and shapes the strategic actions of all.</p>	

The culture of inclusion and hope characterises all activity. Regular pupil surveys provide evidence of the positive impact of the Christian values on inclusion, spiritual development, and Church school distinctiveness. However pupils say that they want to be more involved in creating the surveys

The vision of learning and growing in the knowledge of ‘life in all its fullness’ inspires a carefully crafted curriculum. Tailored to a community proud of its heritage, whilst embracing change, leaders prioritise inclusion. Collaborative curriculum reviews, involving all staff and pupils, ensure that the vision remains effective. For example, on listening to pupils’ views, leaders adapted reading books to embrace more diversity. Equality of opportunity extends to the wider life of the school. Leaders target resources to ensure that all pupils can access extra-curricular activities, which include playing a musical instrument. These opportunities enable pupils to flourish as they explore new arts, skills and sports. Pupils recognise the importance of constant challenge, knowing that, with support, they can take their next steps. Staff make time for reflection and encourage spiritual development in many lessons across the curriculum.

The vision epitomises leaders’ aspirations for this community to flourish in every possible way. It leads to collaborations with a range of organisations including outside agencies, local charities, businesses and the local church. As a result, the school is enabled to offer a host of innovative initiatives which support individual and community wellbeing. The ‘bagels for all’ gives all pupils a positive start to the day. Previously the Junk food project allowed families to select fresh produce every day after school.

Sensory rooms, prayer spaces and highly trained practitioners, impact positively on pupils' mental health. This is demonstrated in pupils’ improved attendance, transformed mindsets and ability to access the curriculum.

Relationships within the school are exceptionally strong. Everyone is welcomed. There is an overwhelming sense of being enveloped in Christian love. All staff are alert to any indication of problems or difficulties for families, ensuring any needs are met. Providing counselling or opportunities to talk to qualified staff and offering assistance well beyond that which might be expected.

Staff wellbeing is of the utmost importance. All staff value the strong, ethical leadership that they are given. In particular they refer to the compassionate way in which requests for personal help are treated. Staff development is of the highest priority. Systems promoting staff wellbeing result in adults who feel valued and well supported. As a result, they thrive professionally and personally.

Inspired by the stable rock as a foundation, collective worship is joyous. Leaders creatively plan a variety of worship experiences, embracing a breadth of Church traditions. Adults and pupils value coming together to sing, respond, reflect or pray. Lighting candles and saying the school’s Bible verse with actions brings the school’s vision alive. A remarkably thriving partnership with the local church, which offers an after-school club for confirmation preparation, richly enhances worship. Diverse in style, local clergy collaboratively plan and lead worship frequently, broadening pupils’ experiences. Families value regular opportunities to share worship in school and church, enriching adults’ and pupils’ spirituality. Pupils value how collective worship helps them to understand the relevance of Jesus’ teachings to their lives. For example, a collective worship using all their values showed how Jesus cared for everyone, prompted pupils to accept they were all loved. ‘It made me think that when I am sad Jesus cuddles me like a teddy bear’ said one pupil. As well as adults, the faith team plan and lead worship, deepening pupil engagement. Pupils regularly evaluate worship. Their feedback prompts improvements, keeping worship relevant and creative. Reflection areas around school encourage pupils to spiritually grow, offer thoughts and prayers related to worship and the school’s vision. These enhance the spiritual development of those who engage. Class

worship is mainly teacher-led. The faith team has identified the need for pupils to lead class worship.

Initiatives such as ‘the Junk food project,’ engage pupils in being agents of change within their local community. Leaders understand the context of their school and strive to provide opportunities for pupils to make a positive change. Examples are charity work, the eco club, and writing about recycling. All inspire pupils to challenge injustice in their community and nationally. However, pupils have not yet fully developed their understanding of how they can impact social action at a global level. They are not sure how their voice can be an influence in the wider world or the inequality that exists.

Religious education (RE) is well-planned, sequenced, highly engaging and enthusiastically led. It reflects the school’s vision, matched to pupils’ needs, enabling all to flourish. Books reflect the creative, rich, and engaging opportunities pupils have used to develop their knowledge of world religions. Pupils speak enthusiastically about RE, how it helps you know and share different faiths and how everyone has a voice. They understand Christianity is a global world faith and the importance of learning about all faiths. They are challenged to think deeply and, as a result, express mature and well-reasoned ideas and opinions. Strong links with the local diocese and MAT ensures all staff access current relevant training. Feedback and marking ensures that pupils know how to improve their work. As a result, all make progress. Assessment is rigorous, progress is tracked and gaps in knowledge and understanding are addressed.

The inspection findings indicate that St Helen’s is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	4 October 2023	URN	139573
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	201
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation	5196 Enhance Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Eddy Baird		
Chair	Robert Hart		
Inspector	Elaine Bowers	No.	960