

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Shap Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address Shap, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 3NL

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**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

With children and the church at the heart of the school, we are 'living in harmony' (Romans 12:16) within our community; nurturing one another in order to create an environment from which all can soar.

Key findings

- The headteacher, strongly supported by governors and staff, has created an inclusive community where 'all can soar.' The school's Christian vision shapes all policies and practices and is lived out in relationships and learning.
- A lack of systematic governor monitoring has limited evaluation of the effectiveness of the school as a church school. Greater stability of the governing body is now enabling governors to make more effective links with curriculum leaders and to undertake more robust monitoring
- The school's curriculum is bold, varied, and individualised. Opportunities for spiritual development exist, and a shared approach to its provision is emerging.
- Collective worship provision is rich, strong, and integral to school life. Most pupils can confidently link collective worship with their own lives
- Pupils benefit from skilful religious education (RE) teaching and a progressive curriculum. As a result, RE contributes to the flourishing of all pupils.

Areas for development

- Engage in rigorous monitoring of the school as a church school, so that it consistently informs the school's ongoing improvement.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to reflect on collective worship, so that they can confidently articulate its impact on their lives.
- Ensure that opportunities for spiritual development, already evident in the RE curriculum, are extended to the whole school curriculum. This is so pupils have more opportunities to pause, reflect and grow spiritually.

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

This is a school for everyone: such a warm, welcoming, nurturing place where every child can soar. It is an extended family.' This comment from a parent encapsulates life in this small rural school, where each family is known and valued. Through the school's individualised approach to learning, 'all can soar' from their own starting point.

Following the appointment of the acting headteacher in September 2019, the school community reviewed its Christian vision and values. This inclusive and distinctive vision drives all its policies and practices and has a tangible impact on relationships and learning. The headteacher has successfully built a harmonious and mutually supportive staff team. They share her total commitment to enabling all to be the 'best self' they can be, created in the image of God. Governors embrace the school's inclusive vision. They demonstrated this during periods of lockdown by prioritising the roll-out of the school's IT resources. This included setting up a learning platform to ensure that every member of the school community had access to education.

Its longstanding and strong partnership with the local church is integral to the daily life of the school. The school is at the heart of its village community, and its active working relationships with a wide range of people and organisations locally exemplify what 'living in harmony within our community' means. Due to the impact of the pandemic and changes in the governing body, governor monitoring has not been systematic. This has limited the ability of the governing body to evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. A clearer sense of purpose is now enabling governors to make more effective links with curriculum leaders and to undertake more robust monitoring.

A strength of the school is its curriculum provision, which is well designed to ensure the flourishing of the whole child. The school develops the strengths and addresses any weaknesses of each individual pupil, so that every pupil is given specific opportunities to excel. The busy and active curriculum includes bespoke elements tailored to the school's rural Cumbrian environment. Opportunities are timetabled for outdoor education, field trips to cities, and occasions when more able pupils work with students from the nearby grammar school. Pupils report that these opportunities have built their resilience. By encouraging them to work with others, school leaders have extended pupils' horizons, which had become restricted during COVID lockdowns. Opportunities exist for spiritual development. These include the exploration of 'big' questions in RE, and the provision of creative resources to prompt reflection in the outdoor prayer space. A shared understanding, approach and provision for spiritual development is emerging. In contrast to the active curriculum, however, opportunities for pupils to pause, reflect and grow spiritually have been less evident in curriculum planning.

The impact of the school's vision and values on pupils is seen in how they confidently engage with key issues in the world around them. Pupils sent their hopes for the future of the world to pilgrims journeying to the Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. Pupils help develop positive attitudes of citizenship and responsibility by working with police in their local community to address parking problems and litter.

Members of the Shap school family live well together. With the headteacher and staff team as role models, pupils' behaviour is good and they show care and concern for each other. Pupils live out the school's vision and values in their relationships and behaviour during the school day. At the start of every school year each class sets its new 'Class Charter.' These charters and the school's behaviour policy are based on compassion and understanding. They create the environment in which all can soar with their learning.

Due to the pandemic, the educational and social needs of many pupils have become more acute and apparent. Putting the school's vision into practice, the headteacher and her team have prioritised the early identification of need. They have increased their expertise in key areas such as mental health. They have targeted support to address pupils' individual needs and to ensure their dignity and respect. Parents talk about the transformative impact of these interventions. One spoke of their child who is now 'finding joy in reading.' Another pupil 'has absolutely soared and got all his spellings right last week.'

Collective worship is biblically based and linked to the school's values. It is inclusive, invitational, and integral to the school's life. Through the strong partnerships forged between school leaders, churches and worship leaders in the local area, worship provision has been greatly enhanced. As a result, pupils experience a rich variety of styles and elements of Christian worship. Most pupils enjoy worship. Many of them are involved in reading, acting and singing, with worship councillors from each class taking specific leadership roles.

During worship time, pupils readily share their thoughts and ideas about key questions. Pupils, for example, discussed Jesus' prayer for his followers to be 'perfectly one' and members of the same family. Pupils considered what this might mean in the context of the daily life of their village, and in the world community. However, at other times, some pupils

lacked confidence in making links between worship and their behaviour and thinking. The ability of these pupils to talk about the value of prayer and reflection was limited.

During the pandemic the school lived out its Christian vision by continuing collective worship virtually. Working closely with families, staff created an accessible and effective online environment, helping pupils to continue to care for one another. Family members spoke about their appreciation of this space where they could ‘be together collectively’ and pray for one another.

RE contributes well to pupils’ flourishing. It is prioritised by being allocated sufficient learning time and it is well resourced. The RE coordinator is supported by the Diocese and an RE local network. She ensures that staff have access to regular training in RE, including the ‘Understanding Christianity’ resource, and specialist RE curriculum support from a local school worship leader. This means that staff are well equipped to understand expectations for RE and to help pupils develop high level RE skills. Pupils enjoy RE, and older ones can discuss how it helps them live in multi-faith Britain and the wider world. Older pupils find it stimulating to engage critically with religious text, tease out key questions it raises and appreciate some differences and challenges within a faith.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The recently introduced RE curriculum is well constructed, coherent and ambitious. Due to sound, confident teaching, particularly in years 5 and 6, learning in RE is effective. RE enables all pupils make good progress, including those with additional needs and the most able. Evidence in books shows that rigorous and effective systems are being developed to enable teachers to know what and how well pupils are learning in RE.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	9 March 2022	URN	112328
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2015		
School status	Voluntary aided primary school	NOR	95
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese / Methodist District	Carlisle		
Headteacher	Katie Chappell		
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 in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	There has been a new headteacher appointed since the last SIAMS inspection. She was acting headteacher from September 2019 and appointed to the substantive post of headteacher in November 2021.		
Inspector’s name	Canon Linda Burton	No.	426