

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Humshaugh Church of England (Aided) First School			
Address	Humshaugh, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 4AA		
Date of inspection	4 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Aided First
Diocese	Newcastle	URN	122295

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Humshaugh is a first school with 43 pupils on roll and a seven place nursery together with provision for two year olds. All pupils are of White British heritage and no pupils speak English as an additional language. 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 below national averages.

The school's Christian vision

Our vision is to be 'good soil' for the children and adults of Humshaugh Church of England First School so that all can flourish and grow.

The ethos of Humshaugh is built upon Jesus' parable of the soils in Matthew 13:3-8 and includes the four elements of: planting the seeds well, cultivating good soil, nurturing the plants and producing a bumper crop.

Key findings

- The vision is a powerful compass which sets the strategic direction of the school, enabling all to flourish in the good soil that the school provides. The language of the vision is articulated and owned by the entire school community.
- The vision bursts out of the very fabric of the school in spontaneous acts of care and kindness which are demonstrated by the pupils throughout the school and the wider community.
- Ambitious leaders, clergy and governors know their school well. They care deeply for everyone in the school and model the love and nurturing which underpins all relationships and makes all feel truly valued.
- Strong subject leadership, enhanced through professional development, enables high quality teaching which results in a good level of religious literacy and a lively interest in RE.
- Worship provides adults and pupils with valued opportunities for prayer and reflection. Whole school singing has a profound spiritual impact on all.

Areas for development

- Broaden pupils' cultural horizons, enabling all to further champion global issues such as inequality by embedding their courageous advocacy and immersing themselves in a wide cultural diversity.
- Increase meaningful opportunities for child led whole school collective worship which further deepens adults' and pupils' spiritual growth, including a growing understanding of the Eucharist.
- Boldly initiate wider opportunities for collaborative work with local Church schools to further enhance the Christian foundation of the school.

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

The carefully chosen language of the school's vision skilfully weaves throughout every aspect of the school enabling all adults and pupils to flourish. The biblical parable of being good soil underpins the vision and fits perfectly within the rural context of the local community. The vision is understood by, and relevant to, the school and local community. As a direct result of this, the vision is clearly articulated by all members of the school community and drives the strategic and organisational decisions that are taken.

Pupils display a passionate desire to live out the vision in the school and in the wider community. Pupils speak with great humility and measured pride in the random acts of kindness they have performed from which members of the local community have directly benefitted. There is a generosity of spirit that is mutually beneficial between school, the local church and the local community. Clergy and members of the congregation are an integral and much-loved part of the school community. Their avid enthusiasm to run enrichment activities such as 'Messy church' further enhances the whole life of the school and bolsters the school's Christian foundation. Strong links with the local Diocese provide valued support for the school. Partnerships with other Church schools are at an early stage.

The vision, initially inspired by the combined wisdom of senior leaders and local clergy, powerfully impacts on every element of school. Leaders, staff and governors accurately articulate how each element of the vision supports their drive to help all flourish. With soil as the core analogy, they describe how the curriculum plants seeds of wisdom and leaders effectively ensure the nurturing of each individual 'plant'. The language of soil has become the very language of the school, articulated by all, enabling all to grow and flourish. Progress for all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, is above national averages. The high level of attendance is testimony to the enthusiasm that pupils have for school and the supportive partnership that exists between home and school.

Loving relationships, which are prevalent throughout the school, naturally emerge through the school's nurturing ethos. As a direct result of this, all feel cared for and valued. Each pupil and member of staff is known personally and loved as the unique individual, made in God's image. Beyond the school and the immediate local community, pupils engage in social action projects such as Hexham foodbank and the global toilet twinning project. Pupils are ambitious for themselves and for others. They can articulate that they want everyone, locally and globally, to enjoy the same good soil that nurtures and sustains them. Adults and pupils skilfully articulate how biblical stories and the teachings of Jesus underpin their ethical actions and how they stem directly from the vision. This is a very inclusive school where leaders emphatically describe, and demonstrate, the importance that they place on the dignity of all adults and pupils. The importance of valuing all is clearly lived out by the pupils in their excellent relationships and thoughtfulness to others.

The school's curriculum is personalised to ensure that pupils have the opportunities for the development of their individual character as well as their knowledge and skills. Pupils thrive with the array of artistic opportunities, forest activities and range of visitors which further enhance pupils' learning. Displays around school are a celebration of the impact of many of these wider opportunities and help to create a vibrant learning environment. Governors and volunteers are generous with their time and actively support creative learning opportunities which significantly enhance the breadth of the curriculum.

Worship is thoughtfully planned by the worship leader and is delivered by pupils, staff and clergy. The strategic decision to increase the number of class-based worship enhances opportunities for all children to be actively involved. However, this reduces the number of opportunities for whole school worship. Parents and staff articulate the profound impact that whole school singing and worship have on their own personal spirituality. The harmonious sound which emanates from the combined voices of all the pupils creates a deeply spiritual feel. One member of staff noted, 'hearing the children sing makes my heart sing.'

Worship provides pupils with opportunities to share personal prayers and encounter valued moments of reflection and stillness. Biblical teaching is central to worship, and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of Anglican traditions and festivals such as Candlemas. Currently they are less aware of the importance of the Eucharist to Christians. The impact of worship abounds in the caring relationships that are evident and the exemplary behaviour that permeates through all areas of the school. Pupils articulate, and live out, ideas shared in worship, such as the importance of forgiveness and valuing one another.

Pupils relish the opportunity to ask meaningful questions and to have time for reflection in RE. They buzz with excitement when talking about RE. Pupils thrive in this key school curriculum area. They demonstrate a high degree of religious literacy as a result of the depth of the curriculum and the opportunities for theological and philosophical reflection. RE teaching and learning benefit from the impassioned leadership of RE. Governors and school leaders ensure high standards for all pupils in RE through robust and supportive monitoring. This, combined with the enthusiasm of staff, ensures that RE actively supports the school's vision that all might flower and blossom in the good soil it provides. Broad and insightful questioning naturally emerges from pupils' genuine interest in RE and has led to a high level of religious literacy.

RE and worship are powerful tools for enhancing pupils' understanding of their place as active global citizens. Pupils benefit from meaningful opportunities within the curriculum to engage in deepening their cultural awareness. Leaders have actively sought to enhance pupils' wider cultural awareness through visits to school from guests from Malawi and visits to a Hindu temple. Providing opportunities for pupils to deepen the breadth of the diversity of their cultural engagement are important in further widening their global lens.

Humshaugh is a school that deeply cares for the positive wellbeing of all adults and pupils. Adults and pupils resolutely describe the positive impact of the school's Christian values on enhancing their good mental health. The vision at Humshaugh is transformative and ensures that all adults and pupils feel valued, cherished and nurtured as unique individuals, rooted and grounded in the good soil the school provides.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Pupils of all abilities, including vulnerable pupils, thrive academically in RE and make good progress. This is because teaching is good and stimulates their thirst for knowledge. Teaching is enhanced through continuing professional development provided by the local Diocese and the deep subject knowledge of the RE leader. Pupils demonstrate a high level of engagement in RE. This is evident in their positive approach to learning, the depth of their questioning and their impressive knowledge of the Bible.

Headteacher	Jude Long
Inspector's name and number	Paul Rusby 938