

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dr Thomlinson Church of England Middle School	
Address	Silverton Lane, Rothbury, NE66 7RJ
School vision	
<p>“The Spirit’s presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.” (1 Corinthians 12:7)</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision and associated values are at the core of leaders' actions and decisions. Consequently, adults and pupils bloom as a result of the inclusive and distinctive Christian vision. • Inspired by the Christian vision, leaders create a broad and balanced curriculum that provides a rich variety of extracurricular activities and school visits. Through this, pupils experience an abundance of interests which broaden their horizons. • The curriculum creates a culture where pupils can articulate their voice. As a consequence, pupils understand the importance of tolerance and diversity. • Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school. It is well-organised, planned and evaluated. As a result, pupils and adults encounter opportunities to develop spiritually. • Religious education (RE) is relevant, effectively planned and considers the needs of pupils. This means that they have a secure knowledge and understanding of a range of worldviews and religions. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the shared understanding of spirituality and strengthen opportunities for spiritual development within worship and across all subject areas. This is to extend the ways that pupils and adults have to grow spiritually. • Extend meaningful experiences for pupils to engage in social action projects across the whole curriculum. This is so all are empowered to be agents of change. • Ensure assessment language is accessible to all pupils. This is to enable them to have a clear understanding of the next steps in their learning. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The school’s Christian vision, grounded in St Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, encourages all to use their talents to benefit others. Core Christian values such as thankfulness enrich the Christian vision. Pupils talk about the relevance and importance of the values applying to all individuals regardless of personal faith or views. The vision of the Cheviot Learning Trust (the trust) closely aligns with the Christian vision of the school. The trust provides expertise and support in a number of areas to Dr Thomlinson. As a consequence, the school is stronger within the trust family. Monitoring of the vision by school leaders, including governors, guides their actions. This positively impacts on the effectiveness of this as a Church school.</p>	



Guided by the Christian vision, pupils benefit from the breath of the curriculum and the range of extracurricular provision. Enrichment activities provide important learning opportunities beyond the classroom and are accessible to all, creating special memories. Consequently, pupils gain knowledge and skills through meaningful experiences which enrich their learning. The focus on spoken communication in the curriculum strengthens pupils' confidence in sharing different opinions. This enhances the way they are tolerant with each other.

Through living out the vision, pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) prosper. Individualised learning within lessons and plentiful intervention groups are evident throughout the school. This is strengthened by close parental links, extending opportunities for pupils who have SEND to flourish. This enables pupils to thrive due to the appropriate personalised support provided.

The school uses the beautiful rural area to enhance the curriculum by the formation of the forest school. This has created an inspiring and inclusive learning environment where pupils can appreciate the wonder of God's creation. Shaped by the Christian vision, pupils work for the good of the planet by improving nature such as by creating bird boxes. Learning to preserve the environment means that pupils understand the importance of looking after the planet for future generations.

Staff and pupils are at an early stage of using a shared language for spirituality. They are given opportunities to think about self, others, nature and beyond to experience spirituality. However, not all curriculum areas provide moments for spiritual development. Pupils enjoy choosing a different act of kindness to carry out during the day throughout the season of Lent. This has established opportunities for spiritual growth where pupils can safely think, learn, reflect and make connections in accordance with the Christian vision.

Collective worship is rooted in the Christian vision and offers adults and pupils the opportunity to develop spiritually. However the impact of these opportunities is not fully clear due to the early stage that the school is at with this. Worship is invitational. There is no compulsion to participate and it inspires pupils due to the assortment of experiences such as music and reflection. Worship is inclusive and provides a range of experiences connected to the lives of pupils. Staff talk about worship impacting on their increased ability to hold deeper, thought provoking conversations. Pupils enjoy worship as it is interactive, educational and they value the togetherness as community. Prayer stations offer chances for pupils to write personal prayers linked to the Christian values.

Inspired by the Christian vision, worship is monitored and evaluated by leaders in order to cultivate improvements. For example, pupils' request for the use of film clips extends their sense of enjoyment to learn about themselves, others and the world around them. The school maintains a strong connection with All Saints Church. Services create meaningful opportunities to develop spiritually through traditional Anglican worship. However, the way adults and pupils can articulate the impact of this on them is less clear. This is because the school is at an early stage of using their language of spirituality. Pupils are given special chances to plan and lead on worship. As a consequence, pupils can use their imagination and creativity to reflect on their own experiences.

The Christian vision creates a caring culture throughout the school. Parents state that their children are confident because they are loved, valued and cared for. Interventions such as 'morning mindfulness' enhance adults and pupils' mental health. This enables them to feel safe, emotionally supported and cared for due to the importance placed on their wellbeing. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Inspired by the vision, all are viewed as uniquely made 'children of God.' Pupils have adults available to talk to. This is a much-valued support during difficult times.

The Christian vision has inspired pupils to become agents of change through the formation of groups such as the Think Pink Group. Through writing letters and considering inequality within the world, pupils appreciate the importance of challenging injustice. However, opportunities for all pupils to engage as agents for change are less developed. Pupils demonstrate an eagerness to support others beyond their local area, such as a link school in Zambia. They feel concern for those vulnerable children in other countries who have to walk long distances to school.

The RE curriculum reflects the Christian vision of the school. Planning within the curriculum is well-sequenced. Staff access helpful training through the diocese. This extends their breadth of knowledge which supports the effective delivery of the curriculum. Pupils learn about a range of religions and worldviews alongside Christianity. This enhances the way they show respect for others and make informed choices. Visits to places of worship help pupils retain learning. Such visits deepen their understanding of diversity within religions.

Influenced by the Christian vision, pupils are challenged within RE and enjoy lessons. A variety of teaching styles such as writing speeches, interpreting pictures and extended writing enhances the enjoyment of learning. Teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and governors. As an impact, meaningful change has occurred with adaptations of resources and extra support within lessons. Use of deeper questions to challenge knowledge, combined with extra support for those who find the work difficult, enhance pupils' understanding. Pupils value guidance from staff and time to draft written work. They speak about how feedback can support their learning. However, assessment language is not always clear to pupils. This means some are unsure about the next steps in their learning. Teachers make necessary curriculum adjustments to support pupil progress.

Pupils feel special and valued at Dr Thomlinson leading to positive engagement in learning together with caring relationships. The Christian vision flows through each aspect of school life, benefiting all.

The inspection findings indicate that Dr Thomlinson Church of England Middle School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	18 March 2024	URN	145639
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	193
Diocese	Newcastle		
MAT/Federation	Cheviot Learning Trust		
Headteacher	Liam Murtagh		
Chair	Sylvia Crane		
Inspector	Lindsay Henderson	No.	2229