

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Vicarage Park Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Vicarage Drive, LA9 5BP
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
Pupils at our school are encouraged to be bold and live a fulfilling life through the values of compassion, responsibility and courage as they grow to have a better understanding of themselves, find their place in the world and learn what it means to love their neighbour.

Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently appointed leaders and governors work ceaselessly to create an open and collaborative community which enables all to have a voice. The wellbeing of pupils and adults drives leaders to positive, bold actions. Systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a Church school are less well developed. • Nurturing and loving relationships, underpinned by the Christian foundation of the school, create a strong sense of community. These relationships are a joyful expression of the deep rooted care that leaders and staff have for all pupils and families. • Religious education (RE) is valued by pupils and enables them to show an understanding of Christianity as a living world faith. Pupils enthuse about the breadth of the curriculum, including learning about a variety of faiths. Opportunities to enrich the RE curriculum through establishing links with local schools are less developed. • The generous offering of time and gifts from clergy and members of the local church enriches collective worship. This important partnership enhances the use of prayer and music in worship. The way this impacts on the spiritual development of adults and pupils is less well developed. • Innovative links between curriculum content and school values enhances pupils' learning. These links provide profound opportunities for pupils to experience values being lived out across the whole curriculum. The planning of significant moments within each subject area to reflect on spirituality is not clear.

Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance opportunities for the further development of the use of prayer and reflective areas and for pupils to lead worship. This is to create enriched opportunities for spiritual development. • Ensure that the leadership team and governing body enhance systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. This is so that the theological underpinning of the vision is understood by all and is the driving force for all planned change. • Further build on current partnerships with the diocese and local church and establish new opportunities for collaborative working beyond school. This is to develop support networks for RE and collective worship leaders



Inspection findings

Through a courageous living out of the Christian vision and its associated values, the culture at Vicarage Park has been transformed. The new leadership team and governing body resolutely and unapologetically place wellbeing at the heart of the school. This has been transformative in creating a learning environment where collaboration and openness give a voice to all adults and pupils. Having a voice and the opportunity to impact on school decisions creates a tangible feeling of being valued amongst staff and pupils. The deeply embedded values of compassion, responsibility and courage are owned by all in the school. They have become the everyday language which unites staff and pupils into a loving family. Leaders passionately ensure that all at Vicarage Park are known and cared for as the unique person they are. As a parent articulated 'our school is a family where pupils are seen as an individual and not as a number.' Guided by the core value of responsibility, leaders ensure this is true of staff as well as pupils.

Kindled by the distinctively Christian vision, caring and nurturing relationships are evident throughout the school. Pupils and adults articulate how the Bible story of the Good Samaritan encourages a sense of love for each other. This permeates throughout the school in good behaviour and how pupils readily forgive each other. The stained glass image of the Good Samaritan, created by pupils, is a daily reinforcement of the school's vision. Leaders and governors prioritise the good mental health of adults and pupils. Practical strategies are shared which help all to live and learn well together. This comes directly from leaders' unequivocal stance that each person is special and their own response to the Good Samaritan story. Parents and pupils trust adults in school to help them and deeply appreciate the support they give to all pupils. Pupils deemed to be vulnerable and those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) flourish and make progress in their learning. Each individual pupil really does matter in this school, with parents articulating that staff go 'that extra mile' for pupils.

Leaders have created a bespoke curriculum to enhance learning. Pupils respond with interest and curiosity to the big questions which encourage thought and discussion. Tangible links are made in all subject areas to the core school values. This ensures that the values are just as much the language of science and geography as they are in religious education. Spontaneous moments for spiritual reflection are evident, on occasions, through the curriculum. Planned opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum are less clear.

Inspired into action through the vision, pupils actively engage as advocates for change. Supporting a foodbank and projects which benefit others directly stem from pupils' understanding that all deserve a fulfilling life. Pupils are proud of their entrepreneurship award for their positive impact on the local community. The RE curriculum and wider curriculum provide opportunities for pupils to understand how to challenge injustice globally as well as locally. They demonstrate a good understanding of how the story of the Good Samaritan inspires them into action to support their neighbours.

The leadership team strives to enhance the sense of the school as a community through actively building partnerships. A recent coffee morning, where families came into school, demonstrates the way leaders seek to strengthen the sense of community. Parents value this sense of hospitality which lives out the school's vision to 'love their neighbour.' One partnership which is highly effective is that with the local church. The vicar and members of the church positively impact on the way that the school lives out its Christian foundation. The church team uses music creatively

and enriches an understanding of prayer . This enhances opportunities to grow spiritually. The local church strengthens the provision for collective worship. The school richly values its close partnership with Carlisle Diocese. This actively supports governance and provides valuable training opportunities which the school is keen to engage further in.

Without compulsion, collective worship provides all with meaningful opportunities to gather together. The collective worship leader is highly ambitious for the further development of worship as a bold expression of the school's Christian vision. Staff and pupils freely participate in collective worship and value this shared time. Recently, pupils have started to plan and lead worship in school. Although this is at a very early stage, staff and pupil acknowledge the positive impact of seeing pupils leading worship has on them. Staff articulate how this lives out the value of being courageous. Many speak with pride and emotion about the impact of pupils leading worship. The school has created an effective structure for collective worship which includes time for prayer, song and reflection. Recent work on prayer by the local church deepens pupils' use of prayer and reflection in worship. Leaders actively build on this to further enhance a shared understanding of spirituality across the school. This is at an early stage of development.

The recently appointed RE leader is passionate in her drive to ensure high quality provision for all. Her enthusiasm is infectious and inspires staff in their teaching of RE. This directly enhances learning in the classroom. The school makes good use of the Carlisle Diocesan syllabus supplemented with resources such as 'Understanding Christianity'. Pupils both value and enjoy RE and clearly articulate their understanding of Christianity as a living world faith. RE provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of a range of world religions. RE provides a safe space to discuss differences and similarities and clearly expresses the school's Christian vision. This positively impacts on relationships where the acceptance of the uniqueness of each individual is seen in loving and warm connections. Opportunities to create partnerships with other local schools to share best practice, and strengthen RE further, are less well developed.

The leadership team and governing body are highly ambitious for the further development of Vicarage Park as a Church school. Leaders invest in staff and pupils, creating an openness which gives all a voice and a sense of good wellbeing. This investment comes through a shared understanding of the importance that all feel valued for the unique contribution they make to school. Through courageous leadership, a sense of moral responsibility and underpinned with compassion, leaders drive the school forward. The vision, and its associated values, creates a deeply nurturing and collaborative working environment in which all flourish.

Information			
School	Vicarage Park Church of England VC Primary School	Inspection date	14 October 2022
URN	112269	VC/VA/ Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Carlisle	Pupils on roll	104
Acting Headteacher	Katie Green		
Chair of Governors	Shelagh Hughes		
Inspector	Paul Rusby	No.	938