



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

## Aberford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address School Lane, Aberford, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS25 3BU

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

**Overall grade** **Good**

**The impact of collective worship** **Good**

### School's vision

At Aberford C of E Primary School, we are a family. We respect each other and are proud of each other's achievements. We foster a love of learning and a determination to embrace new challenges. We are creative and enthusiastic in all our teaching and learning and work together in a safe and happy environment, with Christian values at the heart of all we do.

*Three things will last forever – faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love.*  
1 Corinthians 13

### Key findings

- The deeply embedded Christian vision is built upon a shared understanding of the school as a family. It is the driving force that enables pupils and adults to flourish in a supportive and loving school community.
- Strong and dynamic leaders are aspirational for the school to be the best church school it can be. As a result, the distinctive practice of the school has recently been reinvigorated.
- Pupils express ownership of and commitment to the vision and values of the school. This is practically demonstrated in the way they show respect to all and live well together.
- Religious education (RE) is enabling pupils to have a strong and coherent understanding of Christianity. Their knowledge of other world faiths is not as well developed.
- Collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring for all, and encourages active reflection and spiritual development. Opportunities for spiritual development beyond collective worship are less well-developed.

### Areas for development

- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality for the school community, so that pupils can make the most of opportunities for spiritual development across the life of the school.
- Ensure that the content and delivery of RE enables pupils to develop and deepen their knowledge and understanding of a range of world faiths.
- Facilitate more opportunities for pupils to initiate and lead a range of social action, so that they can develop as courageous advocates, bringing positive change to their world.

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 school's vision of a church school family rooted in faith, hope and love is treasured by all stakeholders. It is the powerful driving force behind the decision making of leaders at all levels. It inspires staff to work with dedication and determination, and pupils to live well together. As a result of this, pupils and adults in the school flourish and the school community is one that thrives.

Guided by the vision, school leaders have led a period of significant review and development of practice with energy, insight and focus. Leaders have identified and built upon strengths of the school. Where areas of practice required further development, this has been done in a systematic and rigorous manner. Rich and varied continuing professional development (CPD) has supported staff in implementing change. However, sensitive leadership has also ensured that staff workload has been carefully managed. This has supported staff well-being and enhanced their sense of value, belonging and fulfilment. As one staff member expressed it, "Everyday, you feel, 'I have a place.'"

Pupils are proud of their school. They share in the ownership of the school's vision and values, and appreciate the support they get from the adults in school and from their peers. Pupils are confident and eloquent, showing willingness to both express their own opinions and to listen to the viewpoints of others. They are passionate advocates of fairness, equality and the celebration of difference, embodying the school's vision. Where pupils have been given the opportunity to lead, such as on the ACE committee, they have done so with responsibility, vigour and a keenness to innovate. However, wider opportunities to transform this enthusiasm into practical action are more limited. This has meant that chances for courageous advocacy and social action, beyond raising money, have not always identified and fully realised.

Behaviour is very good throughout the school, characterised by respect and a care for others. Pupils understand and articulate this as being the result of the shared vision and values of the school. They demonstrate high expectations of themselves and their peers, resulting in a happy and supportive learning environment.

Collective worship, whether gathered as a whole school or as individual classes, plays a central part in the life of the school. Pupils confidently attribute their understanding of the Christian values to the way in which they are explored and developed through acts of worship. Staff and pupils have been involved in the work to refresh school practice with regards to worship. This has resulted in a shape and structure of worship, built upon Anglican practice and tradition, which encourages reflection and provides opportunities for spiritual development for all. Pupils are enthusiastic about opportunities to lead worship and are in the process of further developing of the school's liturgy through collectively writing a school prayer.

Opportunities for spiritual development are present beyond worship. For example, pupils have very recently taken on the relaunch of spiritual stations within the school to challenge their peers in their reflection and behaviour. However the potential for opportunities such as these has not been fully developed. This is in part because there is no shared understanding within the school community of what spiritual development means for them and the ways it can be nurtured.

Considerable work has been done by staff to refresh and reinvigorate the school's curriculum, deepening its challenge and creativity. There are rich and varied learning opportunities, which engage and stimulate pupils. As a result, pupils flourish in their learning. Great care is taken in supporting and nurturing those who may be vulnerable, ensuring that they too can thrive. Parents strongly value this support and that the school gives equal weight to the personal and character development of pupils as it does to academic progress. In the words of a parent, "I could not have wished for any more."

RE is an important part of the school curriculum and the leadership of RE is strong and effective. There has been considerable development of the coverage and sequencing of the learning in RE and of the way in which it is taught. CPD for staff, particularly in the teaching of Christianity, has developed their confidence in subject specific knowledge and pedagogy. As a result, pupils' recall and understanding of Christianity is strong and coherent. However enthusiasm

for RE is not yet reflected in the views of all pupils. In addition, whilst pupils study religions other than Christianity, their understanding of this content is less strong.

Decision making by the governing body is driven by the school vision, fostering a love of learning and the flourishing of all. Governors have a strong commitment to the school and to its success. They have good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. This is informed by effective monitoring, which focuses on both what is being done and its impact.

Effective partnerships, especially with the church community, enrich the life of the school. For example the project to run an after-school café in the church provided opportunities to deepen relationships between parents and with the local community. The strong support from the Diocese, as well as relationships with other local schools and the local authority, have all been well used in the school's drive to fully live out its vision.

'We are a family' reverberates through all that the school does. It is seen in the genuine care shown by leaders and staff for each other, day to day and in difficult times. It is recognised by parents in the dedicated support and inspiration given by the school to their children. And it shines clearly through in the daily life of the school, driven by the determination of leaders that the family of Aberford C of E Primary School will all flourish together in faith, hope and love.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	19 May 2022	URN	107985
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2015		
School status	Voluntary Controlled	NOR	99
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese / Methodist District	York		
Headteacher	Nicola Crossley		
Pupil profile	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.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Rupert Madeley	No.	1811