



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Helena's Church of England Primary School, Willoughby	
Address	Main Road, Willoughby, Alford, LN13 9NH

School vision

Opening minds, widening horizons, developing a better world.

At St Helena's, we are passionately committed to helping all children open their minds, widen their horizons, and develop a better world. We do this by providing a foundation of strong moral and social values, ensuring all can play an active, responsible role within the community.

It is our responsibility to learn and achieve our dreams as a family.

We seek to reveal and develop the talents of everyone, so that we may flourish and become the valued and valuable person God intended us to be. We work towards every member of our school community being happy, confident, committed learners, reaching their full academic potential.

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10

School strengths

- The Christian vision is the bedrock of this highly inclusive community. It is lived out through its values that underpin everything that the school undertakes. The whole community views the school as a ‘family’. Respect and mutual understanding characterise relationships, which enable pupils and adults to flourish.
- The centrality of the vision within the curriculum ensures that the unique talents of all are recognised and celebrated. As a result, pupils and adults feel valued and are able to flourish.
- The wellbeing of all is a high priority and a tangible sense of Christian compassion permeates the school. Everyone is treated kindly and no request is seen as too difficult to consider.
- Vision-driven approaches to partnerships enable this community to learn and grow together. This encourages pupils to make ethical choices and take responsibility for making a difference in the wider world.
- The well-planned religious education (RE) curriculum is enriched by high-quality training, monitoring and evaluation. Consequently, exciting RE lessons result in pupils reflecting deeply about aspects of Christianity and a range of world religions and worldviews.

Areas for development

- Establish a whole-school, shared understanding of spirituality, including the use of a common language. Use this to plan a range of opportunities fostering pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum.
- Expand the ways that pupils are involved in evaluation and decision-making within collective worship. This is so that leaders fully understand how collective worship contributes to the spiritual growth of all, leading to improvements.

Inspection findings

The Christian vision and its supporting values permeate every aspect of this inclusive school. All members of the community, including the pupils, are invested in its continual development. Leaders' commitment to follow the example of Jesus ensures the vision shapes school improvement priorities and curriculum development. Relationships between the school and wider community are enriched by the Christian values of compassion and friendship. Dedicated governors enhance this caring culture by working sensitively with leaders to ensure the vision guides challenging decisions. They evaluate the work of the school effectively, so leaders understand how well the vision enables all to thrive.

The school's curriculum is carefully designed to 'widen horizons' for all learners. It reflects the school's vision to be open-minded and seek to 'develop a better world'. Leaders' commitment to inclusion and drawing on best practice is reflected through their collaboration with wider professionals. Consequently, those who need additional help are well-supported. Teachers consciously strive to meet pupils' individual learning needs because they believe this reflects the vision's emphasis on responsibility. The curriculum is complemented by a wealth of exciting enrichment experiences, such as gardening, dance, sports, theatre and music. Opportunities for spiritual development are thoughtfully explored as they arise. For example, the school's 'Forest Church' project has had a lasting impact, enabling pupils to connect to God through nature. The vision clearly drives pupils to consider how they can utilise their understanding to improve the lives of others. Pupils' sense of responsibility is also fostered within the grounds of their church. For example, during the school's 'Caring For God's Acre' project, pupils rejuvenated the church grounds. This fostered a genuine sense of stewardship for God's creation and wonder about its origin. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about these experiences and the staff that teach them. However, a shared whole-school understanding and language for spirituality is underdeveloped. As such, opportunities are not consistently planned across the curriculum. This means pupils' spiritual growth is not fully nurtured.

Collective worship is seen as the heartbeat of daily life in school. It is appreciated as a special time for the school to gather together as a whole school family. Parents and carers value opportunities to join their pupils in worship. It is engaging and reflective of the Anglican foundation of the school. Pupils are keen to participate and appreciate that everyone is invited to respond in their own way. Many sing joyfully and others choose quiet contemplation. Pupils are invited to respond thoughtfully to Jesus' teachings, deepening their spiritual growth. Collective worship encourages everyone to reflect carefully on issues within and beyond their community. This was movingly demonstrated through a Harvest service in church led by older pupils. It revealed a real sense of understanding for their own community and the challenges faced by their global neighbours. Wider school partnerships with the diocese and local church support the professional development of staff and enrich collective worship. Although pupils engage actively in collective worship, their involvement in evaluation and decision-making is less developed. Thus, opportunities for deepening pupils' responses and enhancing their spiritual growth are missed.

Vision-inspired, respectful relationships underpin daily routines that enable all to feel happy, valued and safe. Driven by a commitment to the vision, the school and its church, families and local community come together as one, deeply caring family. So that pupils can reach their full academic potential, mental health and wellbeing are a priority. The use of a counsellor and bespoke channels of support for individual families create a happy, confident community. Parents value how all staff actively support pupils' mental health, nourishing their emotional wellbeing and that of their families. The school responds sensitively to these issues by collaborating with a range of external agencies. This promotes the belief that everyone is equally valued. Everyone lives out a promise to continually learn, improve the world and better themselves. All pupils and adults have opportunities

to become the valued and valuable person God intended them to be. Leaders prioritise staff wellbeing through their open-door policy and nurturing of individual talents. This leads to a confident staff team who feel valued and encouraged to flourish professionally. Behaviour rewards and sanctions support an ethos in which forgiveness and reconciliation are upheld. Consequently, pupils behave well in school. A buddy system, joining older pupils and younger children for various curriculum activities, typifies the inclusive culture.

Inspired by the vision of developing a better world, the school's thriving partnership with its local church deeply enriches school life. The recognition that pupils and adults have a responsibility towards each other ensures that 'people are supported to reach their full potential'. Leaders strive to enrich the lives of everyone, enabling them to flourish within an aspirational, inclusive and loving learning community. Projects that promote the awe and wonder of God's creation are rooted in the vision of developing a better world. Replanted by pupils, the church grounds are testament to the school living out a vision of taking responsibility for the future. Pupils enthusiastically embrace a range of leadership opportunities because they can see how their ideas help shape decisions. A recent audit of playtime equipment inspired pupils to use their vision to improve social times. Pupils make ethical choices, based on their vision for a better world. They think carefully about how to lessen the human impact on the earth by reducing and recycling waste. The school council proudly promotes projects that serve the local and global community through their chosen charitable events. Discussions in lessons about issues such as worldwide conflicts inspire pupils to be active citizens promoting positive change. For example, pupils donate medical supplies to a charity helping those suffering in warzones around the world.

The RE curriculum is well-planned, broad and balanced and of high priority within school. Teachers feel confident to teach RE due to the support they receive. Leaders benefit from strong links with diocesan advisors and attend training regularly. This demonstrates the outward-facing culture of the school, enabling all to thrive. Pupils enjoy their learning in RE and talk about it with enthusiasm. They confidently discuss their own views and feel empowered to ask big questions in a safe environment. Through carefully crafted lessons, pupils learn about Christianity and a range of world religions and worldviews. They reflect deeply on the themes they study. For example, the respectful exploration of Christian thankfulness challenges pupils to consider a diverse range of beliefs. As a result, pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding within RE, including that of Christianity as a living, world faith.

The inspection findings indicate that St Helena's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	23 November 2023	URN	120587
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	130
Diocese	Lincoln		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Mr Ed Anderson		
Chair	Hayley Groves		
Inspector	Fiona Booth	No.	2217