

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

High Hesket Church of England School			
Address	High Hesket, Carlisle CA4 0HU		
Date of inspection	30 January 2020	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Carlisle	URN	112248

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 Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

High Hesket is a primary school with 168 pupils on roll, with an additional 20 part-time pupils in the nursery. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few 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. Since the last denominational inspection there have been significant staffing changes. The headteacher and senior leadership team have been in post since September 2018.

The school's Christian vision

At High Hesket Church of England School we prepare our children for the exciting world around them, by ensuring that they are ready for 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Our community places outdoor learning at the centre and enables children to feel confident, happy, safe and supported whilst encouraging respect for all others.

Key findings

- The school has developed a biblically based Christian vision, which expresses the commitment to exciting learning and the inclusion of all pupils. However, this does not drive all aspects of school life.
- The vision is worked out by the way the school community lives out its core values of creativity, kindness and friendship. This results in a community living in harmony and supports flourishing for all its members. God's love is clearly evident in all relationships, in particular the support and nurture for individuals with additional needs.
- Collective worship unites the school and provides time to reflect upon the Christian vision. It deepens understanding of the core values, but does not provide enough opportunities for spiritual development, including invitations to prayer or time to reflect.
- The vision for ensuring pupils are 'ready for life in all its fullness' results in a creative curriculum. This supports spiritual development and academic progress for all pupils. It also inspires social action, impressive environmental projects and global learning.
- Religious education (RE) provides pupils with a secure understanding of world faiths, but teaching about Christianity is less secure.

Areas for development

- Embed and express explicitly the Christian vision, so that it is widely understood, effectively drives practice and is central to the daily life of the school.
- Ensure that teaching about Christianity in RE effectively supports biblical literacy and understanding of Christianity as a living faith.
- Renew the programme for collective worship, so that it provides quality time for spiritual development, including opportunities for prayer and reflection.

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 Christian vision at High Hesket School is lived out through the school's core values of community, respect, kindness and friendship. It reflects the Christian foundations of the school. It implicitly underpins the improvement and strategic development of the school. It enables the school community to live well together and flourish. It is now the focal point of decisions made by the newly established senior leadership team. Changes to the behaviour policy, and provision for pupils with additional needs, reflect the desire for all to flourish within the loving and inclusive school environment. However, the biblical roots of the vision are not always explicitly expressed and therefore not all staff understand how their practice is related to the Christian vision.

Since the last denominational inspection, there have been significant changes to the governing board and senior leadership of the school. This prompted a review of the vision, curriculum and strategic direction of the school. Governors know the school well due to regular and responsive engagement with self-evaluation and monitoring activities. They are committed to securing the Christian foundations of the school through recruitment and significant investment in continuous professional development for all staff. Wellbeing of all staff is given significant priority and relationships are particularly strong and supportive.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are proud of their caring and forgiving community. They speak confidently about conflict resolution and how older children are proud to be role models for younger ones. They value each other as unique individuals and show respect, love and concern for the community of which they are proud. Pupils have a deep understanding of their core Christian values. One child has recently written a school prayer that encompasses the values, which pupils are learning to say together. The values provide firm foundations for loving relationships and a sense of social responsibility that reaches well beyond the school gate. The long-established links with a school community in Tanzania have enabled the Mrawi Primary School to flourish and provide sustainable support. High Hesket has enabled other schools to forge similar links as a lead school through the Connecting Classrooms programme. Global learning also extends to a school in Australia, which has resulted in pupils understanding the devastation caused by the recent fires. Pupils have a deep understanding of current world issues and raising awareness. The school also embraces opportunities to promote fair trade as a Fair Achiever School. It engages in other local environmental projects, such as involvement in the Cumbria Youth Climate Change Summit. As a result, pupils are passionate about wanting to make a positive impact on the world.

The school's unique and innovative curriculum, founded on the commitment to outdoor learning as reflected in the vision, inspires and motivates all pupils so that they make good academic progress. Attendance is excellent because pupils enjoy coming to school. Opportunities across the curriculum are used to encourage deep thinking and spiritual development. This is evident across the learning framework that the school has designed, which embraces meaningful reflection projects. Spiritual development within the curriculum is a strength. Pupils explore core values and use prayer spaces for reflection. Outdoor learning is also used to provide pupils with a strong sense of duty to value, respect and look after God's wonderful world. The wider curriculum enables all pupils to experience yoga, forest schools and other creative expressions, which impact positively on their wellbeing and spiritual development. The vision for ensuring every child is confident, happy, safe and supported results in the commitment to ensuring that every pupil flourishes and reaches their full potential. Pupils benefit from a nurture group and specialist teaching, as well as exciting extracurricular provision.

RE is valued and enjoyed by pupils and staff as an academic subject. It is led by an enthusiastic and dedicated leader, who recognises the strengths of the subject and areas required for improvement. Planning reflects the Statement of Entitlement for RE, with a particularly strong focus on philosophical debate. As a result, RE enables pupils to develop spiritually, question deeply and confidently compare various religious beliefs. Pupils are knowledgeable about world faiths, but are less confident in their understanding of Christianity and the Bible.

Parents speak highly of the school and the significant impact that it has had on their children's character development and academic progress. They particularly appreciate the priority given to pastoral support, nurture and the encouragement for pupils to shine as unique individuals. Parents recognise the impact the core values have on their children and the safe environment that the school promotes.

Collective worship is highly regarded by the school and provides an opportunity for staff and pupils to unite and deepen their understanding of the school's vision. Since the last denominational inspection, priority has been given to enabling pupils to participate in planning, leading and evaluating worship. The establishment of the Worship Club has enabled pupils to inspire each other and regularly lead worship. However, opportunities for prayer, reflection and spiritual development when the school are gathered for collective worship are limited. The school benefits from close links with the parish and other Christian organisations who have led prayer spaces and other services in church. Pupils say they particularly enjoy worshipping and learning in church. The school has benefitted from partnerships with the diocese and other local schools, which have supported professional development of staff. The annual involvement with the outreach team from Carlisle Cathedral enriches the music and worship life of the school.

The school is a beacon for God's love at the heart of the community that it serves. All members of the school family are loved as unique individuals. The headteacher, together with the staff and governors, is committed to doing the very best for each pupil and their family. This ensures that the Christian foundations of this truly inclusive school shine brightly.

Headteacher	Amy Harvey
Inspector's name and number	Kathryn Pym 726