

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Michael Syddall Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Noels Court, Off Mowbray Road, Catterick, DL10 7LB

School vision
‘Living life in all its fullness’ ‘Being the best we can be’
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision is at the heart of the daily life of the school. It reflects the school’s heritage and is aspirational for its community. • Collective worship brings the school together for times of celebration and reflection. It creates a sense of belonging and supports both adults’ and pupils’ spiritual development. • Strong relationships, built on Christian love and mutual trust, provide highly effective support that extends beyond the school. • Beneficial strategies ensure that both pupils and adults are well-supported in maintaining good mental health and wellbeing. • Pupils enjoy religious education (RE). It is well-resourced and quality teaching secures pupils’ engagement and progress. A variety of approaches encourage them to reflect and to be curious.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a more effective approach for leaders, including governors, to monitor the impact of school’s Christian vision. This is in order to secure future improvements as a Church school. • Ensure that there is clarity in the understanding of spirituality. This is to facilitate routinely planned curriculum opportunities that deepen pupils’ spiritual development. • Enable pupils to engage in social action in order that they become active agents for change.
Inspection findings
<p>The Michael Syddall School is at the heart of the community. It is effective in supporting both local pupils and the children of service personnel. This is because the school’s Christian vision reflects the needs of its community. The vision takes its inspiration from Michael Syddall, a local vicar and philanthropist, who built the original school in 1658. His desire to make a difference to the community is mirrored in the vision’s aspiration ‘to be the best you can be’. Carefully chosen values, such as honesty and respect, create a tangible way in which the vision is lived out daily. They are widely understood and pupils relish gaining awards that celebrate their effective use of them. Pupils speak openly about the vision, using the words to illustrate their approach to learning. They feel well-supported in achieving its aim and recognise it as a personal journey to success. Leaders and governors drive how the vision serves its community and maintained vital stability in recent times. They also make bold decisions to secure provision that is tailored to the specific needs of the school. Thus, the vision is lived out and therefore, experienced every day. However, its impact is not fully understood by leaders. This is because the monitoring undertaken lacks the rigour required for an accurate evaluation.</p>

The curriculum is underpinned by the vision and is carefully designed to be inclusive. Focused support enhances learning for vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Numerous strategies are efficient in responding to individual pupils' needs. There is a well-established, caring culture where mistakes in lessons are managed positively and used as learning points. This enables pupils to work with greater confidence. There are some planned opportunities within the curriculum for spiritual development. However, there is a lack of clarity surrounding the understanding of spirituality. This limits the extent to which these occasions deepen pupils' spiritual development. The many and varied extra-curricular activities encourage and foster pupils' individual talents and interests. A regular feature of school life, they are well-attended, accommodating pupils of all ages. Nurture extends beyond current pupils, enriching the lives of the wider community. For example, former pupils, now at secondary school, delight in helping to run some of the clubs. In addition, there are activities for parents and carers, staff and the community, that are facilitated by the school.

Collective worship is an important part of the school day, bringing everyone together as one. The vision is explored through worship, with relevant thoughts and illustrations that pupils apply to their own lives. It creates a sense of belonging and provides valuable time and space for reflection. Pupils and staff appreciate this time to pause at the end of the day. Consequently, it aids the spiritual flourishing of those present, both adults and pupils. There is a sensitive approach to worship, with practices that are respectful of individual, personal beliefs. Likewise, staff ensure that routines are in place that seek to enable all pupils to be included. There is effective support from the local church. Clergy lead worship weekly and share in the planning of themes that link to the church year. Pupils are enthusiastic about worship as it is uplifting and engaging, with joyous singing and a focus on being interactive.

The vision is instrumental in ensuring that good mental health and wellbeing are a priority. The school is adept at recognising the specific challenges facing families at various times. The appointment of a pastoral and wellbeing mentor has had a significant impact. Hence, there is targeted help in times of need and pupils acquire 'tools' to assist their own wellbeing. Pupils feel secure in the knowledge that there is always someone with whom they can share their worries. Parents and carers welcome the thoughtful and bespoke provision for service children. For example, gathering items, such as awards and pieces of work, to post to a parent serving away from home. The whole staff team are active in providing support that goes beyond the individual pupil. Relationships with families are built on trust and Christian love, promoting an openness without judgement. Parents and carers appreciate that they are also cared for. They acknowledge how the staff team's exceptional endeavours make a real difference, to both them and their children's lives. The vision fosters a culture where the individual is appreciated for who they are. Purposefully selected curriculum resources are used to provide an accurate representation of the world. Hence, pupils are accepting of difference and respectful of diversity. They actively use the values to guide their behaviour, understanding the importance that respect plays in sustaining positive relationships. Therefore, any issues are resolved quickly, with pupils showing remorse and accepting the forgiveness offered.

A weekly focus in collective worship provides pupils with an age-appropriate insight into global news and events. This provides a safe space for them to develop their own ideas and ask pertinent questions about the wider world. Pupils explore themes of justice and have a sound knowledge of the rights of the individual as part of the curriculum. They are aware that people can make a difference to the world. Fundraising activities are a regular feature that enhances pupils' understanding of compassionate giving. However, they have limited opportunity to undertake social action projects and develop their skills to become agents for change.

RE is a highly valued subject in the school curriculum. It is thoroughly planned and ensures that there is a balance of topics focusing on religion and worldviews. The materials used and the time allocated to the subject, meet the expectations for RE in a Church school. Quality resources enrich pupils' experience of the

subject. A sequenced RE curriculum extends their knowledge. Planned moments to pause and reflect enhance their deepening understanding and spiritual growth. RE is well led and there is a clear focus for sustained improvement. Staff access training from the local diocese. This enables them to share good practice and guarantees that they are abreast of developments in the subject.

The quality of RE teaching is routinely monitored by leaders. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide activities with appropriate challenge. A variety of approaches ensure that lessons are engaging and relevant. Time is also set aside for pupils to consider key ideas and what it means to them and their lives. They are animated by the subject, recalling favourite lessons, and expressing their enjoyment in learning about different faiths. Thus, pupils make good progress in RE. There is rigour to assessment as it is undertaken in the same way as all other curriculum areas. Half-termly updates monitor individual pupil progress and the specific topic. This clear and detailed data supports future developments in the subject.

Nearly four hundred years later, Michael Syddall would be heartened by the school's continued cherishing of the Catterick community. A parent accurately explained it in saying, 'school puts the emotional and spiritual needs at the foundation of everything.'

The inspection findings indicate that The Michael Syddall Church of England School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information

Inspection date	19 February 2024	URN	121609
VA/VC/Academy	Voluntary Aided	Pupils on roll	178
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Alison McHarg		
Chair	Robert Knowles		
Inspector	Jo Williams	No.	863