



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Anne’s Church of England Primary School

Address Warwick Road, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 6LS

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

Excellent

The impact of collective worship

Excellent

School’s vision

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”
This is the first and greatest commandment.
And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” *Matthew 22:37-39*

*Our school vision is to be the best version of ourselves that God created us to be –
“with minds to learn and hearts to care.”*

Key findings

- The distinctively Christian vision is deeply embedded and has become the natural language within school, inspiring all to action. It is comprehensively understood and articulated by everyone, permeating each aspect of school life. As a result, adults and pupils flourish.
- Living out the vision to ‘love your neighbour,’ pupils are actively enabled to be advocates of change. Inspired by the vision, and modelled by the headteacher’s example of servant leadership, the vision has a transformational impact on the whole community.
- Pupils are known and loved as the unique individuals that they are. Through the exceptional relationships that pervade the school, all barriers to learning are broken down enabling everyone to enjoy fullness of life.
- Collective worship is an authentically rich expression of the school’s vision. It provides profound, life-lasting moments of spiritual growth for adults and pupils, which enhance pupils and adults lives way beyond the school.
- Religious education (RE) is exceptionally and passionately led, creating a dynamic culture of learning. There are excellent opportunities for staff development and widespread opportunities for pupils to question, preparing them for life in modern Britain.

Areas for development

- To further enrich pupils’ involvement in planning, delivering and evaluating worship building on the already exemplary provision.
- Further enhance partnerships, within and beyond school, to actively drive and embed the Christian vision so it enables all adults and pupils to flourish.

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

In living out the deeply embedded vision of 'minds to learn, hearts to care', St Anne's is a transformational place to be. Leaders at all levels ensure the well-embedded and deeply Christian vision is woven through all aspects of the school's work. The vision is deeply rooted in theological reflection and biblical text. As a result, adults and pupils clearly articulate how it enriches all relationships and is the guiding light in all decision making. Pupils flourish through the school being 'one big family' which extols the nurturing and caring relationships that exist. Leaders, including governors, powerfully model the vision ensuring all pupils are uniquely nurtured and succeed from their individual starting points. Inspired by the vision, governors made the bold decision to appoint a chaplain. This enhances the way collective worship is an explicit expression of the distinctively Christian vision and strengthens pastoral support systems. Leaders demonstrate an unwavering commitment to pupils deemed to be most vulnerable. Their decision to train a specialist practitioner in wellbeing support is just one example of their drive to ensure every pupil thrives. The impact of these innovative, vision-led decisions enhances opportunities for the spiritual growth and wellbeing of all.

The headteacher is an exceptional role model for all members of the school community. As a result of the distinctively Christian vision, she actively encourages pupils and staff to have a voice in developing the school. St Anne's is a school where real change happens. This is made possible through remarkably strong partnerships with families, external providers, organisations who provide additional support and through local secondary schools links. These relationships are built on trust and respect and embody the transformative language of minds to learn and hearts to care. Staff know their pupils extraordinarily well and demonstrate the highest level of commitment to meet the needs of individuals and their families. There is a dynamic relationship between school leaders and church which produces rich results. They work hand in hand to ensure their work is mutually beneficial, building a community deeply rooted in God's love. There is a true sense of the school serving the community with generosity and compassion, led by pupil initiatives to address local needs. Through an exceptional demonstration of loving your neighbour, collaborative partnership working is generously extended to additional schools by the headteacher and others. This outward looking approach embodies innovative and inclusive practice which is shared by leaders to enrich the lives and work of others.

Shaped by the vision, the curriculum and wider provision at St Anne's is rich and ambitious. It carefully matches individual needs and opens minds to exciting new experiences, providing something enriching for everyone. It offers pupils opportunities to ask big questions, reflect on views and beliefs and constantly strive to be the best version of themselves. The practical outliving of the vision in Early Years has a transformational impact on the lives of the school's youngest pupils. There is a focus on knowing the pupils exceptionally well from the beginning in facilitating the best start possible. Behaviour across school is exemplary. Pupils show high degrees of maturity, independence and self-motivation. Leaders at all levels have identified associated core values, integral to the everyday life of the school, which underpin the vision. Each class embraces a value in an age appropriate manner. This is further enhanced by the recent introduction of STAR awards, recognising and celebrating where pupils demonstrate these values. Leaders live out their vision by providing enrichment activities such as the outdoor learning lessons that skilfully enhance learning opportunities for all pupils. This is evidenced also in the wide variety of national awards that highlight the vision-inspired ambitiousness of school leaders.

An invitational and rich culture of prayer and reflection provide profoundly authentic moments of pupils' spiritual development and growth. Pupils use an extensive range of prayers during collective worship including prayers that they have written. Individual prayer lives are transformed through the rich spiritual language that they are immersed in. Examples of pupils offering to pray for others and creating their own prayer spaces are frequent. The natural way this weaves through each day is the reason its impact is so profound. Pupils and adults speak of collective worship enhancing their day through meaningful moments of calm and peace. Joining together physically for collective worship is especially important to pupils, parents and staff and was missed during periods of COVID restrictions. It is

inclusive, inspirational and fundamental to school life. A comprehensive and invitational programme of collective worship introduces pupils to a broad range of Christian traditions. Opportunities for reflection, biblical teaching, prayer and singing all naturally flow from a vision of ‘minds to learn, hearts to care’. The impact of collective worship on staff and pupils is clearly articulated and lived out in personal changes led by experiences in worship.

Character and moral development are excellent with many inspired examples of pupils demonstrating courageous advocacy to address inequalities in the community. Through highly effective pupil voice teams, St Anne’s champions the wellbeing of others and is courageous in its care of God’s creation. Pupils are motivated to do God’s work because of the trust and insight that their worship and learning provide. They are keenly aware of the need to challenge injustice locally, nationally and internationally. They have the knowledge, desire and faith to act for social justice because they know and apply God’s word with integrity. They live out their visions to be good neighbours. Pupils act as agents for change through meaningful achievements in supporting ethically chosen partnerships. Their actions enable those beyond St Anne’s to flourish. With excellent appreciation of stewardship, pupils diligently care for God’s world and those within it demonstrating their deeply rooted Christian vision.

The school’s highly effective RE provision is exemplary in equipping pupils to make sense of the world and to develop as respectful global citizens. It facilitates debates between peers, encouraging pupils to disagree well. Through their comparative studies of a considered range of world faiths, pupils develop an excellent understanding of a variety of worldviews and religions. RE lessons provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own personal convictions. The significant impact of RE is evident in leaders’ decisions to use it as a template to redevelop the wider school curriculum. The RE subject leader’s passion and relentless drive for improvement is reflected in the ambitious plans to share this work further. St Anne’s deeply embedded Christian vision enables all to strive for excellence in every area. This fundamentally transforms hearts and minds in the school and wider community, positively impacting on all and radically challenging injustice.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	16 June 2022	URN	114220
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2015		
School status	voluntary controlled	NOR	212
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese	Durham		
Headteacher	Lynne Sixsmith		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The current headteacher was appointed in 2012 and was previously deputy headteacher.		
Inspector’s name	Joanna Dobbs	No.	C1807