

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Corbridge Church of England Aided First School

Address	St Helen's Lane, Corbridge Northumberland NE45 5JQ		
Date of inspection	14 October 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Newcastle	URN	122287

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Corbridge is a first school with 150 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The leadership structure has changed to accommodate a partnership with a neighbouring school sharing an executive headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The school's Christian vision

With God's guidance we all strive every day to be 'the best that we can be.' This is based on Matthew 5:16: 'In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'

Key findings

- The school is a trailblazer within the diocese, leading innovation through partnership working, for the benefit of the wider community.
- Inspirational leadership drives the Christian vision, so that all adults and pupils strive to give their best each and every day, living well together and achieving academic success.
- The headteacher is passionate about the school, its pupils, staff and parents and is supported by an equally dedicated teaching team. Their leadership is transforming the lives of the pupils, enabling all to flourish.
- Leadership is cascaded throughout the school, as a result the pupils are highly confident and excel in their leadership roles. By way of giving thanks for all that they have, pupils organise an impressive range of charitable activities.
- Highly engaging collective worship, greatly enriched by the strong partnership with the church, inspires pupils to apply the biblical teaching about trust and friendship in their own lives.
- Religious education (RE) is exceptionally well coordinated so that all teachers are well informed and confident in their teaching. As a result, the pupils thoroughly enjoy RE and make excellent progress.

Areas for development

- The governing body to draw up a formal strategy with the partner school to ensure that the executive leaders continue to be well supported so that they can continue to flourish and live out the vision of the school.
- Explore the ways in which the pupil's spirituality further exceeds expectations in all aspects of school life.
- Refresh the diocesan global link so that the school community achieves an even deeper understanding of culture and life experiences of others.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The whole school community fully understands and lives out the vision, 'With God's guidance we all strive every day to be 'to be the best that we can be.' Governors articulately express the biblical basis, 'It is with God's help that we make decisions and choices. We are all made in the image of God and we strive for growth in mind, body and spirit of all in the school.' As a result all flourish. The school is a trailblazer within the diocese and lead innovation locally in terms of distributed leadership. The decision, guided by God, to share the entire leadership team with a neighbouring school, to ensure the educational provision for the future in this challenging rural context, was not taken lightly. This is a bold and courageous move to secure the future of both schools and to provide strong Church of England school leadership from an exemplary headteacher.

Leaders proactively prepare staff to 'be the best they can be.' The growth of staff is palpable as both their mental health and wellbeing are taken into consideration alongside carefully planned continuous professional development. They are all fully prepared as church school leaders. The team exudes confidence and humility as they support new colleagues. The personal growth from taking on additional leadership roles is evident. All have a firm understanding of the deeply embedded school vision and how this influences working practices. Staff are determined that partners are treated as equals, with dignity and respect. The strong leadership by all, is enabling pupils in the wider community to flourish. The governance partnership, between the schools, is in the process of being formalised in order to avoid duplication of the executive leadership team's work.

Vision clearly shapes the school's priorities and policies and underpins all school life. The promotion of the Christian values of truth, respect, thankfulness, forgiveness and friendship leads to pupils flourishing both academically and socially. They are given truthful and accurate feedback in their behaviour and academic work. Academic results and attendance are above the national averages. Vulnerable pupils are nurtured with tailored provision, including counselling, resulting in their excellent progress. Behaviour is exemplary as the pupils strive to 'be the best they can be' in all that they do. Pupils learn from biblical stories in collective worship, excellent role models and the personal, social curriculum that explores relationships and how best to live together. Governors actively evaluate the vision, and contribute greatly to the school family. As a result, leaders understand the impact of their vision and values.

The school's vision is at the heart of collective worship, as a result individuals grow in spirituality, knowledge and understanding. The headteacher plans the worship themes for the year, based Bible stories, core Christian values and concepts. Staff, clergy and parishioners access training from the diocese and regularly seek feedback from those involved in worship to ensure the activity is meaningful, deepens spirituality and develops self-reflection. Innovations such as pupils planning and leading the 'Open the Book' sessions, lead to a deeper understanding of the Bible and a time to explore their own spirituality. Pupils grow into leaders and are fully aware of the responsibility this entails. In worship, families and friends sit together create a sense of intimacy and a safe haven where pupils can discuss the big questions that arise. Deep respect is shown for one another and less confident pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and prayers. Prayers and greetings are taken from the Anglican tradition hence pupils can fully participate in the church services they attend. The pupils thoroughly enjoy making up their own actions to the Lord's Prayer and have an excellent understanding of the meaning of the words. The whole community joins in with the Harvest, Christmas and Easter celebrations. The local parishioners, led by the vicar, make a significant difference to the lives of the pupils. 'Messy Church' further develops reflection and spirituality. Parents appreciate the collaboration and enjoy being part of the extended church family. Leaders proactively monitor the impact of worship through pupil voice which has identified the desire to develop spirituality even further. Worship makes an excellent contribution to the expression of the school vision.

RE is exceptionally well led by the very knowledgeable subject leader who works in partnership with the diocesan RE consultants. Understanding Christianity training for all staff has resulted in RE lessons that are very engaging, delivered in variety of creative ways. Drama and art stimulate thoughtful discussions. Pupils confidently discuss theological and philosophical ideas and show a keen awareness of biblical concepts. They talk excitedly and in depth about both Sikhism and Islam, following collaboration with the local Sikh community and a visit to a mosque as part of their studies. This has enhanced the pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of the United Kingdom. Global links with Ethiopia are strong, having been established through the parish church. The pupils are very aware of Christian practices within the country and understand Christianity is a world-wide diverse faith. Structured

assessment informs planning and next steps. RE is subject to rigorous scrutiny to ensure that standards remain strong.

As a result of the school vision, an enhanced level of social action takes place at this school. Hope, aspiration and advocacy are intrinsic to the curriculum provision, particularly in learning about and undertaking charitable deeds. In their drive to 'be the best they can be', pupils plan fundraising events that contribute to a plethora of charities, making a difference well beyond the school. Actions include the 'Big Breakfast' undertaken to support Christian Aid, caring for those who are homeless, and cutting down on food waste impact on the pupils in many ways. The pupils are very grateful for all that they have. There is an excellent understanding that one person can make a difference to others. Pupil leaders show responsibility and stewardship, guiding others to work towards a pollution free environment, based on God's love for them and their love for the world. School councillors campaign on the 'Global Goals' for sustainable development in the knowledge that their deeds affect the future of the planet. The impact of which has been recognised by the Young Leader's Award.

It is clear that the school vision 'to be the best that you can be' has an exceptionally positive impact on all aspects of life at Corbridge, resulting in a collective energy and determination for continuous self-improvement.

The effectiveness of RE is Excellent



Learning is well supported and structured so that all pupils make significant progress from their starting points in RE, when measured against the expectations of the diocesan syllabus. The wide range of learning activities ensure that pupils with special needs can access the curriculum and experience considerable success.

Executive Headteacher

Jennifer Ainsley

Inspector's name and number

Mary Cook 811