

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

### Penny Bridge Church of England Academy

#### Vision

Let your light shine.

At Penny Bridge CE Academy, we endeavour to give every member of our school community the opportunity to let their light shine, allowing individuals to reach their potential in all aspects of school life. Everyone has a sense of belonging, is understood and is valued. Through our chosen learning behaviours, we take notice of how our actions can have a positive impact on others and are aware of what we can achieve. We are supportive of others and are thankful and appreciative of what we have. By being active, we view our minds and body as one to feel good and know the importance of understanding our locality and our place in the world. Respect and tolerance of other faiths, cultures and diversity underpins our curriculum.

Penny Bridge Church of England Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

#### Strengths

- The Christian vision is lived out by leaders at all levels. Associated values such as compassion, generosity and thankfulness help the school community to flourish and grow.
- The school recognises and values the unique talents of pupils. The Christian vision shapes the school's approach to providing support for pupils with additional needs. This enables them to 'shine their light'.
- Partnerships within the trust and diocese are strong. These partnerships enhance a culture of wellbeing and good mental health of adults and pupils. The underpinning Christian vision positively impacts on lives, within and outside school. This leads to excellent relationships and a culture of improvement.
- Effective leadership in religious education (RE) has established a relevant curriculum which enhances pupils' learning. Challenging questions are used to explore concepts of meaning and purpose. They contribute substantially to pupils' understanding of Christianity as a diverse world faith.

#### Development Points

- Enhance opportunities for spiritual development in collective worship. This is to extend the way it enables adults and pupils to flourish spiritually.
- Embed and extend pupils' opportunities and experiences in RE. This is to enable pupils to develop a deep understanding of the impact of religious and non-religious worldviews.



## Inspection Findings

Penny Bridge is successful in enabling pupils and adults to flourish. This is because the Christian vision is deeply rooted in the context of a small school that is continuing to grow. The strong sense of community is evident, and adults and pupils feel a sense of belonging. Underpinned by Jesus' teaching, the vision is lived out through twelve values, which include thankfulness, peace, perseverance and generosity. All twelve are well known throughout the academy. They are used as part of everyday language of learning. Governors know the school well and their frequent meetings with subject leaders ensure that governors' monitoring is rigorous and effective. Observations and feedback lead to a cycle of continuous improvement. Regular contact with one or more governors ensures the staff and pupils are well supported and are a 'shining light' to guide the school. The trust vision 'life in all its fullness' aligns well with the vision of the school. Leaders across the trust have completed Christian leadership courses and bring their wealth of knowledge to aid flourishing in school.

Care is shown to pupils and staff ensure they have the best opportunities possible. Adults feel very valued and supported by their headteacher and senior staff. Staff embody the Christian vision in their caring for pupils. This leads to good relationships between staff and pupils. Staff who have retired often come back to volunteer on a regular basis, as they consider it a 'privilege' to be part of this community. A member of the governing body is a mental health practitioner and lends expertise to staff in the form of advice and training. This enables staff to have positive mental health, in turn leading to their flourishing.

Inclusive collective worship provides daily opportunity for reflection and stillness. Prayer, silence and song allow pupils to engage and reflect on the meaning of worship themes and values. This provides freedom for all pupils, including those with no religious faith, to be present and to engage with integrity. The ethos committee talks of worship as a time to think quietly. Pupils know that collective worship is a time for them to reflect on their own lives and the world. Collective worship is mainly led by adults. Pupils have limited involvement in organising, initiating and reviewing aspects of worship. This means they do not have a sound understanding of the part that they can play in developing their own spirituality within the school. Pupils reflect and answer big questions resulting in a deeper level of thinking during worship. However, the school does not have a shared language for talking about spirituality. Governors are invited into school and work with pupils during lessons and collective worship, answering thought provoking questions together. This shows pupils the importance of collaboration.

The vision permeates pupils' energy and passion for helping others with their light and becoming agents of change. Pupils speak of justice and responsibility for their local area. Pupils from Key Stage 2 are able to serve in their local community as part of the community café and 'pop up' post office. The need for residents to have access to a local post office and community space was met by the school. Governors volunteer in the school to share reading, outdoor activities and ethos committee meetings. The vicar from the local church and Methodist minister offer support to pupils and staff and work closely with the ethos committee. This provides opportunities for pupils to engage in deeper conversations about God. Parents talk of the faith pupils 'gain' from attending the school having an impact on their home lives. A pupil was able to reflect on the values taught in school and tell her younger brother they were 'showing no compassion'.

The RE leader and link governor monitor the subject's effectiveness well and offer training and encouragement to develop staff knowledge. The diocesan syllabus is well embedded at the school. The syllabus is effective and is enabling pupils to understand core Christian concepts. 'Big' questions, are used in RE lessons enabling pupils to have a safe space in which to answer freely. Pupils know about and understand Christianity as a living and diverse



world faith. They are able to speak of biblical texts and reflect on how Christians make decisions based on Jesus' example. Teachers use sensory stories to help pupils experience the Christmas story in Luke's gospel. Challenge in the RE curriculum is evident across some of the school, however opportunities to critically engage with rich texts are limited. Whilst pupils' knowledge about Christianity is secure, they are not clear in their understanding of belief and practice in all major world faiths. Some pupils mix up religious celebrations, traditions and key beliefs.

The school's Christian vision and values drive curriculum planning and extra-curricular provision. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on the core value for that half term. This gives space for the pupils to link their learning to the value. An example of this is how joy can impact on people's life even if they are less fortunate. Extra-curricular activities are used to ensure pupils are given experiences that widen horizons. These include trips to the Buddhist temple in the nearby town, a trip to London, sports clubs, quiz club and cycling proficiency. The pupils talk of these with enthusiasm. Those pupils who have special educational needs and disability (SEND) are supported particularly well. Their interests and passions are taken into consideration when planning activities and extra-curricular clubs. Pupils are monitored closely by staff and gaps in their learning are identified quickly. Pupils have access to all lessons with scaffolding and structures in place to enable them to succeed and flourish. Leaders ensure opportunities for pupils to shine are central. Different styles of learning, such as visual and hands on, are pivotal to lessons, so all pupils have the chance to shine. The school makes effective use of its rural location with planned activities that boost wellbeing and provide reflective and spiritual moments in nature. One prominent feature is the morning 'walk around' outside. Staff, parents and pupils together enjoy this peaceful, shared start to the day. This allows for shared spiritual moments and time to flourish together.

Collaboration with other schools through the trust and the local cluster enables staff to share good practice in RE. This leads to continued improvement, stringent monitoring and continued improvement. The RE curriculum is revisited and revised regularly due to fluctuating numbers in classes. This ensures continuity and depth of knowledge in the subject. Staff benefit from a range of diocesan training opportunities.

## Information

Address	Greenodd, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 7RQ		
Date	27 November 2024	URN	140306
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	120
Diocese	Carlisle		
MAT	The Good Shepherd Trust		
Headteacher	Graham Carrick		
CEO of Trust	Claire Render		
Chair of Governors	Martin Cooper		
Inspector	Claire Clark		