

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Prior's Mill Church of England Primary School, Billingham	
Address	Clifton Avenue, Stockton-on-Tees, Billingham, TS22 5BX
School vision	
<p>The Parable of the Mustard Seed – Mark 4:30-32</p> <p>'What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.'</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deeply embedded Christian vision at Prior's Mill drives the actions of the school. It is reflective of the passionate guidance from senior leaders and the local governing body. In partnership with the Melrose Learning trust, this enables adults and children to flourish. • The Christian vision securely underpins the school's curriculum and its outworking, through the 'Prior's Promise.' This rigorously enhances the learning experience of pupils. • Collective Worship is a powerfully inclusive moment each day enriched by a culture of prayer, reflection and spiritual development. Through this, pupils are inspired to appreciate the rich tapestry of human experience and existence. • Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of their local context. Wellbeing and good mental health are central to a culture of dignity and respect, leading to the flourishing of all. • The religious education (RE) curriculum at Prior's Mill is comprehensively planned, balanced and challenging. It enables pupils to acquire a deep knowledge of Christian belief and practice as a living and diverse faith. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with the Melrose Learning Trust and local governing body, extend systems for monitoring this as a Church school. This is to enhance the way the RE curriculum meets the needs of staff and pupils. • Enhance the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults through strengthening partnerships with the local parish church team. • Building on their growing experiences at a local level, extend pupils' ability to challenge issues of injustices nationally and globally. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>A deeply embedded Christian vision, at Prior's Mill Church of England Primary School, is central to the flourishing of adults and children. Leaders ensure the school's distinctly Christian vision is guiding the life and learning experience of all pupils. The vision at Prior's Mill is closely aligned with that of the Melrose Learning Trust which the school joined in 2023. The relationship between the school and the trust is based on connection and collaboration. It strengthens the expression and reality of the school's Christian vision and provides wide-ranging opportunities for school</p>	

improvement and staff development.

The outworking of the school's values in the 'Prior's Promise' creates an environment in which all are enriched and inspired. Following this promise is fundamental to leaders' rationale to keep children safe at school, at home and online. Values, which flow from the parable of the mustard seed, are enhanced with stories about Jesus' life. These provide a focus and example for even the youngest pupils to guide their words and actions. Leaders create the right conditions, just as in the parable of the mustard seed, for learners to be nourished and grow. Beautiful mustard trees are located throughout the school serving as focal points for prayer and reflection further reinforcing this vision. Leaders, and partners, work tirelessly to enable pupils and adults to flourish. They inspire pupils to care for others and learn how their gifts and growth can benefit those around them.

Collective worship is a daily opportunity for prayer, reflection and spiritual development which inspires pupils to live out the school's vision. Worship enables pupils to flourish through profoundly spiritual moments. As the prayer candle is extinguished, pupils are offered the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' love and consider how to put the words of worship into action throughout the day. Key Stage 2 pupils explain that this is a powerful moment that motivates them to reflect on how they should behave. A worship group, composed of pupils, supports the delivery of worship through drama and prayer. Older children assist new members of this group which demonstrates the sense of support and nurture that exists at Prior's Mill. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to, evaluate and lead collective worship at both class and whole school level. This sense of ownership strengthens pupils' commitment to uphold the 'Prior's Promise.'

Worship is coherently planned and expertly linked to the vision, ensuring that this is reinforced daily for pupils and adults. Whole school collective worship sets the tone for the week and both staff and pupils recognise the value in this. A comprehensive plan supports all staff to lead class and key stage worship throughout the week. In these moments, themes are developed and unpicked further in an age-appropriate way fostering the spiritual flourishing of all. Collective worship is enhanced through local partnerships. Representatives of the local church lead worship half-termly. 'Parish Friends' support Open the Book sessions for Key Stage 1 pupils regularly and Eucharistic services are held termly. Parents' insightful comments demonstrate the powerful impact worship has on many who have attended. These external partnerships provide supportive links from the wider community that are contributing to the flourishing of all at Prior's Mill. Leaders continue to explore opportunities to develop partnerships with Billingham Team Parish to share in the spiritual flourishing of all. Pupils and adults have a clear understanding of what spiritual development means to them at Prior's Mill. Leaders recognise that this can be extended from the key role it plays in collective worship to influence the wider curriculum. The way intentional moments of spiritual reflection are embedded within the curriculum is at an early stage of development.

Wellbeing and good mental health is a fundamental part of the vision at Prior's Mill. In collaboration with the trust and local governing body, wellbeing support is nurturing and inclusive. The local governing body are passionate about protecting the welfare of staff and pupils. Decisions are made which are ethical and reflective of the needs of the community. The trust's mental health and wellbeing lead trains staff to support the needs of parents and pupils. Access to mental health support, visits from a therapy pony and the appointment of a pupil welfare officer reinforce this. Volunteers from the parish are a weekly presence in the Key Stage 1 yard to support the needs of younger pupils. These actions have a powerful flourishing effect and reflect the value that leaders place on treating all with dignity and respect.

The RE curriculum at Prior's Mill is effectively planned and confidently led by senior leaders. Collaborative work with the diocese and Stockton local authority ensures that the RE curriculum meets local needs. The priority placed on RE at Prior's Mill reflects its key place in the curriculum of a

Church school. Recent changes ensure that the curriculum is well-balanced, relevant and diverse. Learners are able to acquire knowledge about Christianity as a living and diverse faith through the school's approach to Christianity as a global faith. Senior leaders use different depictions of Jesus from a range of cultures and continue to invest in diverse religious reading books. This builds an inclusive and equitable culture where all are welcomed.

Pupils reflect confidently on the impact of faith on their lives. Older pupils accurately talk of being the mustard tree for younger pupils reflecting on how they protect and nurture them. The 'Prior's Promise Pals' seek out pupils demonstrating the 'Prior's Promise' and award them with certificates at celebration worship. These examples demonstrate the characteristics which enable pupils at Prior's Mill to thrive.

Regular opportunities to challenge injustice exist at the local level. Pupils speak enthusiastically about changes they have achieved in their school community and the local area which have had a positive impact. These include reducing waste and the appropriate disposal of school dinner stickers. Leaders acknowledge that courageous advocacy is in its infancy and are developing opportunities to explore wider issues of injustice nationally and globally. Positive steps are already being taken in this area with valuable work being undertaken in relation to the 'global goals.' These steps inspire learners to be agents for change who recognise and challenge injustice.

Throughout the school, displays, reflection areas and biblical quotes reflect the spiritual journey that the school is on. Parents, staff and pupils support the 'Prior's Promise' and recognise the benefit it has for their school community. Pupils are consulted and listened to. The school community has created a permanent room providing all with opportunities to pray and reflect. This was created following feedback from pupils and highlights the power of pupil voice at Prior's Mill. A pupil explained that this was for any adult or child, of any religion, who needed a quiet place. Leaders are unwavering in their drive to empower the school community to flourish and grow in their God-given gifts.

The inspection findings indicate that Prior's Mill Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

Information			
Inspection date	23 October 2023	URN	149706
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	433
Diocese	Durham		
MAT/Federation	Melrose Learning Trust		
Headteacher	Richard Linsley		
Chair	Kevin Cooper		
Inspector	Kevin Taggart	No.	2246