

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

<b>Pickhill Church of England Primary School</b>			
Address	The Green, Pickhill, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 4JL		
Date of inspection	11 December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Leeds	URN	121510

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

### School context

Pickhill Church of England Primary School is a primary school with 36 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 in line with national averages. The school federated with another nearby village school of a similar size in October 2018. There has been a complete change of teaching staff since the last denominational inspection.

### The school's Christian vision

Through encouraging children to experience "Life in all its fullness" (John 10:10) we enable children to be the best that they can be.

### Key findings

- The recently renewed Christian vision is beginning to shape a school family where pupils and adults are valued and nurtured. As a result, pupils grow in confidence, enjoy learning and make good progress to live life in all its fullness.
- Varied and engaging collective worship is central to the school community. It is strengthened by pupils' thoughtful leadership and enthusiastic partnership with the local church.
- The broad curriculum, shaped by the Christian vision, provides rich experiences for all. Although, the thematic curriculum is framed around big questions, opportunities for spiritual development beyond RE and collective worship are insufficiently planned.
- Religious education (RE) is broad and balanced, enabling pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the main theological concepts in Christianity and key aspects of a range of world religions. However, direct experiences of faiths other than Christianity are limited.
- School leaders and governors form a strong team who, inspired by the Christian vision, drive forward improvement.

### Areas for development

- Develop and embed the Christian vision and its theological foundation so that it explicitly shapes all areas of school development.
- Focus the exploration of big questions across the whole curriculum in order to provide systematic opportunities for thoughtful debate and spiritual development.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to meet people of a range of faiths in order to deepen their understanding of world religions.

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**

Following consultation with the whole school community, school leaders have thoroughly revised Pickhill's Christian vision so that pupils and adults own it. From the vision, of 'life in all its fullness', springs an emphasis on wholeness and mutual respect. This is a warm and nurturing school where pupils look after each other like a family. There are opportunities for each pupil to have responsibilities, from looking after the poultry to reminding adults to turn lights out. As a result, pupils grow in confidence. This ensures good rates of academic progress for all, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special needs or disabilities. As seen in attendance above the national average, pupils enjoy coming to school because they say they look forward to learning and love seeing friends. They say they feel safe and teachers listen to them. Staff work together as a close team who respect and trust each other. As a result, pupils and staff live and work well together, exemplifying the vision that each fulfils their potential. The well-being of pupils and staff is effectively supported.

Good partnerships with the diocese and various school networks support the development of Pickhill as a church school. In particular, the formation of the federation has strengthened teaching and learning in both schools through sharing strategies and leadership responsibilities. The school has also made good use of diocesan advice and training. A senior teacher has been enabled to undertake training in the leadership of Church of England schools. The governors and the headteacher share in a deep commitment to the school's Christian vision. However, change and illness among governors have recently reduced the monitoring of the impact of the vision. Some policies do not explicitly reflect the school's Christian vision.

The close link between the local church and school is mutually beneficial and makes an important contribution to the whole community. For example, this term pupils joined together with members of the community to celebrate harvest with a service in church. After this, they served parents and grandparents with a lunch of soup and bread that they had made that morning using produce from the school garden. Similarly, well organised Christmas celebrations, including a nativity play, enable the school community to celebrate the festival and explore it meaningfully. Clergy and church members are highly committed and enthusiastic in leading collective worship in school and in church.

Inspired by the Christian vision, teachers are keen that pupils should have a rich variety of experiences in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. They use the rural location of the school to full advantage, especially through weekly eco-school and monthly visits to the woods. Visitors such as a Ghanaian story teller have helped to expand pupils' horizons beyond the village. The Christian vision prompts the planning of the whole curriculum around big questions, some of which are ethical. On occasions, a whole project may be developed at short notice to respond to a topical issue. For example, showing compassion as an expression of the school's vision, pupils decided to raise money to help a local boy who was terminally ill. Fundraising provided Maths learning, the cake sale provided cookery (design technology) and getting the support of parents produced persuasive letter writing in English. When the boy died, on their own initiative, pupils wrote prayers. However, the use of focussed questions to explore spiritual and moral issues is inconsistent across subjects.

Pupils are encouraged to empathise with others and to consider how to care for the environment. Under the leadership of the eco-committee, pupils take practical action to save energy, recycle and plant, tend and harvest in the school garden. Thus, they are beginning to see how they can make a difference.

RE is well led. The school meets the statutory obligations for RE and follows the locally agreed syllabus, taking into account diocesan advice about the inclusion of a resource called Understanding Christianity. A broad and balanced programme of study focuses on big questions that engage pupils' interest. 'If God's everywhere, why go to a place of worship?' was a recent question that challenged their thinking. Pupils enjoy exploring different angles, changing their minds and building up to a big debate. Pupils develop an understanding of world faiths although they lack direct experience of visiting places of worship except churches or meeting followers of faiths other than Christianity. Overseas links, for example with a school in India, make pupils aware of Christianity as a living world faith. Pupils make progress in RE that is in line with other subjects, in particular English. The RE assessment system is applied consistently and moderated through a wider network of schools.

Collective worship is a real strength of the school. It is varied, engaging and invitational. A pupil said they liked worship because they are 'not left out or ignored'. The festivals of the church's year and themes based on Christian values provide a framework which enhances pupils' appreciation of key Christian beliefs and practices. Worship uses a wide range of biblical material which is often presented in an interactive manner. This enables pupils to understand Bible stories and their importance for Christians. Particularly through the worship committee, pupils play a vital and valued part in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship whether in

school or in regular services in the parish church. Pupils and adults particularly enjoy the weekly collective worship which incorporates Picture News, a resource which also increases awareness of the wider world. Pupils and staff appreciate the way the topical stories help them to relate faith to everyday life. The format of daily worship has evolved through listening to pupils' opinions. For example, writing 'post it' notes was introduced at the end of the Picture News collective worship to enable all pupils to share their views. Opportunities for personal prayer have been carefully considered. For example, each class has a reflection tent, provided in response to pupils saying they wanted more time to think individually. A variety of artefacts, such as a worry monster with a pocket in which to place requests, help pupils to learn to pray. A pupil described how they had not prayed before joining the school but 'praying helped me to believe in myself'.

Headteacher

Rowena Sykes

Inspector's name and number

Eleanor Benson 920