

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Higher Walton Church of England Primary School

Address	Rosewood Avenue, Preston, PR5 4FE		
Date of inspection	26 September 2019	Status of school	VC primary
Diocese	Blackburn	URN	119393

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

School context

Higher Walton Church of England Primary School is a primary school with 106 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above national averages. A new Vicar has been appointed since the last inspection and recently took up appointment.

The school's Christian vision

We encourage all our school community to have 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). We strive for all to flourish and achieve their full potential academically, personally and spiritually through our strong Christian values, nurturing and inclusive environment, and the care and support of our school family, church and wider community.

Key findings

- The strong leadership ensures a robustness in maintaining the Christian character of the school through being inclusive and caring for all as individuals.
- The vibrant curriculum provision offers innovative approaches, informed by the school's vision, ensuring that all pupils experience life to the full.
- Pupils are inspired to be enthusiastic advocates of change, personally selecting charitable and social action projects.
- The school vision underpins a strong sense of community whereby pupils and adults are individually nurtured and feel they belong.

Areas for development

- To explore ways by which pupils can become even more articulate in their evaluation of the teachings of Jesus, so as to strengthen understanding of their continued relevance in today's world.
- To develop the outdoor areas further to enhance opportunities for reflection, prayer and worship.

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

Higher Walton CE Primary School has a strong leadership team (SLT) led by a passionate and forward thinking headteacher. Their resolute commitment to enhancing the Christian character of the school is reflected in the biblical theology deeply rooted in the school's vision. Leaders show boldness in applying the vision to inclusion and compassion for those with additional needs, who are valued as unique individuals. There is a disciplined approach which ensures that each child realises their potential with no ceiling being put on any child's achievement. There is exceptionally vigorous and effective monitoring and evaluation by governors and SLT across the school. This meticulous approach leads to well-informed, strategic intervention, so that pupils achieve their full potential. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths is consistently above national average. Leaders provide an innovative and comprehensive curriculum ensuring that each individual has opportunity to 'live life to the full'. The headteacher inspires a determination to look for new and positive chances for pupils and staff to shine, whatever the challenge faced.

There is an impressive boldness in how leaders use ethical arguments in the provision of opportunities to celebrate local and global issues, broadening the personal development of the pupils. There is a tangible excitement amongst pupils when they discuss displaying the values of the school through social action and challenging injustice. One pupil commented, 'God doesn't just inspire us; we inspire him because he wants everyone to live a good life.' Through the Fiver Challenge, for example, pupils create a business plan to raise money for a charitable cause of their choice. Through the team theme afternoons, including imaginative use of the Forest School, explicit links are made between academic and creative learning and character development. Parents speak appreciatively about the impact on their children's actions, such as initiating litter picks. Pupils become enthusiastic advocates for reducing global warming, for instance, encouraging each other to cycle to school. Art work produced as a result of theme days is of excellent quality. The exhibitions of such works in the church building extends the valuable links between the two communities.

The school has consistently achieved Lancashire's Gold Behaviour Quality mark which reflects sustained effective practice. Leaders ensure that policies embed the school vision to provide nurture and care. Specialist staff boost the use of growth mindset strategies and emotional literacy. Pupils are enthusiastic about the positive behaviour approach which they say makes them feel safe and happy. They speak with pride about friends who are awarded a Golden Ticket, rewarded by afternoon tea with the headteacher. These are granted for such as unprompted acts of kindness or a Christian value being demonstrated. Parents speak extremely enthusiastically about the positive start provided by school community. This extends to those commencing in this school, as well as those transferring later from elsewhere. One new pupil stated 'I was really worried, but I was given two special buddies and now I have lots of friends.' The institution of morning meetings and 'talk it out' sessions is evidently having successful impact on helping pupils to settle quickly and to manage their own feelings. Parents feel that their voice is heard through the school's evaluation as a church school. They are effusive in praise of staff at all levels for how the school's vision extends to beyond the school walls and includes them as parents. One said 'School goes above and beyond what would be expected.'

Pupils demonstrate first-rate critical thinking skills through the use of challenging questions by teachers. They are also able to challenge each other in a safe environment and give reasons for their opinions. There is an impressive depth of understanding and closeness between pupils, even when they disagree. This is evident in religious education (RE) lessons, pupil discussions, in the playground and in collective worship reflections. One pupil asserted, 'Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and they can think what they think.' Another stated 'We're not solo, we take care of everyone, everyone helps and has responsibility.'

Pupils respond eagerly to the diverse teaching styles in RE and develop good awareness of Christianity as a living faith, as well as other faiths. Training is well-established for all staff, ensuring the Church of England Statement of Entitlement is fully met. Pupils acquire a broad understanding of the wider community through opportunities to ask questions of members of other faiths and visiting their places of worship. Pupils spoke excitedly about baking the challah bread for a Jewish Shabbat celebration and learning about Sikhism from another pupil and his parent. One pupil reflected, 'Being a member of a faith is more than a belief, it's the way you act'.

A thought-provoking time of worship on the theme of climate change, led by year 6 pupils, demonstrated how effectively this previous area for development has been addressed. The powerful use of sign language, during the invitation to worship, reflects a depth of understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God. Worship leaders also invite others to pray and reflect on their own behaviour. Pupils' initiative to establish a place for prayer and reflection outside, the 'House of Hope', has yet to be fully completed but has been supported by the parental community. Pupils show an appreciation of the way Christians worship in different ways through their suggestions for prayer in the forest space. There have been long-standing effective links with the local church community and the church hosts reflections, such as 'Thy Kingdom Come' time so that all school community can attend, including staff. During the recent interregnum members of the church took the initiative to become more involved in supporting school through developing 'Open the Book' worship.

Staff are unreserved in their praise of support for their own mental health and wellbeing. Leaders clearly act quickly to address any challenges through effective, timely actions. The headteacher understands personal situations and staff appreciate the thoughtful individual cards of appreciation sent, which encourage them considerably. Professional development opportunities have been a priority in establishing staff and leaders career development, often through effective partnerships, including the Diocese.

One pupil summed up the impact of the school's vision: 'School helps you prepare for responsibility in the future.'

Headteacher/Executive principal/Head of school	Joy Headley
Inspector's name and number	Jan Potter (939)