

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Whixall Church of England Primary School</b>	
Address	Brownsbrook, Whixall, Whitchurch, SY13 2SB
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>Through our distinctive Christian ethos, we develop a loving and supportive atmosphere that nurtures the uniqueness and talents of all.</p> <p>Through our inspiring curriculum, we aim that all children achieve their true potential, embrace challenge and become resilient individuals who are empowered to embrace the fullness of life.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whixall Church of England Primary cherishes the worth of each unique individual. Leaders and staff go above and beyond to care for every pupil. This includes the most vulnerable, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as well as their families.</li> <li>Due to the family atmosphere and nurturing culture, the wellbeing of the whole school community is a top priority. Everyone aspires to the best they can be by 'overcoming their Goliaths', persevering and celebrating each other's achievements.</li> <li>The embedded Christian vision is lived out daily and demonstrates the leader's perceptive understanding of the school's context. This has resulted in a wide range of opportunities for pupils to be courageous advocates and to widen their horizons. However, monitoring and evaluation do not effectively cover all aspects of being a church school.</li> <li>Collective worship is inspirational and at the heart of daily life. Leaders, along with a church representative and pupils are heavily involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation. This allows spiritual growth and gives regular encounters with the teachings of Jesus. Pupils confidently lead prayer.</li> <li>Religious Education (RE) is very well led and managed. The provision is engaging, creative and progressive. Pupils are enabled to discuss their own personal beliefs as well as those of others with exceptional depth, thoughtfulness and sensitivity. This is as a result of high quality teaching.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a more robust and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the Christian distinctiveness. This is to ensure that the key foci for improvement are being identified.</li> <li>Establish a mutually beneficial global partnership to continue to develop pupils' awareness of injustice and inequality.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

Committed leadership at Whixall has led to a clear Christian vision and embedded values at the heart of school life. This vision is explained by the community through the story of David and Goliath. Staff frequently review how David's characteristics help the children to persevere, be resilient and aspire to reach their full potential. Fondly referred to by the pupils as 'overcoming their Goliaths' they can clearly articulate what the vision means to them. They give many examples of how it is impacting on their life both at school and beyond. One pupil rightly explained that it 'helps you to believe in yourself, persevere and succeed'. They see themselves as being like David and reflect on aspirational goals that they wish to achieve. Inclusiveness, care and support for the school community, and the area it serves, ensures its overtly Christian mission is effective. It is clearly appreciated and makes a difference to people's lives. Relationships with the Fields Multi Academy Trust (FMAT) are mutually beneficial; collaboration and upholding the Christian distinctiveness being key. Leaders, including governors, speak passionately about the difference the vision makes to the daily life of all. The local church works in close partnership, enhancing the Christian setting of the school. Leaders correctly articulate how all key decisions, processes and policies radiate from the vision. Governors have a deep and thorough knowledge of the school. However, there is no systematic plan which ensures that all aspects of Christian distinctiveness are rigorously evaluated. As a result, it is not yet clear how monitoring is leading to sustained improvements.

Vulnerable groups are clearly identified. The Christian care and support for these pupils, including those with SEND is a top priority. This is one of the strengths of the school. Pupils who haven't settled in other settings have come to Whixall and are thriving. The school truly reflects a loving Christian family where all work together as a close knit team. They share each other's joys and support one another through life's difficulties and challenges. Parents know and appreciate that school is a safe and secure environment in which their children can flourish. They speak of how this reflects the vision. Staff show Christian love to each of the pupils and their families. One parent rightly commented that 'it's not just a job for staff here, they really care and always go above and beyond'.

Within the classroom, and in more informal contexts, pupils show high levels of respect and dignity. Year 6 has links with a multi-cultural inner city primary. They are currently writing letters to each other to learn about their differences and what unites them. Relationships across the school community are strong. Consequently, behaviour is exemplary. A deep sense of belonging permeates and pupils take this along with their Christian values into secondary and beyond. In keeping with the vision, all successes are celebrated. Curricular, extra-curricular and out of school achievements are equally valued, enabling pupils to live life to the full. These wide-ranging opportunities develop confidence, engender self-belief and broaden horizons. The holistic development of each child is of high importance to leaders and staff. The vision reinforces the uniqueness of each individual. All know that they are loved and encouraged to be the best they can be.

The learning experiences are exciting and broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world. As they move through the school, they focus on different countries, such as Kenya and Brazil. This enables them to explore social and cultural diversity in a range of contexts. The RE curriculum complements this. Pupils have good religious literacy and can apply their knowledge of a range of worldviews. Their understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith is exceptional. They are excited about learning within the natural world at Forest School. The enjoyment gained from the breadth of sporting and music opportunities contributes well to their development. There is a secure understanding of and approach to spiritual growth. It is

consistently defined in policy and practice. Reflection spaces in classrooms are valued as a time to think and be calm. Pupils particularly appreciate the space to write prayers or to light a tea light candle to reflect on their worries.

Pupils are aware of global issues and they are knowledgeable about people who are in much less fortunate circumstances. Fundraising for several charities encourages compassion and generosity. They have an understanding of the need to act where there are inequalities in the world. A strong sense of justice and fairness prevails in their concern for world problems, such as plastic pollution. As a result, glass bottles instead of plastic are now used for milk at the instigation of the pupils. Whixall has recently made connections with a school in Gambia and sent out additional supportive resources. The link is at the early stages of development.

Invitational and inclusive collective worship is valued as a time of calm and reflection. Pupils' powerful and joyful singing significantly enhances the experience. Leaders, worship council and a member of the church plan and lead these special times. The worship council held a day of reflection and training with the Diocesan adviser. There are opportunities to share views and ideas about current world issues. All of these are then rooted in the Bible to help guide and support pupils in their own lives. Key Christian festivals are celebrated in the church, this unites the school and local community. All appreciate the time to come together as the Whixall family to pause and reflect. One pupil rightly said that 'worship helps them to be a better person as they try and live by the messages'. Reflection and prayer are integral.

RE is a considerable strength of the school. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about the subject because it is presented in a varied and creative way. They particularly value the safe environment in lessons in which they feel confident to reflect on their own beliefs. The high quality curriculum along with effective teaching ensures that children develop a deep understanding of Christianity and other world religions. They express their thinking confidently, making connections between a range of beliefs, practices and their own lives. Excellent leadership makes good use of assessment and feedback. Journey days enhance the RE curriculum. Significant days on the Christian calendar are chosen to explore. For example, a journey day on Pentecost led to strong knowledge and a deep understanding.

Every unique individual is nurtured and supported to be the best they can be. This equips them well for the future, enabling them to have aspirational hopes and dreams.

Information			
School	Whixall Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	6 July 2023
URN	143325	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Lichfield	Pupils on roll	161
MAT/Federation	Fields Multi Academy Trust		
Executive headteacher/CEO	Nicola Brayford		
Chair of Governors	Jenni Whitfield		
Inspector	Kerry Geddis	No.	955