

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Whitechapel Church of England Primary School			
Address	Whitechapel Road, Cleckheaton BD19 6HR		
Date of inspection	15 October 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled
Diocese	Leeds	URN	136511

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	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Whitechapel is a primary school with 413 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 and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are below national averages. There has been a change in headteacher since the previous inspection in 2014.

The school's Christian vision

Learning, caring, succeeding
 We **learn** with **courage** so we can change ourselves and the world,
 We **care** with **compassion** and **respect** with dignity,
 We **succeed** when we all flourish together.
 'Let your light shine before others' (Matthew 5:16)

Key findings

- The clear, distinctive and accessible Christian vision is supported by all members of the school community. Pupils engage well with the associated values but are at an early stage in relating the vision to their biblical knowledge.
- School leaders, including governors, are effective in guiding and monitoring the school's progress as a Church school. As a result, pupils are progressing well academically and spiritually, and relationships at all levels are excellent.
- Collective worship, both in school and in church, enables pupils and adults to learn and reflect. Pupils participate well but are not given sufficient responsibility to plan and lead worship themselves.
- Religious education (RE) contributes well to pupils' knowledge and understanding of spiritual matters. There is not a clear enough distinction between learning in RE and in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

Areas for development

- Take steps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of biblical material, so that they can more confidently explain their ideas about the Christian vision and values.
- Provide opportunities for pupils of all ages to take greater responsibility for planning and leading collective worship.
- Ensure that there is a clear distinction between studies in RE and in PSHE, so that pupils have a better understanding of how spiritual matters differ from those that are social, moral or cultural.

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 encouragement to 'let your light shine' is visually and strikingly presented to visitors arriving at Whitechapel. More importantly, it represents a shared positive ethos and a vision to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school community. Leaders, including governors and clergy, have worked together to create a vision interwoven with distinctive Christian values and underpinned by a biblical text that is accessible and meaningful to everyone, no matter their age. This cohesive approach, although quite recently established, provides a springboard for school development and a bedrock for decisions. For instance, governors speak of using the Christian vision, particularly the role of courage, as a reference point for discussion, action and change. Pupils have a growing awareness of the importance of the vision and values. They can explain how compassion is a key feature of the parable of the Good Samaritan and that Noah displayed courage when he built the Ark. Pupils also have strong opinions about respect, which is demonstrated in how they treat each other. They speak about those who are different, emphasising that respect is important and 'that's how it should be'. They have not yet fully understood the deeper significance of what Jesus meant by 'let your light shine'. However, they do know that the vision influences how they behave. Attitudes and relationships at all levels are excellent and this is particularly demonstrated by pupils' eagerness to fill each other's 'bucket of kindness' and by the numerous ways that older pupils care for and support younger ones. In this sense, the school's Christian distinctiveness is being lived out. School leaders and foundation governors regularly monitor the promotion of this distinctiveness, which includes gathering the views of pupils and parents. This has resulted in actions such as enhanced staff training, the appointment of a pastoral leader, and innovative work with pupils and adults around growth mindset and mental health.

School leaders take effective steps to promote pupils' spiritual development. All classrooms have reflection areas with prompt questions linked to Christian values, and activities or artefacts to help pupils to reflect and pray if they wish. Pupils' comments, which are gathered and collated by members of Year 6 in a display book, reveal mature responses to Bible stories and parables as well as to wider Christian themes, such as Creation. Links with local churches are strong and mutual. Pupils benefit greatly from church visits whether for major Christian festivals or for other aspects of their learning. Pupils engage with wider social and global issues with enthusiasm, and school leaders have encouraged this, seeing it as a positive move away from tokenistic class charities. As a result, pupils have become passionate and proactive advocates for causes such as the plight of elephants and the reduction in the use of plastic in school. Groups such as the school council and the eco-club drive these initiatives. The school also maintains close links with the Diocese and with the Stronger Together Partnership of schools, especially for staff training. In most areas of learning, pupils' progress is at least in line with national averages. Where there are challenges, for instance in gaps in achievement between girls and boys, leaders ensure that appropriate support and intervention are provided.

Collective worship, in a variety of formats, is a central feature in each school day and enables pupils and adults alike to be actively engaged, to pray and sing, and to reflect on spiritual matters. Worship is invitational and includes strong spiritual and moral messages. It is clearly linked to biblical teaching and to Christian values. For example, acts of worship focus on forgiveness and Jesus' response about how many times a person should forgive. Teachers relate this to real life instances, such as the destruction of Coventry Cathedral. As a result, pupils grasp key principles, for instance by stating that 'it is easier to forgive than to stay angry'. Pupils respond well to times of reflection and know a range of prayers and responses, which they use regularly. They sometimes do not have sufficient opportunity to take part in sung worship, though this is partly due to constraints of time. Collective worship is well supported by the local vicar, both in school and in church, and also by associates of the Zephaniah Trust. This widens pupils' understanding of the range of Christian practice. Pupils are actively involved in leading worship, for instance by reading prayers, but are mostly directed by adults. Older pupils in the embryonic collective worship group have begun to lead class worship for younger pupils. Given their mature attitudes, however, pupils do not have frequent enough opportunities to take responsibility for planning and leading worship. The recommendation from the previous inspection has only partly been met in this respect. School leaders and foundation governors are proactive in monitoring collective worship and pupils have the chance to offer ideas through discussion with their teachers. Pupils and other stakeholders do not yet have a more formal role in evaluating the impact of worship, though parents express their appreciation of invitations to attend times of worship.

RE contributes well to the distinctive Christian character of the school and is used by teachers as a vehicle for emphasising the school values and for promoting pupils' spiritual development. For example, a lesson about promises generated discussion around issues of trust. The adoption of the Understanding Christianity materials, alongside the Kirklees agreed syllabus, has given both pupils and teachers a deeper understanding of the subject. A flexible approach to units, for example through a whole day devoted to the theme of Creation and studies in mixed age groups, has been successful in capturing pupils' interest. In lessons, pupils listen well and have respect and consideration for other points of view, showing good debating skills. Teachers demonstrate skill in asking open questions and valuing a range of responses. Lessons are well supported by visitors, such as the Hand to Mouth team. Pupils learn about faiths other than Christianity, particularly through the input of a Jewish visitor and a Moslem member of staff, and this is widening their appreciation of diversity. Pupils say that it is right to respect all faiths and that 'it is important to know' about them. A system is in place for assessing the progress of pupils against unit objectives. The subject leaders for RE and PSHE work well together and some initiatives, such as the Archbishop of York Young Leaders Award, are having an impact in both areas. Pupils learn about British values and how they complement Christian values, for example in learning about perseverance. At times, the distinction between RE and PSHE is not clear and this limits the potential for RE to support spiritual development.

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