

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wirksworth Church of England Infant School	
Address	North End, Wirksworth, Matlock, DE4 4FG
School vision	
Inspiring learning for All. 'Be kind to each other.' Ephesians 4:32	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian inspired leadership unites this school community. The Christian vision is lived out through values that make Wirksworth a loving and harmonious family. • Support for good mental health and wellbeing are exemplary. Pupils, families and staff are nurtured and so encouraged to explore their unique talents. • The curriculum offer is exciting and highly creative. It provides abundant opportunities to learn in classrooms and in the outdoor spaces. • The Christian vision and values shape pupils' behaviour. Respect for creation, and for each other, is at the heart of pupils' response to issues of social injustice and climate change. • Links with parents, the church, diocese and local community are strong. These reflect the inclusive vision for 'All' to flourish. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the effectiveness of the religious education (RE) curriculum. This is to give pupils a more secure knowledge of the concepts explored in their study of Christianity and other world religions. • Extend the shared understanding of spirituality to enable staff to explicitly plan for spiritual development across the curriculum. • Review the experience of worship so that the language used allows all pupils to participate as their views allow. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Wirksworth is a school with one mind and one heart. Throughout the transition to one site, leaders reassured staff and families that the merger would be a positive change. Such reassurance is successful. Parents, some of whom may have fostered reservations, now delight in the single-age classes and wider opportunities the one school provides. Several family members volunteer in school, particularly with the rambles and other outdoor events. This is a result of their understanding of the vision and values. Learners who were on roll at the partner school, feel at home and part of the extended family at the 'CofE'. This is due to the boundless passion, talents and kindness shown to all. Leaders are outstanding role models of service to others. Their actions are inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus. With selfless concern, at times for their own wellbeing, they work tirelessly to support staff, pupils and families. In this way, the Christian vision of kindness is at the heart of this happy, thriving place.</p>	

Governors are deeply committed to the school. They work with the diocese to develop the school as a Church school and to access professional support. This partnership is cemented by the close relationship with the parish church and other community groups. It is clear that Wirksworth engages brilliantly with several local groups. As a result, learners have a deep connection to their home town and its beautiful surroundings. The school is actively engaged with events like the farmers' market and well dressing festival. Leaders, including governors, are well informed about the daily life of the school. They provide strategic direction and practical support. For example, governors organised exciting new playground equipment. Leaders work with the pre-school and the junior school to ensure learners have a happy transition to their next setting. Their work with the local authority, concerning the merger, is characterised by their profound wisdom and tenacity. Governors are particularly mindful of staff wellbeing. They insist that senior leaders secure an appropriate work-life balance, although acknowledge that this requires further gentle firmness to secure.

Such care and kindness for all, is the hallmark of the school. This is especially so for those pupils who are more vulnerable. Working together, staff support each other. As they are valued, so their work with and for learners inspires growth. Pupils who have additional needs are fully integrated into classes. Teachers and support staff skilfully respond to individual needs and seek specialist help to meet them. This is rightly appreciated by parents. As one said, 'they are more than teachers, this is more than a school'. As such, the Christian vision of inclusion and kindness is fulfilled. Staff help pupils to be aware of social injustice. Support for events like 'Children in Need' encourage learners to think of the needs of others. Actions to address inequality and injustice are undertaken at an age-appropriate level. It is remarkable that Reception age children confidently express their views on the controversial re-editing of stories by authors like Roald Dahl.

A feature of the curriculum is its extraordinary richness and creativity. Leaders produce plans that enrich spiritual growth. However, staff do not have a shared understanding of spirituality and this inhibits them when planning for spiritual development. The 'sense of adventure' activities give learners time to reflect on their surroundings and respond to the passing of the seasons. Art and written work is simply stunning as a result and evidences the flourishing of all ages. The learning environment, indoors and outdoors, celebrates how pupils are inspired to achieve across the curriculum. Wirksworth's leaders coordinate curriculum projects across a local cluster of school. Leaders also publish their 'sense of adventure' programme further afield. The school is recognised by the diocese as leading the way in such development. In this way, the inspirational experience at Wirksworth flows out into the wider diocese and county.

Daily collective worship is important to adults and pupils. It is carefully planned to reflect the landmark events in the church's calendar. Worship is effective in providing spiritual nourishment. The school and church celebrate harvest, Christmas and Easter together. Links with the parish are strong and mutually appreciative. Foundation governors and parishioners lead regular worship and ensure that plans are appropriately biblically rooted. There is a well-established rhythm of worship which pupils find comforting. Inclusion is key and pupils, even the youngest, have the confidence to share their thoughts with others. Prayer is integral to worship. Pupils believe that they are expected to follow the 'hands together, eyes closed' invitation to prayer. Consequently, worship leaders do not make it clear that children are invited not expected to pray. Leaders are aware that applying the most recent Church of England guidance for worship is not fully realised.

RE lessons cover aspects of Christianity and other world religions. Pupils are keen to learn and particularly enjoy the practical activities, like drama and art. A few learners are confused in their recall of concepts studied. A culture of retelling Bible stories during worship complements learning in RE. This is beginning to help pupils understand the main concepts of the religions studied. Pupils are able to talk of Christian teaching, for example, explaining that Jonah and Noah both went on sea

voyages. Learners are animated when talking about how ‘God sent rainbows as a sign of hope’. Their views are refreshingly honest. As one noted, ‘Jesus made poorly men better so I am kind too’. Leaders and governors are currently exploring diocesan support to upskill those who teach RE and so improve its effectiveness.

The inspection findings indicate that Wirksworth Church of England Infant School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	4 December 2023	URN	112864
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	62
Diocese	Derby		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Joanne Poyser		
Chair	John Burnett		
Inspector	Allyson Taylor	No.	768