

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Helme Church of England Academy	
Address	Helme, Meltham, Holmfirth, HD9 5RW
School vision	
<p>Dream, Believe, Achieve</p> <p>God gives everyone talents and skills and it is our responsibility to nurture and develop these to be the best that we can be and improve the world around us for everyone.</p> <p>This is based on The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders have established a vision that is clearly articulated and shared by everyone. It permeates the life of the school and enables each person to recognise and use their individual talents. Leaders, including governors and those in the Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust, know their school well. They have made positive changes to the curriculum and provision in order to further enact the vision. Their accurate self-evaluation and improvement planning demonstrate that they understand what needs to be done next. The Christian vision is lived out through an inclusive culture where everyone is valued and feels that their voice is heard. Leaders actively support the wellbeing of pupils and adults so that they can believe and achieve. Collective worship is valued and influences the lives of both pupils and staff. It has a central role in the school and enhances the understanding of the vision and values. School leaders have given religious education (RE) a high profile across the school. Pupils enjoy the subject and recognise that it plays an important role in their lives. As a result, they learn well and make progress. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed the school's shared language of spirituality. This is so that both planned and spontaneous opportunities enrich the spiritual development of all. Ensure that the planned curriculum for RE enables pupils to deepen their understanding of religions as diverse and living global faiths. Further empower pupils to take independent responsibility for leading and challenging injustice and to act for change locally and globally. 	

Inspection findings

Helme is a happy school where everyone is valued. Leaders and governors are reflective about why their Christian vision is right for the community they serve. All members of the school are empowered to use their talents to achieve well. They are keen to look after each other and have maintained a culture that is deeply caring. Active partnerships, including with the diocese and the Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust, have supported the school to live out its vision. Recently appointed senior leaders have taken action to move the school forward and have the full backing of governors and staff.

Leaders, including governors, have evaluated the vision and challenged its ongoing relevance. It resonates with the vision of the trust and there is a commonality of aspiration and expectation. The desire to allow everyone to dream ambitiously of the things that they wish to accomplish is lived out every day. Governors have a robust monitoring schedule which enables them to see the vision in action, and consequently they know their school well. Leaders appreciate that they have a responsibility to listen to the views of their community and respond appropriately. As a result, pupils and staff say with confidence that they know that their voices will be heard. This enables everyone to develop their academic abilities and natural talents.

Driven by the vision, leaders and governors are ambitious for every pupil, particularly the most vulnerable. They ensure that everyone is fully included in the life of the school. Parents appreciate how leaders have gone 'above and beyond' to ensure all pupils are supported and nurtured. This positively supports pupils' self-confidence and has helped to create learning behaviours that are calm and purposeful. For example, pupils listen quietly and respectfully to stories in RE, and discuss their ideas sensitively. Staff build opportunities for spiritual development into the curriculum and are developing a common understanding of how these can be incorporated into lessons. They can articulate how some spiritual moments enrich their curriculum. Whilst leaders have identified a shared language for spirituality, they appreciate that this needs to be used more consistently. Pupils encounter a range of additional opportunities that broaden their experiences. They regularly learn outdoors and undertake forest school activities which enhance their appreciation of nature. Sometimes, pupils organise activities for each other, such as older pupils running a 'disco club' at lunchtimes for younger pupils.

The school's Christian vision is at the heart of collective worship. This is recognised as a special time when the whole school comes together. Different themes and values are explored, and there is the opportunity for personal reflection. The school prayer, inspired by the vision, is understood by all. Older pupils help by taking responsibility for the planning and delivery of activities. They have helped to evaluate the effectiveness of worship by collecting the views of others. Adjustments have been made to the timing of worship within the school day to ensure that everyone can be included. As a result, it is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Some pupils have been inspired to enact change in their own lives and community. For example, after listening to stories about sportsmanship, pupils have started to shake hands at the end of break time football matches. They have also become more sportsmanlike during matches outside school. Adults say that worship is important to them because it brings the school together. They value the opportunity for a period of calm and reflection in their working lives. Worship themes are continued into classrooms, and individual journals support pupils' spiritual journeys. Following a visit to another school in the trust, school leaders created reflection spaces in each classroom that have common features. These offer the opportunity for spontaneous prayer and reflection, and pupils interact with them throughout the week which enriches their spiritual development.

Pupils and adults speak positively about feeling appreciated at Helme. The vision empowers everyone to dream and believe in themselves. Pupils demonstrate school values and as a result they feel safe, included and appreciated. Staff look after them and they learn and play together positively. A culture that supports wellbeing has been effectively established. This extends to the staff team, who recognise that leaders take action to ensure that good relationships exist and everyone is treated well. Senior leaders offer supportive guidance and feedback. The trust and diocesan partners have provided a range of professional development opportunities, and career enhancement is valued. Effective training has led to staff, including those at the start of their teaching career, feeling confident in undertaking their responsibilities.

There are numerous opportunities for pupils to use their talents and take responsibility in school. They speak enthusiastically about their roles, and can identify where they have made a difference. For example, pupils wrote letters to parents requesting help in developing a peace garden within the school grounds. This has led to offers of support and action. Pupils choose charities that they want to support through fundraising activities. However, their understanding of how they can challenge injustice and make a difference beyond their immediate community is limited.

RE is valued and has a prominent place in the school curriculum. Leaders, inspired by the vision, have recently made deliberate decisions to change planning and provision to ensure that it is challenging and well-sequenced. The RE leader is proactive in seeking and sharing appropriate training from the trust and the diocese. Monitoring and assessment tracking is rigorous and ensures that pupils make good progress. Pupils recognise that RE lessons have enabled them to develop a better understanding and tolerance of others. They enjoy the opportunity to explore 'big questions' and want to learn in depth. They understand that it is important to learn about the beliefs of others and can recall some key facts about different religions. Older pupils are able to use previous knowledge to identify similarities and make comparisons. However, their understanding is quite limited, and changes have been made to the curriculum to address this. Teaching of global faiths, including Christianity as a world religion, is not yet fully embedded.

Helme Church of England Primary Academy is a school that ensures that the vision is central to all of its work. The inspection findings indicate that it is living up to foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	26 February 2024	URN	145556
VC/VA/Academy	Academy (VA)	Pupils on roll	128
Diocese	Diocese of Leeds		
MAT	Learning Accord MAT		
Headteacher	Gillian Spooner		
Chair of Governors	Natasha Dyson		
Inspector	Rick Weights	No.	C23/24