

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Crowlees Church of England VC Junior and Infant School

Vision

Our school is a place where happy memories are made. Everyone feels safe, cared for and learns to care for others; is valued for being themselves; is supported in learning to make the right decisions and challenged to be the best they can be.

This vision is underpinned by our shared Crowlees Christian values and rooted in the words of St Paul in Corinthians chapter 16 verse 13 ‘Stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.’

Strengths

- Driven by the Christian vision, highly committed, knowledgeable governors work in close partnership with school leaders. This enables them, through rigorous monitoring and careful evaluation, to ‘stand firm’ when taking actions for further improvement.
- A challenging, well-rounded curriculum, with outdoor education at its heart, ensures that pupils flourish spiritually. This is because the vision is lived out in Christian values, such as respect, which permeate every aspect of provision.
- Inclusion is a particular strength at Crowlees. The welcoming culture, based on strong affirmative relationships, ensures that each person’s individuality is accepted and celebrated. Pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are cherished by adults and pupils. This enables them and their supportive peers to thrive in school.
- Collective worship is welcoming and inspirational for the whole school community. The concept of ‘pray as you pray’, invites people to take part in prayer in a way that suits their beliefs. It enables pupils to engage fully so that they learn about how others make good choices. This helps pupils to develop spiritually as they look outward to the world around them.

Development Points

- Embed the new religious education (RE) curriculum in order to raise the profile of the subject. This is to create greater opportunities for pupils to show in their own work the depth and diversity of religious and philosophical beliefs they encounter in lessons.
- Further develop pupils’ understanding of injustice and equity. This is to equip them to become agents of change, able to make a positive difference for themselves and others.



Inspection Findings

The school is a warm, welcoming community, founded on positive relationships that give each person the confidence to 'stand firm'. The Christian vision is a thread woven through every aspect of life at this vibrant Church school. Leaders and governors work together closely to ensure that every action they take and every decision they make is driven by the vision. Careful monitoring and thoughtful evaluation enables them to identify the next steps in the school's journey. They live out the vision by standing firm when prioritising the school budget to provide what the pupils need. Examples include recognising that the changing needs of pupils made a sensory room a necessity and providing it. Leaders also deploy staff carefully to where they will make the greatest impact on pupil flourishing. Teamwork and positive relationships amongst and between staff, pupils, parents, governors and the church ensure that people thrive here. Morale is high and staff feel valued, respected and supported.

The well-established curriculum, with a focus on outdoor education, promotes pupils' growth and development. The regular experience that pupils have in the forest school enhances several subjects, ensuring a well-rounded, challenging curriculum. In line with the Christian vision, pupils create memories and grow spiritually through opportunities to interact with the natural world. Varied activities steadily increase pupils' independence, giving them the courage to acquire new skills outside that support them later. They experience awe in making campfire food. They notice the views around them and they wonder at how natural materials can make dyes to use in art work. These experiences contribute to pupils developing positive personal attributes, such as teamwork, communication and other life skills. Their work outside complements a thoughtfully constructed curriculum, with planned opportunities to develop their spirituality, and to grow personally. This is just one aspect that parents value highly. They know how well staff develop the whole child. In this way, the curriculum truly embodies the vision. Leaders are determined that external pressures, such as budget considerations, do not turn them from providing what pupils need.

Collective worship is a joyful time to gather and to grow spiritually. Pupils and adults enjoy the opportunity to 'pray as we pray' so that whatever their faith, they feel welcomed. Leaders plan carefully for this in order to ensure that pupils feel encouraged to want to join in prayer and sing. The pupil collective worship leaders are involved in readings, drama and stories which engage their peers. Worship is shaped by the vision through its focus on Christian values, such as courage and compassion, and on inspirational people. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of individuals who have faced challenges in their lives. They explore how people tackle difficulties to make a positive difference for themselves and others. Displays referring to worship provoke further thought and consideration of the big questions that have been explored. This looking out into the world enables pupils to see beyond themselves and to develop their spirituality. They are taught to consider the choices that they make and what sort of person they want to become. This prepares them well for life after primary school. Very strong links with the church team provide varied worship opportunities, which benefit the whole school community. Similarly, the outside Peace Circle is a space for personal reflection and prayer, which further enhances spiritual development.

Highly positive relationships are at the very heart of Crowlees Church of England School. This is another feature valued by parents, as is the school's approach to promoting good mental health. The care and love they experience inspires pupils and adults with the confidence and self-belief to grow and develop in many ways. Pupils are taught to 'stand firm' in the face of difficulties with friends and they use this knowledge when making their own choices. They recognise that in order to treat everyone with respect, a core Christian value, they must do the right thing. Work on exploring Christian values starts as soon as pupils join the school. During the inspection, a child in Reception explained compassion as 'kindness with understanding', demonstrating considerable knowledge. This forms the early foundations for the good behavior seen in school, particularly in



lessons. Pupils understand the value in learning and meet the high expectations that leaders have for them. They readily accept that some pupils need additional support from staff and their peers, and are eager to provide encouragement. As a result, pupils with SEND thrive, as do their classmates who develop personally, socially and emotionally by supporting them. This creates a culture of inclusion, dignity and respect that enables pupils to flourish.

The school's Christian vision plays an integral part in enabling pupils to embrace responsibility. The school has been instrumental in devising the Mirfield Respect Programme to teach pupils about respect for self, others and the community. It is an outreach of the Christian vision because it influences how pupils develop across the town. Hearing about inspirational people in collective worship forms a foundation for pupils to learn to take responsibility for their actions. This is complemented by well-planned personal, social and emotional education (PSHE) and teaching about mindfulness. Pupils are beginning to recognise injustice and want to make a positive difference. They have well-established opportunities to take social action within their community such as by litter picking. They also take thoughtful action relating to what they achieve when awarded house points. Instead of 'spending them' on small plastic treats, they donate them to a charity of their choice. This is a conscious decision to reduce plastic consumption by giving up a 'treat' in order to help others through the school's subsequent charity donation. Pupils are in the early stages of considering how they can tackle injustice. Leaders are introducing them to ways that they can influence those in power within and beyond their immediate community. Pupils are starting to see how they might make a positive difference by becoming agents of change.

Thorough monitoring in RE has resulted in leaders identifying the need for a change in syllabus. The newly adopted one is thoughtfully chosen because it provides the necessary diverse, challenging and relevant learning. Leaders have planned more regular opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their philosophical and religious knowledge and understanding in their work. This is enabling leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the new syllabus and is beginning to raise the profile of RE. Leaders partner with the diocese to provide training that continuously develops teachers' skills and knowledge to the benefit of pupils. Leaders and governors evaluate the subject thoughtfully and with determination to ensure that, through RE, pupils flourish.

Information

Address	Springfield Park, Mirfield, West Yorkshire, WF14 9PD		
Date	17 September 2024	URN	107725
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	421
Diocese	Leeds		
Headteacher	Kathy Woods		
Chair of Governors	Helen Butler		
Inspector	Melanie Barratt		