

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Norton Free Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Matthews Lane, Norton, Sheffield, S8 8JS
School vision	
<p>Our school is a caring, Christian Community with Jesus Christ at the heart of everything we do. It provides a safe nurturing environment enabling all children to flourish, to be the best they can be, to value themselves and others and to live joyfully and in peace.</p> <p>We share with our children - John 3:18 'Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth'.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within this highly inclusive school staff ensure each pupil is cherished as one of God's children. Consequently, they flourish. • Leaders, at all levels, use the school's distinctive Christian vision and associated values as the catalyst to drive the school's decisions. As a result, the vision impacts upon all areas of school life. • Pupils are kind, thoughtful and caring. They have confidence to speak out, with the courage of their convictions, to challenge injustice and inequality. • As a result of the vision to show love 'in action' the school nurtures the more vulnerable. It welcomes all with open arms, extending God's love. In this environment pupils learn to value themselves and others. • Prayer is integral to the school day. It is a valued vehicle for pupils' heartfelt gratitude for the good in their lives and for help in the challenges they face. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared understanding of spirituality to enable pupils to make the most of reflection times. • Explore ways in which pupils actively engage in the preparation and delivery of collective worship to enhance its impact upon their lives. • Develop ways in religious education (RE) to support pupils to retain their knowledge and understanding of world faiths. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Norton Free is a deeply inclusive school, the vision and associated Christian values permeate every aspect of school life. Pupils and adults are cherished and valued as God's children. Pupils flourish because adults invest in knowing them so well. Staff utilise pupils' interests, fostering talents and broadening horizons so that pupils develop confidence to become the best they can be. Pupils thrive, valuing their own and others' achievements within a caring community. Consequently, Norton Free is a joyful school. Staff are correct when they compassionately state, 'the vision is lived</p>	

not laminated’.

A knowledgeable and supportive governing body are diligent in oversight, holding the school to account with regular monitoring visits. They question and seek clarification, ensuring the school’s Christian ethos is maintained. They take great pride in the school’s achievements. Consequently, governors ensure the school’s Christian foundation is maintained.

Through the vision’s focus of nurturing pupils and staff to be the best they can be, academic success is clearly prioritised. With a passion to empower each pupil, staff recognise and celebrate resilience and perseverance. By explaining the school’s values pupils demonstrate how they achieve goals. Developing and maintaining healthy bodies and minds is key to this success. A daily mile is enjoyed by all and wellbeing programmes are carefully devised. Through targeted intervention, staff are meticulous in determining pathways so pupils flourish. This includes reviewing academic, personal, social and mental health needs. No stone is left unturned.

The school is very proactive in encouraging all to enjoy sport. Olympic athletes visit school to inspire pupils and staff. Within a nurturing environment, leaders motivate pupils to find inner strength to attain personal sporting achievements. This significantly develops confidence, extending into all aspects of school life. Furthermore, sport develops pupils’ resilience and leadership skills. It is one of the many ways the school encourages respect for self and others. Pupils are proud to represent school and achieve highly, further embedding the impact of belonging to ‘Team Norton’.

A rich and deep prayer life is a significant feature of the daily school experience. The school prayer reminds pupils and adults of how their community spirit impacts upon lives. The prayer is a daily reminder of the importance of mutual kindness and finding joy in companionship, through Jesus. Each class also has their own prayer. Pupils are invited to share personal thoughts, placing them on a dedicated prayer tree. These are read in collective worship. A member of St James’ Church regularly joins pupils in the school’s prayer corner. These opportunities encourage pupils to spend time being still and open to God’s love. Dedicated classroom spaces provide the chance to reflect. However, the potential for opportunities such as these is not fully developed. This is principally because they do not have a shared language to explore an understanding of spiritual development.

Leaders organise and oversee collective worship and the weekly celebration assembly, linking awards to school’s values. Collective worship is based on the teachings of Jesus and traditions and liturgy of the Anglican Church. Pupils have opportunities to reflect upon spiritual and moral issues. A respectful atmosphere for collective worship encourages pupils to enter calmly, listen attentively and enthusiastically participate in songs. The school attends St James Church services, celebrating major Christian festivals. Local Christians are invited to lead worship, including authors who explore big questions. Although pupils flourish spiritually in these times, they are participants and not leaders. This limits the impact of collective worship.

The established Garden of Reading, Reflection and Remembrance holds a special place in the heart of this community. It is particularly valued by those who have sadly experienced loss. Being true to the vision, the garden exemplifies the care and nurture that is the foundation of the school. It is a place of peace, inviting Jesus into quiet reflections.

As a key school value, kindness abounds, consistently impacting upon pupils’ and adult’s lives. Vulnerable pupils, joining the school from elsewhere, find a supportive welcome. A fresh start is quickly established. Staff, driven by the vision, clearly believe every pupil deserves a second chance to thrive and consequently they do. Norton Free transforms the lives of the most vulnerable. These pupils flourish within their new beginnings, many eventually becoming role models for others.

Governors proactively take an interest in pupil and staff wellbeing. As effective listeners, they ensure each member of staff feels valued. Leaders know staff well, are considerate with workload expectations and encourage professional growth. This generates self-belief from which a strong team has arisen. Staff flourish as professionals who are highly cherished.

The school's culture reinforces the intrinsic value of every person, all loved by God. Consequently, pupils recognise inequality and injustice. They take action to support those in need, identifying charitable causes. They live the school's vision by caring, valuing others and seeking for all to live joyfully and in peace. Pupils take independent steps to raise funds. Through a concern for homeless people, pupils organise and then deliver food parcels.

Encouraged by the school's vision, pupils demonstrate their determination for positive change and desire to make a difference. For example, they have lobbied local politicians to install solar panels at school. This is prompted by ecological concerns and their desire to live the vision, loving the world with their actions. They demonstrate how they respect God's world, being custodians for nature. Maintaining the pond demonstrates their due care for wildlife. They passionately share plans, such as establishing an orchard for the benefit of pupils in the future. Their enthusiasm for what they expect to achieve is palpable. In this they are custodians of God's world.

RE makes good use of resources such as the local agreed syllabus and Understanding Christianity. Consequently, the RE curriculum is coherent and sequential. RE lessons are a safe place to explore big questions and subsequently pupils become intellectually curious. Pupils are able to recount bible stories, they explore ideas and are comfortable in discussing their thoughts and questions. Frequent visits to St James' Church provide rich opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding. Pupils respect each other's ideas while reflecting upon their own. However, pupils' ability to recall their learning about world religions, beyond Christianity, is not as it should be.

This is such a happy school. It is deeply inclusive, tireless in inspiring all pupils and adults to become the best they can be. Through its Christian foundation the school ensures pupils experience joy, learn to live in harmony while becoming confident, successful learners.

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

Information			
Inspection date	23 January 2024	URN	107106
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	215
Diocese	Sheffield		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Hazel Bell		
Chair	Dan Thaw		
Inspector	Mark Millinson	No.	2121