

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ackworth Howard Church of England VC Junior & Infant School	
Address	Station Road, Low Ackworth, Pontefract, WF7 7HH
School vision	
<p>Educating for 'life in all its fullness.' Providing opportunities for growth in mind, body and spirit through inspirational and innovative education underpinned by a deeply Christian ethos. Those who learn and work here will develop confidence, embrace creativity and enhance their knowledge and skills so that they can experience 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's ambitious, Christian vision drives all decisions, big and small. Leaders at all levels, including governors, ensure that all develop in mind, body and spirit so that they may flourish. • Pupils independently and confidently challenge injustice as authentic agents of change as a result of a cohesive and intentionally planned curriculum. Pupils hold the firm belief that all should experience 'life in all its fullness'. • Effective relationships enable pupils and adults to flourish. Proactive support is offered in partnership and, in turn, pupils learn how to help themselves. • Collective worship is skilfully planned and highly valued by pupils, parents and staff. It provides opportunities to explore ideas about the Christian faith and their own beliefs. • The school celebrates its pupils' many strengths. Pupils, including those who are vulnerable, are proud of their own achievements as well as the achievements of others. They recognise the importance of the contribution they make to their community. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the religious education (RE) curriculum for world faiths other than Christianity supports pupils to understand them as diverse, living faiths. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Ackworth Howard is a welcoming, vibrant school community where pupils clearly care about themselves, each other and the world.</p> <p>The school's embedded Christian vision to provide education for mind, body and spirit drives decision making by leaders at all levels. The vision is central to its curriculum, extra-curricular offer and pastoral support. As a result, pupils and staff speak of it as simply, 'the way things are here'. The school's resolute focus on its vision has enabled the community to remain steadfast in times of turbulence. New initiatives are evaluated for how they contribute to a 'fullness of life', including their impact on staff wellbeing.</p> <p>The impact of the school's vision is carefully evaluated. This impactful monitoring has resulted in</p>	

effective change to improve outcomes for all pupils, including the most vulnerable. The governing body has been supported through diocesan training to develop their monitoring. As a result, they are equipped to evaluate that the school's Christian vision provides the opportunity for all to flourish. Following the example of adults around them, pupil leadership groups also ensure that the decisions they make reflect the school's vision. Parents and carers embrace the school's deeply Christian ethos and support the school in achieving its aims.

Staff go the extra mile to ensure all pupils, including those with special education needs and disability (SEND), are fully included in the life of the school. Leaders are proactive in identifying barriers to learning in order to put targeted support in place. For example, the 'Winston's Wish Gardening Group' has been a ray of hope to those who have suffered bereavement. Pupils are clear that the special times shared in this group help them to approach their challenges with confidence. Pupils at Ackworth Howard do not simply acknowledge difference, they celebrate that they are unique individuals made in the image of God. They are quick to highlight the gifts and achievements of their peers. The school has invested heavily in their outdoor environment to provide further opportunities to develop body and mind. Pupils of all ages play collaboratively and embrace their creativity as they build obstacle courses and go on muddy adventures.

The outpouring of the school's Christian vision makes a tangible difference to the lives of pupils. With this comes the expectation that they will, in turn, do the same for others. The school's curriculum takes care to draw attention to and challenge issues of global injustice. As a result, pupils are determined to ensure that all achieve 'fullness of life' through access to a good education. This is clearly seen in their work with their partnership school in Tanzania. Pupils are also thankful to their friends in Tanzania for teaching them new skills and helping to invigorate collective worship. Pupils are empowered to be agents of change on issues that they feel passionate about. For example, inspired by their opportunity to care for rescued chickens, pupils have created their own campaign to promote free-range hens. Pupils know that their voices are heard and that they have an impact. There are numerous examples of pupils working collaboratively, without adult intervention, to resolve issues within their community. Meaningful links with other schools help to extend opportunities for pupil leadership and social action. Ackworth Howard pupils see themselves as change-makers who want to, and believe they can, make a difference to their world.

Staff are treated well in line with the school's deeply Christian ethos. They are proud to be part of their school and its wider community. They are invested in to develop their own mind, body and spirit. Leaders, including governors, have taken key decisions that have positively impacted on staff wellbeing. These decisions demonstrate the ambition they have for all staff to have 'fullness of life'.

RE has a high profile within school and pupils enjoy the chance to learn more about different beliefs and views. Pupils are supported by a detailed, progressive curriculum to have a secure knowledge of Christianity. The curriculum for the teaching of faiths other than Christianity does not sufficiently identify the accurate key knowledge around expression of faith. This is something that leaders highlighted through their monitoring of the curriculum and its impact. RE is well resourced and leaders have been proactive in sourcing training to further their own development. The school has thought carefully about how to promote the idea of Christianity as a living faith with diverse beliefs. The subject lead has begun to identify opportunities for speakers and visits to develop pupil's deeper understanding of different faiths.

Collective worship is inspirational in the way that it provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on social injustices in the light of biblical teachings. Pupils and staff value the opportunity to reflect personally and to deepen their understanding of the views of others. Pupils are clear that there is no expectation to pray. However, some acknowledge that praying to God helps them to 'achieve big things' and helps them think. Pupil worship leaders have brought about meaningful change as a



result of their own evaluations. They are clear that their worship belongs to them. The school is grateful for the links with the local church that support them in sharing the teachings of the Bible in an engaging way. Pupils benefit from the opportunities to participate in worship with their own families and with the wider school community.

Spiritual development is central to the school’s Christian vision. There is a cohesive approach to spiritual development that is well understood and makes this vision a living reality. Pupils have access to planned opportunities to develop spiritually through the lens of Christian values embedded into curriculum subjects and collective worship. Pupils wrestle articulately with life’s ‘big questions’. Reflection areas are used well across school. Pupils in Early Years make use of these areas to help them to feel ‘safe if you are worried’ and to say ‘thank you’.

At Ackworth Howard, children and adults are given plentiful opportunities to develop in mind, body and spirit. As a result, they flourish as both unique individuals and as a collective community.

The inspection findings indicate that Ackworth Howard Voluntary Controlled Church of England Junior and Infant School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	25 January 2024	URN	130977
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	207
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Michael Walker		
Chair	Lorna Malkin		
Inspector	Vikki Wilson	No.	2249