

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Paul's Church of England VA Primary School, Elswick

Vision

To glorify God and serve the community by pursuing, through biblical principles, an excellent education.

Strengths

- St Paul's is a small school with a big heart. The school is a community built on nurture, positive relationships and equality as all children are precious and valued by God, as expressed in the Christian vision.
- The school offers a rich and diverse curriculum driven by the vision which creates experiences and life enhancing memories. The curriculum is accessible to all because pupils are given the same opportunities and experiences regardless of need, ability or diversity.
- Leaders have created an inclusive Christian culture where pupils and adults can thrive. Staff are dedicated and caring as they enable pupils to flourish.
- Inspired by the vision, support for mental health is exemplary. Leaders ensure that mental health and wellbeing are a priority of the school. A strong, supportive team provide excellent support and care for all.
- An exciting abundance of extra-curricular experiences and partnerships are transformational. The planned range of enrichment opportunities develop the whole child and contribute to the holistic growth of pupils.

Development Points

- Monitor the impact of the Christian vision and develop systems for evaluating the school's distinctiveness. This is so that the school can continue to grow and flourish as a Church school.
- Deepen a shared language and understanding of spirituality to build on current practice to provide explicit opportunities for spiritual flourishing within the curriculum and worship.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to live out the Christian vision on a national and global scale. This is so they are equipped to be agents of change beyond their locality.



Inspection Findings

St Paul's is a school community built on care, inclusivity and relationships with the vision at its heart. Pupils and adults thrive. This is because leaders have created a shared belief that all individuals are valued and precious to God. Leaders understand the surrounding community well. They have embedded a Christian vision that drives school policies. As a result, the school is transformative within the community it serves. Staff and pupils use Christian values such as forgiveness to live out the vision. The importance of values is fully understood. One pupil said, 'perseverance reminds us God is there and to keep going in hard times.' Pupils embrace the values because they are celebrated when demonstrated, including 'hot chocolate with the head'. They strive to express key weekly values within their actions in order to seek recognition of good character. Staff cherish opportunities offered for continuing professional development. This has allowed staff to keep knowledge up to date within Church school education. Governors comprehend the Christian vision. However, formal monitoring of the impact of the vision is not secure within collective worship and religious education (RE).

The curriculum reflects the Christian vision. Leaders hold high expectations for all pupils regardless of need, ability or diversity. This means that all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged are given the same learning opportunities. Pupils with SEND flourish because they are provided with tailor-made learning and support, which staff monitor and review. Leaders have further assured the meeting of individual needs by the employment of 'KICK.' Subsequently, the focused sports and mentoring provision provides individualized support for selected pupils. This has helped them to build confidence and speak openly. Reading opportunities develop pupils' imagination. As a consequence of reading the book 'In Every House on Every Street' pupils gain a sense of belonging and look to the wider world.

Leaders strive to bring the curriculum to life as the school engages with memorable experiences. The school uses the beautiful woods at Thornley to explore new environments. This means that pupils are passionate and engaged within their learning.

Partnerships and extra-curricular activities are considerable. Pupils enjoy the range of experiences offered from attending the Centre for Life, to drama activities at the Theatre Royal and sporting sessions at Newcastle United Football Club. This has provided moments for academic excellence and opens doors to new adventures. Intercultural enrichment visits to schools in France and India provide important learning opportunities beyond the classroom. Pupils gain an understanding that they are global citizens, and this widens their perspectives.

Staff and pupils are at an early stage of using a shared language for spirituality. They are given opportunities across the curriculum to share feelings, reflect and share wonder moments. This is not however formally identified within curriculum plans. Leaders have introduced a new spirituality model. Pupils are given opportunities to think about God, one another and the world beyond to experience spirituality, but this is not fully embedded.

Inspired by the vision, worship is a time for togetherness. It offers moments of reflection and joyful singing which enriches spiritual development. Worship is inclusive and provides a range of elements such as music and Bible stories. One pupil said that worship 'opens our hearts to new experiences.' Pupils talk about meaningful moments within worship to reflect and consider past actions and how to move forward. Worship encourages pupils and staff to live out the values of the school. Pupils value moments of prayer and speak about talking to God and his love for people. Pupils cherish moments to share thoughts with others and reflect on differing beliefs and where they relate in the world. Leaders, including governors, evaluate worship informally. There are currently no formal systems for monitoring collective worship that include all groups within the school.



The Christian vision creates a warm, welcoming, loving and caring ethos with close relationships. Parents state children are happy because they are cherished and safe. Echoed by the Christian vision staff are knowledgeable about individual pupils. This enables pupils to feel emotionally supported due to the importance placed on wellbeing. Family support is exceptional. Practical and emotional help is in abundance. This enhances close relationships with parents and is a much-valued support during difficult times. Pupils value the worry box. They speak about expressing worries without having to communicate concerns in person. The quality of relationships within St Paul's is very high. Staff are dedicated and warm-hearted valuing children and each other as they aspire to enable children to flourish.

The Christian vision inspires pupils to become agents of change within the local community. Through litter picking, pupils improve the local environment. By writing letters to members of Parliament (MPs) and local councillors, pupils strive to make local change. Pupils talk about the importance of justice and make links to Christian values. However, opportunities to challenge injustice on a national and global scale are less frequent. This means that pupils are not given scope to make positive changes beyond their community.

The RE curriculum mirrors the Christian vision. Staff access beneficial training from the Diocese. This increases their expertise that supports the effective delivery of the curriculum. The curriculum is well-balanced and sequenced. Consequently, pupils learn about a range of world faiths including Christianity. Pupils value learning about different cultures. They speak about RE teaching them the importance of respect despite diversity. Motivated by the Christian vision, pupils value investigating the commonalities between religions and the meaning of Christian Parables. This enables them to gain a deeper knowledge about differing beliefs and practices. RE lessons help pupils to connect to the content studied by reflecting on their own experiences and thoughts. This allows pupils to understand the relevance of content and enhances pupils' understanding. Pupils are challenged within RE and enjoy their lessons, specifically debates. This extends their breadth of knowledge and provides deep thinking. Visits to places of worship helps pupils enhance subject understanding. Such visits strengthen their comprehension of diversity within religions.

Teaching and learning are monitored with book checks, lesson observations and by pupils talking to teachers. This ensures that teachers are following the curriculum and to facilitate future improvements within lessons. Pupils appreciate feedback in books to identify strengths and areas for development within work. At the end of lessons, teachers assess individual pupil work to determine understanding of content taught. This permits teachers to identify misconceptions that can be addressed in subsequent lessons.

St Paul's is a remarkable school. The Christian vision trickles through every aspect of school life and pupils thrive. As one parent stated, 'children flourish because the staff treat children as if they were their own.'

Information

Address	Victoria Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 7JU		
Date	16 October 2024	URN	108502
Type of school	Maintained Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	225
Diocese	Newcastle		
MAT/Federation	West End Schools' Trust (WEST)		
Headteacher	Jason Cochrane		
Chair of Governors	George Curry		
Inspector	Lindsay Henderson		