

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School, Longbenton	
Address	Goathland Avenue, Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8FA

### School vision

We uphold that all people, created in God's image, are of equal value and worth and therefore must be treated with respect and given the greatest opportunity to flourish as human beings in God's world. We should all therefore aim to reflect His character as best we can through our core values of truth forgiveness, compassion, thankfulness, humility, determination, excellence and service.

### School strengths

- The school's Christian vision is well-embedded and underpins relationships throughout the whole school community. It enables staff and pupils to respect, collaborate and support each other so that pupils, including those who are vulnerable, flourish.
- Collective worship is central to life at St. Bartholomew's. It is wholly inclusive, enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually. It offers a time in the day for coming together and an opportunity to 'stop, reflect and think'. It inspires both pupils and adults to consider how they can serve and support themselves as well as others.
- The school's commitment to wellbeing comes directly from the vision statement that 'all people are created in God's image'. Strong provision for emotional and mental health enables pupils and adults to feel valued and of equal worth. Pupils and adults across the school naturally articulate the values of acceptance and respect.
- The culture within St. Bartholomew's encourages an innate sense of justice among its pupils. This comes directly from the school's Christian vision. A strong commitment to mental health ensures that all are treated well here.
- A relatively new staff team is well supported by the headteacher to ensure growing confidence in delivering religious education (RE). Quality teaching ensures that pupils make good progress as a result of the rich and engaging curriculum.

### Areas for development

- Secure the sustainability of leadership within RE to enable the school to continue to meet the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education.
- Formalise a whole school understanding of spirituality by developing a consistent approach to identifying spirituality in action. This is so that pupils and adults are better able to talk about their own spiritual development.
- Provide pupils with opportunities to take a lead in social action so that they can engage actively as positive agents for change.

## Inspection findings

Rejoicing in God's creation is central to life at St. Bartholomew's. Enriched by pertinent Christian values, the school's vision drives opportunities for all to flourish as human beings in God's world. All within the school community are united in seeking the best for themselves and for others. An underlying sense of the preciousness of every individual ensures that pupils and adults are the core concern for everyone. Leaders are attentive and proactive in meeting the diverse needs of their community. They are a present presence, personifying the Christian vision by treating all with equal value and worth. This creates a culture of respect, tolerance and trust which enthuses staff, pupils and their families. Governors have a clear understanding of their school's vision and how it is driving school development. They are committed to ensuring the human flourishing of all within their community.

The school's curriculum includes meaningful opportunities for the development of curiosity and deeper thinking. Pupils value this and talk enthusiastically about big questions they have been pondering. The school's Christian values, including truth, forgiveness and compassion, are woven throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of the relevance they hold for them. Leaders' bold, vision-based decision to review the curriculum has led to a focus on the performing arts. Engaging and enriching moments for self-expression develop confidence as well as the chance to show excellence beyond the classroom. However, a consistent understanding of spirituality and spiritual development across the school is not in place. This means that opportunities for spiritual flourishing are lost. For example, some pupils understand special spaces for quiet reflection to be purely for those experiencing anxiety.

Collective worship sits at the heart of this school. A palpable sense of the spiritual is experienced as the whole school signs the words to a song, ensuring everyone is included. Pupils, staff and parents speak passionately about the importance of worship to them. Leaders are successful in ensuring worship remains relevant, inspirational and open to all. This instils an innate understanding that worship is for everybody, whether they have a religious faith or not. As a result, prayer time is reflective and respectful. All pupils and adults are able to hear and engage with passages from the Bible. They talk readily about the impact of the Christian message on their lives. For example, pupils link their sense of responsibility for the care of creation to stories heard during collective worship. A coherent theme runs throughout the week. Big questions introduced on Monday continue beyond the act of worship, into classrooms, playground and home. Leaders share reflections on the worship theme with parents through the weekly newsletter. This extends the invitation to hear and ponder on what it means to be human in God's world. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the regular visitors who contribute to the prayer life of the school. This includes fortnightly visits from the recently appointed priest attached to the local church. Enriching opportunities for spiritual flourishing spring from growing links between school and church. Discussions with pupils and adults show that termly visits to church stir feelings of being close to God. Members of the church community reach out with love to the school. This clearly enhances the spiritual development of adults and pupils.

School leaders place a high priority on wellbeing as a way of living out the words of their vision. Strategic decisions taken, including the appointment of a wellbeing consultant, support with holistic planning. The adoption of pet guinea pigs provides opportunities for therapeutic relief and a sense of service. It is clear that a strong sense of collaboration and support exists across the staff team. Leaders have a 'helicopter view' of the school and are quick to respond to needs. Time is invested to listen, understand and support. This ensures a sense of trust and openness. Pupils show tolerance and compassion towards one another, leading to an overwhelming sense of dignity and respect for everybody. All know they are valued and respected as children of God, created in his

image. As a result all are able to flourish, including the most vulnerable.

Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of justice and responsibility. From the youngest upwards, pupils talk authentically about the importance of forgiveness. There is an embedded understanding of reconciliation and a trust that problems will be solved. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to serve and have an impact within school. For example, sports leaders have developed new extracurricular clubs. Harvest is hailed as a time for thankfulness and an opportunity to help others through donations to the Bay Foodbank. Regular fundraising takes place across the year and pupils see this as a chance to make a difference.' Newsround' is a regular feature of school life. This enables pupils to ask questions and discuss ethical issues. However, there are not consistent opportunities to empower pupils to actively engage in social action and become agents of change.

The RE curriculum is engaging and is focused on enquiry. Big questions encourage a deeper understanding about the wider world. Pupils enjoy RE and speak with confidence and enthusiasm about their learning. The 'Understanding Christianity' resource underpins the syllabus, supporting teacher subject knowledge. Leaders have ensured that other world faiths taught within the curriculum reflect the school's local context. High quality RE is a priority for leaders. Following the resignation of a subject specialist, class teachers have only recently taken on the teaching of RE. This is a positive step. Support from the diocese and ongoing training from the headteacher ensure teacher confidence in delivering high quality lessons. Ongoing assessment and feedback makes certain that progress across the school is good. Regular headteacher drop ins to lessons and robust professional discussions ensure that high expectations for RE are maintained. The headteacher takes action to address inconsistency. The responsibility for ensuring the school continues to meet requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education rests with the headteacher. There is currently no succession plan in place to develop further leadership within RE. Governors take their legal responsibility for the RE syllabus seriously and recognise this as an area for development.

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

Information			
Inspection date	19 October 2023	URN	108615
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	201
Diocese	Durham;Newcastle		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Richard Restall		
Chair	Richard Stubbs		
Inspector	Helen Tait	No.	2247