

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

East Cowton Church of England Primary School	
Address	East Cowton, Northallerton, DL7 0BD

School vision
<p>‘Building Futures with Love.’</p> <p>The theological rooting of our schools dates back to when they were originally gifted by the churches to the village. Their aim was to educate children so they could learn to live as God intended, informed and influenced by the Christian faith. Our vision continues this theological rooting with our vision statement ‘Building Futures with Love’ and our overarching aim is to be a group of schools which enable each child and adult to flourish and be the architect of their own future which is rooted in love.</p> <p>Our vision statement ‘Building Futures with Love’ is linked closely with the bible and in the greatest commandments given by Jesus: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength’ and ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Matthew 22:36-40)</p> <p>Each day we live out these commandments by learning to love ourselves, each other, our community and our world, growing each day as active, healthy and engaged citizens.</p> <p>Our schools are built on a foundation of love, understanding and support for all children, parents, staff and the community. Love is at the heart of the greatest of God’s commandments and we endeavour to use our cornerstone value to guide us through every decision made and every action taken.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision at East Cowton Church of England Primary School, results in a deeply welcoming school. Here, pupils are loved, nurtured and supported to succeed as individuals. There is a strong sense of community and this supports the flourishing of pupils and adults. • Leaders at all levels, including governors, are completely dedicated to meeting the needs of all pupils. The vision permeates all aspects of school life. This can be seen in the strength of relationships. East Cowton Church of England Primary School is a place where everyone in the school family is valued and nurtured. Behaviour is exemplary and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning. • The inclusive curriculum is designed so that all pupils can access learning. Pupils with additional needs, or those who are vulnerable, receive bespoke support which enables them to flourish. Leaders prioritise wellbeing and this is reflected in the care offered to pupils and adults. • Collective worship enhances the life of the school. Worship leaders help to open and close this special time of the day and do so with enthusiasm and confidence. Worship is well supported by local clergy and the school and community enjoy worshipping together. • Religious education (RE) provides pupils with a challenging and exciting curriculum. It is well-planned and resourced through effective subject leadership. Creative and interactive lessons encourage high quality discussions between pupils. Pupils respond to good teaching with calm and purposeful attitudes to learning. Pupils across both key stages demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a variety of world religions and worldviews.

Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the understanding of the school's vision and its biblical roots more widely within the local community. This will result in a greater sense of shared ownership. • Embed the existing shared understanding of spirituality amongst staff and pupils. Pupils can then be given further opportunities to develop this area of their lives through the curriculum. • Provide further opportunities for pupils to explore issues of injustice in the world and enable them to respond. This will increase their awareness that they can be agents of change in school, the local community and the wider world.
Inspection findings
<p>Every detail of the Christian vision has been carefully thought through by leaders to ensure that it is right for the school. East Cowton's Christian vision is that of the four schools that make up the Cornerstones collaboration in the Dales Academies Trust. However, the individuality and uniqueness of this small rural school has been maintained. The school has the freedom to mould their vision ensuring it is bespoke to the needs of their own school community. Love, as expressed in the words of Jesus which underpins the vision, is at the heart of school life at East Cowton. The vision is rooted in Christian teaching and drives the work of the school from curriculum planning to pastoral care. However, not everyone within the wider community fully understands the vision of the school or its intended impact. Leaders and governors understand the context of the local community. They have clear plans in place for areas that need to be developed further in their journey as a Church school. Governors monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision and recognise that they are on a journey. They are keen to support the relatively new executive headteacher in her drive to bring about Church school improvement.</p> <p>Leaders have carefully applied the vision to ensure that the curriculum meets the learning needs of all pupils. Recent developments to the wider curriculum are grown from the vision. Staff strive to ensure all pupils reach their potential. Within lessons, pupils discuss and reflect upon the relevance of the school's vision in the wider world, deepening pupils' understanding. For example, they independently discuss how to show love and respect for each other to ensure everyone feels happy and safe. The ambitious curriculum, and calm yet purposeful learning environment help pupils to achieve success.</p> <p>Leaders know their staff and pupils well in this very small school and it has a real 'family' ethos. As a result of the vision rooted in love, nurturing relationships within the school community are a key strength. Younger pupils talk proudly of their friendships with older pupils. Parents state they feel that these friendships are a strength of the school. Pupils behave with kindness towards each other and they show mutual consideration towards each other. One pupil described the school as, 'loving because everyone is always kind and caring'. The staff team model the Christian values of friendship and love for one another. Parents see the school as a family and commented, 'there is a genuine care for everyone, not just the children.'</p> <p>Staff and pupils have a strong understanding of how to live out the school's vision. Pupils are nurtured by staff as unique and valued members of the school community, recognising that they all have different needs. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported individually. Staff speak positively about mental health and wellbeing support from leaders and governors. Hence, staff support each other and flourish in their work. Staff also comment that the mutual support from the multi-academy trust has impacted their wellbeing</p>

positively. They appreciate being part of a strong network of professionals.

Spiritual development is in its early stages and leaders have planned for training and support for staff and governors. There are some opportunities for spirituality across the curriculum and this is being further developed. The recent addition of the spirituality shed has been very well-received by pupils. They talk about feeling calm and relaxed when they visit their spirituality shed and enjoy the opportunity to spend quiet, reflective time there.

The whole school community shows compassion towards others. Pupils are aware of charities which support local foodbanks and the homeless. During their RE lessons, older pupils felt strongly about supporting homeless children in different parts of the world through the Toybox charity. There are few opportunities for pupils to be advocates of change although they are developing an understanding of social injustice. During recent years there have been few global connections or initiatives, so pupils' understanding of wider global society is limited.

Collective worship unites the school and is a focal point of the school day. It is motivating, inclusive and centred on love. Even the youngest pupils recognise worship as a special time of the school day. The use of candles, church colours, responses and music encourage them in this. Its positive impact can be seen in enthusiastic participation, reverential times of prayer and reflection and joyous singing by all. Worship provides a safe place where pupils can think, reflect and pray. Worship leaders help to prepare and lead collective worship and act as role models for others during worship. It is carefully crafted to include times of stillness, wonder, joy, prayer, reflection and questioning which supports pupils' spiritual journeys. The school maintains a strong connection with the local clergy who support collective worship. The vicar recently led a session with the youngest pupils teaching them the meaning of the Lord's Prayer in RE. This has had a positive impact on their spirituality during worship. Many staff are well supported to lead worship. Inspired by the Christian vision, worship creates meaningful experiences. Adults, including parents talk about worship impacting positively on the pupils both at school and home. Staff describe how attending worship has developed their own sense of spirituality.

Religious education (RE) contributes to flourishing. Good leadership has ensured that teachers both at East Cowton and across the Cornerstones schools are confident to deliver RE. Involvement in diocesan training and local RE support groups further strengthens this leadership. RE is prioritised in school with a generous allocation of weekly learning time. Lessons are very well planned and delivered with clear impact on the lives of the pupils and it contributes to pupils' developing spirituality. The youngest pupils speak passionately about caring for others less fortunate than themselves. The oldest pupils talk enthusiastically about their work on the ten commandments and linking them to things still going wrong in the world today. The curriculum is highly creative allowing pupils to take part in lively debates. Pupils enjoy RE and speak with enthusiasm about opportunities to discuss a wide variety of 'big' questions. They have a good knowledge of Christianity and world faiths. Their understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith is developing.

The inspection findings indicate that East Cowton Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	13 December 2023	URN	144157
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	29
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation	Dales Academies Trust		
Executive Headteacher	Kirstie Petch		

Chair	Jean Lang		
Inspector	Jane Davis	No.	2210