



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

<b>Pool-in-Wharfedale Church of England VC Primary School</b>	
Address	Arthington Lane, Pool in Wharfedale, Otley, LS21 1LG
<b>School vision</b>	
<p><b>BELIEVE &amp; ACHIEVE</b></p> <p>“Everything is possible for one who believes” - Mark 9:23</p> <p>Pool is a welcoming, inclusive and happy school, where everyone is valued and loved. Our high aspirations enable everyone to dream big and learn to become the best version of themselves.</p> <p>We nurture confident, caring individuals who live well together within our diverse, wider community.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our Cornerstone Values</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMPASSION PERSEVERANCE RESPECT WISDOM</b></p>	
<b>School strengths</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders, with the effective support of the diocese, have recently refreshed their Christian vision. This vision is now driving school actions. Pupils, staff, parents and governors speak confidently of how the vision, worked out through the cornerstone values, guides and informs their lives.</li> <li>• The school’s Christian vision underpins the curriculum, hence the recent courageous decision to radically reorganise curriculum provision. This has been done so that all members of the school community can ‘Believe and Achieve’.</li> <li>• Worship is a safe space for pupils and adults to flourish spiritually. Pupils benefit from a varied diet of worship experiences and supportive links with local churches.</li> <li>• Pool-in-Wharfedale school provides a highly nurturing environment. Pastoral support is a strength of the school, providing a wide range of appropriate interventions.</li> <li>• A wide range of pupil leadership opportunities contribute to a sound understanding of vision inspired responsibility and justice in action. Pupils can be the change they want to see.</li> </ul>	
<b>Areas for development</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders have not ensured that the provision, profile, and priority of religious education (RE) results in an effective curriculum. Therefore, leaders should take steps to ensure that RE is of the highest possible quality and standing as part of the whole school curriculum.</li> <li>• To embed the recently refreshed Christian vision, so that it continues to underpin and drive school improvement.</li> <li>• To develop a shared language for spirituality, so that pupils and adults can explore, express and understand this aspect of themselves more deeply.</li> </ul>	
<b>Inspection findings</b>	
The recently refined Christian vision, encapsulated in ‘Believe and Achieve,’ is meaningful to	

members of the school community. Working closely with the diocese, leaders have devoted time and thought to exploring and understanding the biblical basis of the vision. Four cornerstone values have been selected as the practical outworking of the vision. These cornerstone values are known, understood and, pupils correctly say, 'keep you going'. Pupils and adults regularly refer to them as practical guides for living. Governor visits to link classes, 'Believe and Achieve' worship and awards, are effective in ensuring the Christian vision is relevant to all. However, as the process of refreshing the vision has been recent, the vision is not yet deeply embedded.

The curriculum including extra-curricular activities, trips and visits reflects the school's Christian vision. 'Believe and Achieve' in action has empowered leaders to take the difficult decision to completely change the school's curriculum. This curriculum change has secured the flourishing of both pupils and adults at Pool-in-Wharfedale. The cornerstone values days provide an opportunity to explore the vision in action in a creative manner. Careful provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are vulnerable. Daily school life contains many opportunities for spiritual development both planned and spontaneous. This includes regular use of the peace garden, class reflective spaces and daily mindfulness. Pupils recognise the benefit to them of opportunities for prayer and reflection. One pupil described spirituality as 'wholesome' in that it deals with the whole person. There is a spirituality statement in place. However, the lack of a shared vocabulary to talk about spirituality is limiting the impact of their experiences.

The important role of RE in a Church school has not been central to curriculum provision, therefore it is ineffective. It is not appropriately sequenced, balanced, relevant or diverse. Whilst the RE lead is passionate about the subject, it is only recently that any subject development support has been provided. Monitoring of the RE curriculum, gathering pupils' views and attending appropriate staff training are new developments. Therefore, they have not yet made an impact on what and how pupils are learning. Pupils have limited opportunities to engage deeply with RE as a broad and diverse academic subject. However, they do recognise that RE provides them with a safe space to discuss and explore difference. Many pupils do not know their next steps in learning. This makes it difficult for them to articulate their understanding. The inconsistencies within the RE curriculum are preventing high quality RE from existing at Pool-in-Wharfedale.

Collective worship is a special time of day to members of the school community. Worship is underpinned by the school's Christian vision and values. Pupils consider worship at church to be a highlight. It is relevant, memorable and an opportunity for them to build relationships with their 'Buddies' who they support on the journey to church. 'Whooshy worship' (worship using interactive bible stories) is a joyful experience. Members of the school community observe that something important would be missing without their worship experiences at school. Adults recognise that they also benefit from the opportunity to stop and reflect on what school worship offers them. Pupils and adults are flourishing spiritually through a varied diet of collective worship experiences. Visitors who lead worship and opportunities for worship in local churches or the school grounds enrich the worship experience for all. Thoughtful and effective provision is made for those who find attending whole school worship overwhelming. This has been so effective that some pupils have, over the course of the year, felt able to join whole school worship.

Pool-in-Wharfedale school has an inclusive, calm and orderly atmosphere. Positive behaviour and attendance are strengths of the school. A parent said correctly, 'I felt immediately welcomed here'. Staff are a very close-knit team, who live out the Christian vision in the way they support their pupils and one another. Appropriately challenging staff training has recently been sourced through the diocese and local authority. Attentive provision is made for the wellbeing and positive mental health of both pupils and adults. This includes 'drop-ins' for pupils, families and staff and appropriate support for those delivering the mental health interventions. The Kingfisher room provides a safe space with sensory activities for social times. The pupil Mindmate ambassadors have received



relevant training and support their peers with sensitivity. A wide range of tailored pastoral interventions include guinea pig club, nurture group, communication group and support for pupils with anxiety issues. Parents recognise that recent changes in leadership have been positive and particularly appreciate the visibility of senior leaders who are easily accessible.

There are numerous highly valued opportunities within daily school life for pupils to demonstrate responsibility. Pupils recognise the benefit this has on their own lives as well as those they are helping. The buddy system is widespread, well-established and has an ongoing impact even when pupils have left Pool-in-Wharfedale school. Pupils are proud of their roles including Games Leaders, Digital Leaders, Pool Pals, Mindmate ambassadors and being members of the Worship Collective. They can clearly link their reasons for taking on these roles to the school's Christian vision. The whole curriculum is contributing to pupils' awareness of justice and empowering them to be agents of change. This includes meeting other young people who are refugees, which has had a powerful impact on them. Other justice related opportunities include a Key Stage 2 leadership award, Eco club and the cornerstone value day on conservation. The conservation day is shared with the wider community via the Otley carnival. Members of the school community are proud of sharing their passion for conservation in a wider forum.

The inspection findings indicate that Pool-in-Wharfedale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School has strengths, but that there are also issues that leaders need to address as a matter of priority. These issues relate to RE and are listed in the areas for development.

Information			
Inspection date	11 July 2024	URN	108000
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	193
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Sally Fox		
Chair	Joanne Pellow		
Inspector	Ruth Houston	No.	947