

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Gainford Church of England Primary School and Preschool	
Address	Low Road, Gainford, DL2 3DR
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	Excellent

School's vision
<p>Together We Love, Learn and Flourish.</p> <p>Our Christian vision and core values are central to the daily experiences of our school family. Through them we aim to enable ever part of our community to grow and develop, flourishing in all areas of their lives, developing their intellectual, spiritual, moral and physical attributes, becoming proud, respectful contributing members of our community.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional, and mutually beneficial, partnerships between school and the local church enriches collective worship. Consequently, worship is a joyful, spiritually nourishing and deeply reflective expression of the Christian vision. Opportunities to enhance pupils' appreciation of Holy Communion (the Eucharist) are at an early stage. • The Christian vision, lived out in loving and nurturing relationships, enhances the positive wellbeing of adults and pupils. All are known and loved as the unique person they are and as a direct result, all flourish. • Rich and meaningful opportunities to develop spiritually are enthusiastically embraced by pupils. Spiritual development is not fully embedded within the curriculum, and so opportunities for further development are missed. • The vision directly inspires pupils to demonstrate love through ethical and charitable activities. Love for others flows naturally from them and enhances the lives of those within, and beyond, school. • Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of Christianity as a living world faith. They are inquisitive learners who engage purposefully with religious text and theological ideas.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop a shared understanding of spirituality across the school, and embed the intentional planning for spiritual development within the curriculum. This is to enhance opportunities for adults and pupils to flourish spiritually. • Enhance opportunities to extend pupils' understanding about the importance of Holy Communion to Christians. This is to further enrich their appreciation of the different ways that Christians worship .

Inspection findings

The vision of 'togetherness' provides a language which unites the whole school community in love for each other. Motivated by a deeply held drive to live out the distinctively Christian vision, decisions made by leaders ensure all flourish. The associated values of care, support and respect enhance the whole culture of the school. Through naturally loving and highly inclusive relationships, the vision is transformed from a set of words into a way of life. This shapes policies and actions and enables all to thrive as they develop and grow together. Leaders, governors, adults, clergy and pupils clearly articulate their understanding of the vision. They thoughtfully share their own sense of how it is biblically rooted in a Christian narrative. This joint understanding contributes to the sense of unity throughout the whole community.

Exemplary relationships between the local church and the school elevate the impact of collective worship. Worship is exceptional in its planning and delivery. As a rich expression of the school's Christian vision, it inspires a bond of unity. It is valued by adults and pupils and provides spiritually nourishing moments of reflection. Joyful singing lifts and enlivens the whole school community. Members of the local church 'open the book' team enact Bible stories with pupils, enhancing biblical understanding. This intergenerational leading of worship embodies the sense of togetherness central to the vision. Messy church and 'mini disciples' activities inspire pupils to deepen their understanding of Bible stories. Opportunities for the school community to work alongside clergy and members of the local church strengthens the bond of unity. This enriches opportunities for reflection and spiritual flourishing. Parents articulate how worship impacts on pupils in the care they demonstrate at home. Adults reflect on how watching pupils lead worship fills them with joy. These are richly valued, meaningful moments. Pupils enjoy being worship leaders and thrive on the responsibility this gives them. They lead prayers and worship which enhances their own spiritual development. Prayer stations, made by school worship leaders in the local church, provide valuable experiences of leading worship in the wider community. Through the breadth of provision at Gainford, pupils have a wide appreciation of the different ways that Christian worship. However, their understanding of Holy Communion is less secure. The mutually beneficial relationship between school and the local church enriches lives through loving collaboration.

The powerful link between church and school is acknowledged through the national Growing Faith award. This is the first partnership in the country to achieve this prestigious accolade. It celebrates the innovative relationship between the local church and school. The success of this union is rooted in a joint understanding of the Christian vision. Church invests in the school with members of the congregation keen to be actively engaged in school life. Church and school leaders, including governors, work seamlessly to ensure the vision is central to their aspirations that all flourish. Enthusiastic and engaged governors know the school well through robust self-evaluation processes. They work closely with school leaders in accurately evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. The bold decision to fund a family support worker directly stems from governors' understanding of what flourishing means to them. This positively impacts on families and pupil attendance, enhancing learning opportunities for all. Leaders are eager to share their learning with other schools. This demonstrates the desire to further expand the impact of the vision beyond the school.

Pupils enthusiastically engage in opportunities for social action. This is inspired by the vision and pupils' eagerness to demonstrate love within their school and the community. The impact of this directly enriches lives within, and beyond, the school. Initiated by pupils, events such



as superhero charity days and creating crisp packet blankets for homeless people transforms lives. Pupils' actively engage with the Archbishop of York Young Leaders Award. This strengthens pupils' understanding of the links between their vision, worship and social action. Pupil leadership roles within the school council provide them with a forum to put ideas into action. They do not just talk about the commandment of Jesus to 'love one another', they live it out.

Wellbeing and good mental health is a school priority. Inspired by the vision, it has, at its heart, a culture of care for one another. This enriches the school as a place to work for adults and a place to learn for pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), flourish. All are known, and are cared for, as the unique person they are. A nurturing and inclusive ethos ensures that all feel safe, all feel valued and all thrive. This is evident in the broad smiles, noted by visitors, that light up the school, radiating a sense of hope and aspiration. Pupils are eager to learn. Opportunities for critical thinking are evident throughout the curriculum. As a result of the Christian values that are known and shared by all, relationships are warm and loving throughout school. Pupils and staff are mutually respectful and caring. Positive behaviour is strikingly evident. When mistakes are made, pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the school values such as forgiveness and respect.

Spontaneous and planned moments of reflection are valued by pupils and enhance their spiritual development. Reflection areas within classrooms provide precious moments for them to write prayers and spend time in quiet thought. Adults and pupils articulate their own understanding of spirituality. A shared language is starting to develop, although it is not yet fully evident.

RE is valued by adults and pupils. Members of different worldviews and world faiths are welcomed into school, extending pupils' knowledge and breaking down stereotypes. They provide valued moments for pupils' learning and enhance the broad and balanced RE curriculum. This increases their understanding of diversity. The acceptance of difference extends beyond tolerance. RE provides a safe and valued space for pupils to develop their religious literacy. High quality work is evident in pupils' books highlighting the pride they have in their work. An enquiry based approach to learning leads to enthusiastic engagement in RE, ambitious expectations and outcomes. Pupils demonstrate well- developed skills in analysing biblical text. They confidently, and accurately, navigate through the stories of the Bible. Big questions and opportunities for theological reflection deepen their understanding of Christianity as a living world religion.

Underpinned by the vision, the dynamic partnership between the local church and school, creates an aspirational culture where all flourish.



Information			
School	Gainford Church of England Primary School and Preschool	Inspection date	2 February 2023
URN	114222	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Durham;Newcastle	Pupils on roll	56
Headteacher	Chris Riley		
Chair of Governors	Jill Young		
Inspector	Paul Rusby	No.	938