

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Kirkby la Thorpe Church of England Primary Academy

Vision

‘Building a Hopeful Future through Kindness, Learning and Trust.’

At Kirkby la Thorpe, we strive to ensure that each person is empowered to flourish and contribute positively to society. We seek to equip our pupils with the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary to navigate the complexities of our world, rooting this in Christian love.

Kirkby la Thorpe Church of England Primary 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 deeply embedded. It is underpinned by the example of St Thomas, Jesus’ disciple. This ensures that the decision-making and actions of leaders at all levels result in the flourishing of pupils and adults.
- This is a school where people are treated well. The vision, and the focus on St Thomas, inspire confidence in learning, kindness and trust. This enables adults and pupils to understand how to treat others in the model of Christian love.
- The curriculum is rooted in the Christian vision. This ensures that pupils are empowered to flourish in their own way, whatever their starting points.
- Adults and pupils have a clear understanding of spirituality. A common language enables them to effectively express their spiritual flourishing. As a result, their individual spiritual development is enriched.

Development Points

- Develop the religious education (RE) curriculum so that there is a greater focus on exploring religions and worldviews through different perspectives. This is to deepen pupils’ understanding of the nature of belief and its impact on people’s lives today.
- Explore Bible stories more deeply in collective worship. This is to enable pupils to have a greater understanding of the Christian story, providing further inspiration for their spiritual flourishing.
- Extend the range of partners contributing to collective worship. This is to engage pupils and adults with wider experiences of Christian worship, enriching their spiritual flourishing.



Inspection Findings

Kirkby la Thorpe Church of England Primary Academy has a clear identity, firmly rooted in its Church school foundation. Through successful and inspiring leadership, there is a compelling ethos, enthusiasm and ambition. The established Christian vision lies at the heart and flourishing of the school community, underpinned by the story of St Thomas. His example of courage, trust, curiosity and perseverance is the driving force behind the living out of this vision. Commanding wide ownership, pupils and adults reference its far-reaching influence. This includes understanding the importance of being curious and asking questions as well as recognising the value of perseverance. The vision, therefore, is clearly understood and its meaning accessible. Values of kindness, learning and trust support this. Pupils talk about trusting Jesus, even in challenging times, because 'St Thomas trusted him'. They are praised when they live out a value. Celebratory 'Who shone?' worship at the end of the week honours this. Governors are active and effective in supporting and challenging the school. They ensure that a hopeful future is offered to pupils and families.

The school's planned curriculum and extra-curricular activities are shaped by the vision. Pupils are nurtured, enabling them to develop their gifts. The vision is lived out in their learning because they are empowered to flourish, whatever their starting points. Outdoor learning, visits and visitors support this. A range of extra-curricular activities including sport, music and a young carers group, enables pupils to understand how they can contribute positively to society. Engagement in these activities also supports their flourishing. The curriculum successfully provides for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. They thrive because staff skilfully provide targeted support, including sensory circuits. Engaging in carefully chosen activities enables pupils to regulate their behaviours and be ready for learning. There is a shared understanding of spirituality. Whenever possible, staff identify points of spiritual encounter in the curriculum. Pupils take time to pause, reflect and consider possible actions, contributing significantly to their spiritual flourishing. Committed to raising the aspirations of pupils, governors look beyond their school, engaging in partnerships more widely. Supporting the provision of a day for pupils focussing on the construction industry being an example. Such partnerships provide wider opportunities than pupils might otherwise have in a small, rural school, supporting their flourishing.

RE is a subject with a high profile. The subject leader is supported by the diocese, thus driving developments. This has included sequencing the curriculum to support changes to pupil groupings across year groups and key stages. As a result, it is relevant and appropriately challenging for pupils. A range of religions, including Christianity, and non-religious worldviews are explored. Pupils show knowledge of these at an age-appropriate level. However, there is insufficient focus on enabling them to explore deeper questions and to consider the impact of beliefs on people's lives. SEND pupils access learning in RE because the curriculum is adapted to meet their needs. This includes providing additional resources and materials. As a result, they thrive. Pupils learn RE enthusiastically and with obvious enjoyment. This ensures that it impacts positively on their lives. The RE leader supports teachers, sharing new initiatives and ideas. As a result, the curriculum is being shaped to ensure it continues to meet the needs of pupils effectively.

The rhythm of collective worship threads through daily life, enhancing the spiritual life of pupils and adults. Christian in character and focus, worship is co-operatively planned. Pupils are engaged in this because they are appointed as collective worship champions. Working with staff ensures good coverage and balance, exploring the schools' values and issues in the wider world. As a result, pupils understand the importance and relevance of



worship. The school's clear understanding of spirituality supports this, enabling both reflection and challenge. Times of prayer, reflection and singing enrich worship. All are welcome to take part if they wish. Bible stories are referenced in worship but there is insufficient focus on these in the planning and delivery. Pupils do not find it easy to explain what the stories mean. In addition, their understanding of how biblical messages can be applied to everyday life is limited. Support for pupils with additional needs is sensitive and effective. Adults sit alongside those who need a physical and therapeutic presence, enabling their engagement with worship. Staff benefit from the times of reflection that collective worship brings, finding that the pupils' reflections inspire their own thoughts. Partnership with the local church is strong through supporting collective worship and ensuring the school accesses the church building for worship and learning. This provides a natural link for families and the school community with their local church. Opportunities for pupils and adults to experience different worship styles in collective worship, however, are limited. In classrooms, pupils pause and reflect at specially created reflection areas. These support their spiritual flourishing.

The vision inspires a culture of care and compassion. Pupils experience Christian love based on the example of Jesus, lived out in the lives of those around them. In this highly inclusive school, people are treated with dignity and equity. Pupils learn to be positive and active citizens through the school's approach to behaviour. Strong attention to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing is a constant theme, characterising the school's ethos. Those who face challenging circumstances are supported and enabled to move forward. Leaders emphasise the importance of 'standing alongside people'. This results in adults and pupils knowing there is always someone to listen to them and offer support. Building strong relationships is key. This ensures that when difficult conversations are needed, there is a depth of respect and understanding. The small staff team offers support to one another. This approach is highly valued and contributes significantly to their wellbeing.

Pupils look outwards from their school to a wider world. This is because the vision shapes a culture of justice and responsibility, supporting them to contribute positively to society. They show responsibility through school-wide duties. Caring for each other's interests within school extends to those outside. Showing kindness in school prompts them to consider how they show kindness to their family. Pupils have a strong sense of justice. They express this as something 'being out of shape' and needing to work at 'putting it in shape again'. Learners show a deep compassion for the environment as well as people and animals who are disadvantaged. This sense of compassion fuels their determination to help. The eco-team actively initiates litter picking in the village. Raising money and awareness of, and support for, an animal charity has ensured pupils know they make a difference. Such activities enable them to recognise the challenges in the world around them and their responsibility to help 'make life better'.

Information

Address	Church Lane, Kirkby la Thorpe, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9NU		
Date	20 March 2025	URN	140445
Type of school	Primary Academy (formerly Voluntary Controlled)	No. of pupils	104
Diocese	Lincoln		
MAT/Federation	Stand-alone academy		
Headteacher	Clare Early		
Chair of Governors	Andy Parker		
Inspector	Jane Lewis		