

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Crakehall Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	The Green, Crakehall, Bedale, DL8 1HP
School vision	
<p>At Crakehall we work together to create an inclusive environment and a plethora of opportunities where all staff and children can grow and flourish. Creating the right culture and positive relationships are at the heart of everything we do. We value and treasure every individual and take great pride in watching each other grow.</p> <p>Growing together to: Build strength through resilience, Value myself and others, Understand our world.</p> <p>The parable of the Sower is the root of our school vision. Matthew 13: 1-23</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strongly embedded Christian vision shapes an ambitious, inspirational curriculum. Pupils value and embrace all the opportunities the school offers, successful in their learning and personal development. • Strong relationships are deeply rooted in Christian love. The nurturing provision across all aspects of school life creates an inclusive environment where all pupils and adults can flourish. • Collective worship is at the heart of school life. A special, enriching partnership exists between school and church and between other schools in the Synergy Schools Federation. Children are fully engaged in the planning and leading of worship. • Leaders have developed a clear, shared understanding of spirituality. This allows reflection to be a natural part of all curriculum areas and collective worship. • The school's Christian vision creates a culture where all members of the school and local community live well together. Staff and pupils live the vision and maintain excellent behaviours as a result. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the existing good practice to further embed opportunities for spirituality to be enhanced beyond the curriculum and collective worship. • Develop further the current practice to facilitate and widen the opportunities for all pupils to engage with social action. This is to enable them to make a difference to the lives of others. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Crakehall Church of England school has a deep understanding of its biblically rooted and distinctively Christian vision. Leaders and staff can articulate the need to adapt the vision to meet</p>	

the emerging needs of the changing context they serve. Subtle changes to language widen the impact of the vision. Pupils can also describe the inclusive nature and their involvement in these changes.

Leaders are inspirational role models for all. They stimulate all adults and pupils through their own positivity and enthusiasm. This has a profound impact on the lives of staff. It inspires confidence and enables all within the community to flourish. Adults readily share their gifts and talents with other schools. For example, leading worship for the Federation. This contributes meaningfully to spiritual development and wellbeing in the wider community.

The partnership with the Federation is mutually beneficial. Its structure provides highly effective support, whilst upholding the school's own distinct Christian character and vision. This is exemplified in bold curriculum decisions that respond to pupil need. For example, a focus on a maximum of five pieces of key knowledge so pupils do not experience cognitive overload. Streamlining all curriculum areas enables pupils to thrive, with planned moments to allow spiritual exploration. Continued school improvement is secured by a local school committee of governors, through robust systems of self-evaluation. Successful collaboration with other schools in the Federation secures effective staff training. This develops expertise in all subjects and reinvigorates a love of subject knowledge in staff. Leaders are driven in facilitating pupils blossoming and growing together.

Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school, characterised by the school values of trust, friendship, compassion and forgiveness. Pupils understand and articulate this as being the result of the shared vision and values of the school. They demonstrate high expectations of themselves and their peers, resulting in a happy and supportive learning environment. Pupils feel safe when sharing their ideas, they know others will listen and are always 'supported to figure things out'. They explore vision-infused values through their carefully planned games in the playground, facilitated through perceptive pupil outdoor ambassadors.

Parents are familiar with the vision. They comment that it is woven into everything their children do and impacts positively on behaviour, at school and home. Relationships are seen as a priority of the school's ethos. Parents appreciate that staff are approachable and know families well, they talk of 'handing their children over to family'. Parents rightly know their children are safe at Crakehall School. The influence of the vision on staff means they seek to be positive role models for each other and for the pupils. As a small school the staff feel they 'all have a voice'.

Collective worship is planned to explore Christian values and to relate biblical teaching to current events using 'Picture News' and links to age-appropriate global events. The collective worship lead plans worship across the school and staff differentiate to meet the needs of their own classes. Pupils regularly deliver and plan worship. They receive collective worship training from the diocese, alongside other pupils across the Federation. Singing is central to worship and is both joyous and uplifting. The awe and wonder of the children was evident and supports the spiritual development of the individual. Everyone in the school is invited to worship. Pupil worship leaders signify the start of worship with the sound of a bell and collect every class to join. Children can be heard singing throughout the school building as they make their way to worship.

Prayer is a regular feature of the school day. Reflection areas within classrooms offer opportunities for pupils to pray. Each area has a 'big question' and reflection book where the children can share their comments or feelings. Pupils stated, 'prayers gave them strength when things are difficult'. Beyond the classroom the children all have access to various reflection areas, inside and outside the school building. Wellbeing is a priority for staff and pupils and as a result both feel they are supported and listened too.

Well-established and reciprocal partnerships enrich the school's work, affirming and refining provision, particularly with diocese and church. Promoted by the vision, these partnerships provide a common purpose and support collaboration. The extra special relationship between the church and school is to be celebrated. Children regularly attend a weekly service alongside the congregation of the church. This allows them to experience a 'real service', the singing of traditional hymns and developing an understanding of prayer. An informal meeting after the church service for the pupils and congregation is used to strengthen the bonds within the local community. It provides a space for spiritual growth and connection.

Alongside the Christian values the school community worked together to create 'SOULRICH' characters. The characters are a visual representation of the key characteristics they believe are needed to fulfil the school vision. Pupils who have displayed these characteristics in school are celebrated with 'SOULRICH' vision certificates. For example, a pupil may receive an award for valuing myself and others.

Pupils have a clear understanding of justice and are active in their pursuit of the rights and needs of others. They explore ways in which working together and doing something small can make a big difference. For example, creating food parcels to support local Ukrainian families allows pupils to engage in social action. However, currently pupils are less aware of how they can independently be agents of change.

RE is well-led, by passionate staff and supported by the Federation who adopt an innovative model to subject leadership. This model champions the wellbeing of staff in small, rural schools allowing all to flourish. All staff are confident in teaching the subject, with an expectation that they adapt resources to maintain a fully inclusive programme of study for all pupils. Rigorous shared planning and comprehensive monitoring ensures high standards are maintained across the school.

RE is an effective vehicle in realising the school's vision. Pupils enjoy the refreshed style brought about by the introduction of Understanding Christianity to support curriculum development. Consequently, pupils are fully engaged in activities that require them to think deeply by exploring 'big questions'. The curriculum meets the church and statutory requirements. School leaders are relentless in sourcing meaningful experiences in RE to support pupils' understanding of world religions and worldviews. For example, all pupils have accessed a Hinduism workshop led by a Hindu visitor, ensuring a deep understanding of world faiths.

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

Information			
Inspection date	23 November 2023	URN	121483
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	98
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation	Synergy Schools Federation		
Headteacher	Mike White (Executive Headteacher) Sam Marino (Head of School)		
Chair	Andrea Offord		
Inspector	Ashleigh Lees	No.	2239