

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Ellis Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	School Street, Hemingfield, Barnsley, S73 0PS
School vision	
<p>At The Ellis C of E Primary School, all stakeholders- governors, staff and families- share the same theological vision for our children: to ensure they feel valued members of our Christian school community and are inspired to be the best they can be through our core values of High Aspiration, Love and Courage.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision nurtures and encourages everyone. This ensures the Ellis is a welcoming and loving school family. • Leaders show a profound dedication to their school community. They clearly articulate the link between this and their vision. Their commitment to everyone being ‘the best they can be’ drives improvement decisions and enriches relationships. • Compassionate leadership and high aspirations contribute substantially to the flourishing of all. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good support. They are also valued as talented, unique individuals. • The effectiveness of the Ellis as a Church school is enhanced by mutually beneficial partnerships. Relationships with the local Church and the Diocese are particularly impactful. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine the religious education (RE) curriculum further. This is so that all pupils develop a deeper understanding of religions and world views as well as the diversity within them. • Develop the school’s shared understanding of, and approach to, spirituality. This is so that planned and spontaneous opportunities are maximised, enabling pupils more chances to explore their reflections. • Widen the opportunities for pupils and other adults to contribute to spiritual flourishing through collective worship. This is to further enhance their participation and its importance in the life of the school. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The Christian foundation and vision are key to the success and improvement journey of The Ellis. The vision of ‘be the best you can be’ is very well-embedded. It is a constant reference point throughout each day and the life of the school. Each person is welcomed and cherished, with their gifts and interests encouraged. Across the community, relationships are honest, joyful and nourishing. As one teacher accurately said, ‘We don’t welcome a child, we welcome a family’. Staff work as a harmonious team. They value how they are trusted and supported to flourish in their roles. The strong family feel positively impacts on the pupils in their care. Relationships with parents are very positive. They hugely appreciate the way the school supports them as well as their children.</p>	



One parent rightly said, 'I can tell that conversations about God are taking place in this school. My child came home telling us we are all known and loved'.

Leaders understand the school community well and are guided by the vision when making strategic decisions. The provision and successful deployment of specialist staff are such examples. Senior leaders are uncompromising in their determination that all should flourish with their gifts and talents recognised. In this way, a culture of high aspiration applies to all and is effective. Vulnerable pupils and those with SEND are supported well. While leaders reflect the vision in their work, robust systems to capture its impact are less well-developed. Advice and support from the Diocese have been highly impactful, bolstering the school's ongoing journey of improvement. Governors provide support and inform the work of leaders. However, their knowledge and monitoring of the vision as well as the Christian-based aspects of the school are underdeveloped. This means they are unclear about how to support leaders in preserving and enhancing the school's Christian foundation.

Learning experiences reinforce the message inherent in the vision as pupils are guided to 'be the best they can be'. The curriculum offered helps shape pupil character and growth. Such an example is the residential visit for year two children to Whirlow Farm. Leaders have high aspirations, evident in recent improvements to the curriculum. This includes looking at how the vision can be further threaded through all subjects. Success is regularly celebrated at The Ellis. Gold awards capture the vision and values of the school being lived out daily. Teachers ensure there are regular times to pause and reflect. They effectively consider times when 'awe and wonder' occur, for example during forest school. Special spaces in each classroom highlight the importance of reflection as part of their spiritual journey. Currently, there is no shared definition of what spirituality means at this school. Consequently, it is difficult for staff to plan for activities to promote wider spiritual flourishing.

Relationships at The Ellis are overwhelmingly positive. An atmosphere of care and good humour pervades the school. Pupils support each other and actively seek to help their peers make good choices. In this way they are beginning to be agents of change, growing their own and others' talents. Pupils relish supporting charities such as Age UK and the Wombwell foodbank. They enthusiastically take on leadership roles. Opportunities such as the 'Eco-council' and 'Archie Awards' encourage some to make a difference in the world. Leaders are at the early stages of linking the vision, the curriculum and ethical activities to increase opportunities for social action.

Collective worship is central to the daily life of pupils. Their comprehension of the school's vision arises from their participation in these sessions. Pupils value it as an important time of celebration and learning. Consequently, they have an understanding of some Bible stories and characters. Local clergy enrich the school's spiritual life through leading weekly worship and major Christian festivals at St Mary's. The Ellis Church takes place monthly in school. This provides an open opportunity for children and parents to access family worship in a familiar setting. Through these experiences, pupils extend their learning about Anglican traditions. However, staff are not invited to attend worship daily, hence they are unable to articulate its impact on their spiritual journey. The collective worship council play a small role in its delivery. Those who are not active churchgoers, or who consider themselves Christian, are invited to take part and reflect rather than pray. Many pupils share in the prayer life of the school. Pupils like it when their own reflections are used to enhance the experience of worship in the classroom, hall or church.

RE contributes to pupils' sense of being global citizens. Leaders have made recent and rapid changes to the curriculum. This is to ensure it meets the requirements of national guidance. Written work gives a positive impression of the variety of tasks and activities enjoyed by pupils. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of teaching which means that sometimes RE lessons lack challenge and a precise focus. Assessment in RE is underdeveloped. As a result, some pupils' knowledge and understanding of the range of religious studies is superficial. However, pupils value RE as an



important academic subject that helps them to understand worldviews and explore their own beliefs.

This is an exciting time at The Ellis, with the green shoots of development and change evident. The school cares deeply about individuals as a living testament to its vision for each person to 'be the best they can be'. It is the reciprocity of honesty and love that makes this school a special place.

The inspection findings indicate that The Ellis is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	16 November 2023	URN	106638
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	226
Diocese	Sheffield		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Emily Edwards		
Chair	Marcus Wood and Dean Clarke		
Inspector	Darren Dudman	No.	2101