



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ashby Church of England Primary School

Address Burton Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire, LE65 2LL

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 **Good**

School’s vision

‘You have filled my heart with greater joy’. Psalms 4 v7
Inspiring everyone to:
Achieve their full potential
Challenge creative minds
Encourage and nurture talents

Through our Christian values of Compassion, Endurance, Forgiveness, Friendship, Trust and Wisdom.

Key findings

- School leaders are passionate about the school. Their commitment to the shared vision drives their desire to see it fulfilled. Due to the pandemic their focus has been on supporting the school community. There have been few opportunities to engage more widely.
- The school’s work with its most vulnerable pupils transforms their lives. They flourish through supportive relationships, encouragement, and nurture of their talents.
- A focus on spiritual development is central to the flourishing of pupils and adults. Exploring ‘big questions’ supports everyone to value difference and diversity.
- Through the contribution of several Christian churches from across the town pupils have a good understanding of the breadth of Christian worship. However, they have limited experience of Christianity as a global faith.
- Religious education (RE) is a strength of the school. A structured and well taught curriculum supports the development of pupils’ knowledge and understanding enabling them to talk confidently about religious beliefs

Areas for development

- Explore ways in which the Christian vision can inspire the school to look for opportunities to widen its reach into the diocese and beyond. This will strengthen Ashby’s ‘Journey of Joy’ and share that journey with others.
- Work with pupils to continue to strengthen the work of courageous advocacy so that more can become agents of change with a concern for justice.
- Deepen pupils experience of worldwide Anglican worship to enrich their experience of faith in today’s world.

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

Ashby is a welcoming, nurturing and joyful primary school. The leadership of the headteacher and her senior team has created a highly inclusive school community. The Christian vision is summarized in the statement 'A Journey of Joy'. The vision is effectively underpinned by a Bible verse. It has a positive influence on how everyone in the school undertakes their journey. Pupils talk about 'ACE' – achieve, challenge, encourage. The vision and values are part of the everyday language of the school. Pupils reference Bible stories that help them to understand what it means to journey with joy. As one pupil put it 'God can give you a heart full of joy because God created joy'. Staff share this journey too. They are provided with opportunities for professional development and support enabling them to flourish. Parents are enthusiastic about the work of this church school. The vision inspires their children to want to achieve their potential. The creative approach to learning and the encouragement of individual talents are some of the reasons they cite.

The rich curriculum enables pupils to engage with learning so that they can flourish, reaching their potential. They make connections with the world and the experiences of others through asking 'big questions'. An English lesson on persuasive writing encouraging support for Christian Aid resulted in pupils organizing a fund-raising event for the charity, for example. A group of pupils have become 'plastic persuaders' challenging the school community to reduce their use of plastics. These pupils see themselves as courageous advocates for the planet. Others are keen to engage in similar initiatives. Behaviour is exemplary due to strong relationships. Forgiveness and friendship are key to the early resolution of issues that might arise.

Respect for all has a high profile. Leaders' provision of bespoke support to vulnerable pupils and their families is transformative. The vision clearly shapes these actions. The detailed knowledge staff have of the needs of each child and their family is exemplary. Governors take courageous actions ensuring pupils have the support they require. This includes making financial decisions to provide significant amounts of small group and 1-1 support. Tailored support is given by other members of the staff team including lunch time supervisors and site staff. Through these interventions pupils' behaviour improves and their self-esteem grows. As one governor put it 'here is a love that doesn't stop'. During the pandemic teachers recorded a message each morning for their class. This personal interaction between teacher and pupils was valued by parents. Teachers went 'the extra mile' ensuring all pupils were supported with home learning packs and digital devices.

There is a shared understanding of spirituality. Classrooms have a focal point for reflection on the values. An outdoor area creates an inspiring space for everyone to engage with nature. Pupils and adults describe the restorative benefits of such a space. Staff value the opportunities they have for spiritual development. Time is given at the end of each day for reflection in classrooms. Opportunities to reflect on the day or to take time for quiet are valued by everyone. Staff are clear that this time ensures that pupils leave the school each day with 'the slate wiped clean' and in a calm, reflective manner.

Collective worship is key to supporting pupils' spiritual development. It is invitational and engaging. The image on the wall in the worship space aids pupils understanding of how individual Bible stories make one big story. Links with the parish church are strong. Along with involvement from other churches and Christian organisations in the locality, pupils experience a breadth of Christian expression. However, they have little experience of diverse traditions in the worldwide Anglican church. Singing is important in worship at Ashby. Pupils have a daily reminder of the importance of joy through the songs used. Prayer is used to draw together themes from the worship. Pupils say this helps them to 'connect with God'. They use stories they hear in worship to support them in their lives. The story of creation motivated them to think about caring for God's world. Prior to the pandemic pupil worship leaders were becoming active in preparing, leading, and evaluating worship. The vicar is a regular visitor to school. They have developed strong relationships with pupils and families which ensures a strength of partnership between church, school, and home. During the pandemic worship continued online. Parents are grateful for the ways in which it ensured everyone in the home could access this important aspect of school life.

RE is led and managed by a skilled and committed leader. They ensure staff are trained and supported. Pupils are encouraged to critically reflect on their own and others' beliefs. Pupils in Year 6 were challenged to reflect and question beliefs about death. This led to stimulating and powerful class discussion. Pupils encounter a range of religious beliefs. In learning about Hinduism, they considered the challenges Hindus might face when living in Britain. Before the pandemic

pupils visited a Religion Roadshow where they engaged with believers from a range of religions. Older pupils reflected on the importance of listening to others and ‘respecting others’ beliefs. The RE curriculum utilises the locally agreed syllabus and the Understanding Christianity resource effectively. Pupils can use religious language meaningfully, talking about the special tray Hindus use when they worship and its significance to the Hindu religion, for example. They explain the concept of the Trinity as being ‘the three parts of God’ and use the story of Jesus baptism to illustrate their understanding of this. There is clear progression through the curriculum so that pupils build on skills and revisit prior knowledge regularly. Teachers use assessment sheets to measure how well pupils learn. Pupils complete these at the start and end of each unit of work. Responses noted are then used to develop of pupils’ learning.

All members of Ashby’s distinctively Christian community are united in their desire that the Christian vision and values are lived out daily. The vision makes a powerful difference to the lives and outcomes of both pupils and adults.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	30 November 2021	URN	120910
Date of previous inspection	4 February 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled primary school	NOR	307
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese / Methodist District	Leicester		
Headteacher	Liz Powell		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is broadly in line with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.		
Additional significant information	The school is 1 of 5 primary schools in the town of Ashby. A high proportion of the school’s vulnerable pupils are currently in upper key stage 2.		
Inspector’s name	Jane Lewis	No.	27