

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Langdale Church of England Primary School	
Address	Chapel Stile, Ambleside, LA22 9JE

School vision

Our vision is to provide all children and adults with opportunities to aspire and become confident, lifelong learners in an ever-changing world. We are the heart of our community where ‘Every child is valued. No-one left behind’. In the spirit of John (10:10), we share Jesus’ vision to experience “Life in All its Fullness”. We offer a school which is inclusive, with respect and compassion at its core. Diversity is celebrated within our school community and further afield and the opportunities for learning beyond the classroom is an approach encompassed alongside our shared Christian values so that children can enjoy the natural world and all of God’s creations. We enable learners to collaborate with others allowing individual skills, talents, interests and beliefs to flourish.

School strengths

- The Christian vision is driven by leaders who know their school well. Consequently, deeply embedded mutual trust empowers others, enabling all to flourish.
- The exceptionally strong staff team is rooted in genuine Christian love which secures highly effective relationships across the whole school and beyond.
- All aspects of the well-crafted curriculum are steered by the Christian vision. It is successful in meeting each pupil’s individual needs and is pertinent to the school’s unique context. Religious education (RE) plays a significant role within the wider curriculum.
- The school’s vision maintains a key focus on good mental health and wellbeing. As a result, bespoke provision guarantees that both adults and pupils are fully supported.
- The mutually beneficial partnership with the local church is thriving and bringing the community closer together.

Areas for development

- Establish a shared understanding of spirituality that enhances existing practice, enriching pupils’ spiritual development yet further.
- Equip leaders at all levels with the tools to undertake robust and routine monitoring. This is in order to support the ongoing development of good quality collective worship and RE.
- Secure ways in which practice, rooted in the Christian vision, is effectively reflected in documentation, thus deepening its impact.

Inspection findings

The Christian vision at Langdale is adept in reflecting its unique location. As a result, it is highly effective in ensuring the flourishing of all within the school community. The idyllic setting masks challenges faced by the community, such as rural isolation. Thus, the vision responds by being outward facing. It is underpinned by the concept of 'Life in all its fullness' from the Bible verse, John 10:10. However, the school's approach runs even deeper, embracing the wider biblical passage which includes the Parable of the Lost Sheep. Staff compare themselves to shepherds, ensuring they deliver the vision's strapline that, 'Every child is valued. No-one left behind.' Pupils thrive due to staff's relentless commitment in supporting each of them on their journey. Likewise, six key Christian values such as compassion and trust, provide a blueprint for the pupils to live out the vision on a daily basis.

Governors are committed in their roles and know the school well. Through a recent review of the vision, they have created a document that has a clear focus in its aspirations. This secures its relevance to the school community. Nevertheless, the way in which the vision is lived out across the school, lacks clarity in some documentation. The vision is at the heart of their work enabling governors to be courageous in their decision making. Bold choices, made by governors, are true to the vision of no-one being left behind. Each meeting ends with a reflection asking how the decisions taken will directly benefit pupils. Governors facilitate ongoing school improvement through routine monitoring. However, there are limited formal systems in place to evaluate the effectiveness of collective worship and RE.

The curriculum is deeply rooted in the Christian vision and is aspirational in its desire to seek flourishing for all. It recognises the school's unique location and makes excellent use of the local environs. 'Life in all its fullness' is lived out in provision that goes beyond the academic. Hence, the well-crafted content is skilfully mapped out, securing a bespoke experience that matches each pupil's needs and interests. Trusting leaders empower staff at all levels in developing their expertise. Staff's personal skills and interests are harnessed, enriching the breadth of activities that are as varied as bushcraft to computing projects. This engenders a creative cross-curricular approach where a geography topic will also include pupils creating their own pedometers. As a result, they exude confidence and resilience both personally and in their learning. The vision is clearly visible in the effective nurture provided for pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND). Tailor made programmes ensure growth in learning and pupils know that their contributions are valued. Pupils develop life skills and engage in rich learning experiences. This is due to the careful planning of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and workshops in school.

The vision underpins the importance the school places on collective worship. It is a focal point of the day bringing the school community together. Pupils are supported in gaining a good knowledge of the Christian faith and Bible stories. This is because worship is well planned and draws on both themes illustrating Christian values and the Church calendar. Those leading worship are sensitive in the use of key phrases so that no-one feels compelled to join in. Worship is both a joyful and reflective occasion. Pupils sing with a glad heart but are equally equipped to pause and reflect in stillness and quiet. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced beyond worship through opportunities for reflection, provided in the school day. However, there is not a shared understanding of spirituality. This ultimately limits its impact on the richness of pupils' deeper experiences. Worship is highly engaging and frequently interactive, with pupils eagerly taking on various roles. This enables them to develop their own thoughts and responses to the Christian faith. The close links with the church ensure that worship is varied, including different styles and ideas. Therefore, pupils are comfortable with key prayers and responses. Half termly worships in the church have created a familiarity where the school community experiences a genuine welcome, cementing this effective partnership.

Exceptionally strong relationships across the school demonstrates the vision in action. Christian love abounds, resulting in staff feeling valued and pupils knowing they are safe. There is a highly inclusive culture and 'looking out' for one another is the norm. This is seen in staff caring for each other and older pupils choosing to look after the younger pupils at playtimes. Utilising forgiveness and reconciliation, staff take swift, compassionate action, quickly resolving the rare occasion of a playtime disagreement. Pupils' experiences are enhanced both socially and academically from accessing collaborative events beyond the valley. Likewise, staff also receive a broader perspective through external training and resources. This is due to leaders investing time beyond the school in a variety of beneficial partnerships.

The school is proactive in aiding good mental health and wellbeing for pupils and adults alike. Staff are approachable and trusted. This enables families to ask for help when needed, knowing that there is an understanding, listening ear. This is an effective catalyst in providing targeted support for all, including those who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable.

The vision drives leaders in providing pupils with a broader perspective of the world, beyond the Langdale valley. This outward facing approach brings a variety of rich experiences, deepening pupils' understanding of difference and diversity. This was encapsulated when one pupil simply stated, 'we are just the same and should treat everyone with respect'. Pupils actively seek to make a difference and regularly undertake social action projects that protect their local environment. The school also ensures that pupils are exposed to the challenges facing the wider world. They are confident in addressing big issues and are active agents for change. For example, they consulted with the local MP on the wider, significant impact of second homes. He subsequently raised the concern in Parliament.

RE reflects the school's vision in that it enriches pupils' lives through a wide range of absorbing experiences and activities. The subject leader has designed a customised curriculum that matches the school's needs. It provides rigour and draws on different accredited sources. Pupils enjoy RE. This is because they are provided with a good balance of topics that includes a range of faiths and worldviews. The thoughtfully planned content meets the requirements for RE in a Church school. The local church and clergy greatly enhance RE provision, for example, performing a mock baptism in the church. Pupils' learning in RE is well sequenced and they make good progress in the subject. Detailed assessment, frequent monitoring and targeted training all ensure a robust approach.

Langdale School secures the community's flourishing through nurturing love. A teacher commented, 'everyone is shepherded well, and the flock followed'.

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

Information			
Inspection date	14 December 2023	URN	112321
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	26
Diocese	Carlisle		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Rachel Underwood		
Chair	Mark Kidd		
Inspector	Jo Williams	No.	863

