



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Towcester Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address Islington Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 6AU

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

We will send the children out, as Noah did the dove (Genesis 8:8-12), having nurtured and prepared them for life. Knowing that they are valued they can fly and take the values of the school out into the world.
'If we live by the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit.' (Galatians 5:25)

Key findings

- Leaders have developed a vision that reflects the local context. All decisions are made based on this vision which is deeply rooted in Christian teachings and places the child at the centre. However, the values that support the vision do not yet fully reflect the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- Pupils behave well. The key to this is the relationships that the school enables and grows so that the community lives well together. Forgiveness and reconciliation underpin all the strategies and policies of the school, including inclusivity and behaviour. As a result, the whole child is considered and flourishes.
- Every child is seen in their uniqueness and their ambition is encouraged. Pupils with special educational needs, or who may be considered vulnerable, are provided with consistent approaches. As a result they make bold decisions in their learning and are confident in exploring their own spirituality.
- Collective Worship at Towcester is excellent. It is centred around the school’s Christian vision and enables stillness, joyfulness and empowerment through biblical teachings. Leaders have created a dynamic special time which is highly valued by the whole school community. They find deep meaning through Christian teachings and celebrate the fullness of life that God intended.
- Following recent revisions, the religious education (RE) curriculum is now relevant to the school context. Pupils enjoy the subject. RE is effective in developing their learning through exploring believers' practice, thinking and living. As yet, deeper level thinking and creative responses in RE are not yet fully embedded.

Areas for development

- Review the values of the school so they reflect the Christian teachings of the vision. This would provide clear pathways for pupils and adults to live this out in a real and practical way.
- Build on pupils' understanding of social justice and inequality. This would help them to recognise and consider a personal response to issues of disadvantage, deprivation and injustice.
- Embed more opportunities for deeper thinking in RE and how pupils can respond in creative ways to demonstrate what they are capable of.

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 school's Christian vision clearly focuses on how pupils and adults can flourish. The school community's understanding of the vision is strong because leaders express it passionately. Parents recognise the innovative approach taken to know and support pupils individually. This makes the school an inspiring place to be in, as pupils are celebrated for who they are. The school extends its vision into the local community and church. Church and school leaders share the same vision and are united in rooting all their work to ensure that everyone flourishes. A good example is the school's offer of practical support to the people of war-torn Ukraine. The school, church and local community worked together to collect provisions thus helping others in great need. Pupils identify a range of local charities to work with each year. This enables them to establish strong, supportive relationships and understand their work.

Inspired by the school vision to nurture, support is given to families where needed. This helps to remove barriers and promote flourishing. The family worker has built fruitful links with local organisations to ensure families are given equal opportunities. This ensures that no one is left behind or in need of essential support. The Friends of Towcester has funded individual wash bags for the most vulnerable pupils and a local supermarket provides free food for the school breakfast club. The impact of this is pupils who are anxious about coming into school now have a safe and successful start to the day.

The vision kept the school community together during periods of COVID lockdown. It gave them an anchor in times of uncertainty. It has had a positive impact on key policies that governors monitor, including special needs, inclusion and behaviour. This has resulted in a significant reduction in behaviour incidents in the school as well as high attendance figures throughout the pandemic period. Staff successfully identify complex needs in pupils, who, as a result thrive. The headteacher is passionate in driving the vision forward in all aspects of the school's work. She ensures that the impact of the vision is far reaching, utilising the highest level of support from the Diocese and academy trust. In pursuing the best quality training for her staff, all act with confidence and compassion in the most challenging of times. Mental health is supported by a learning mentor and mental health champions, demonstrating that this is a priority within the school. The impact is that pupils have calm role models who always conduct themselves with great dignity and respect. This enables pupils to express their views and concerns and feel listened to.

Pupils with special educational needs are one example of how all pupils are supported to make progress in their learning and flourish. The decision to create a resource base for pupils with additional needs reflects the school's Christian vision of valuing everyone so they can flourish. Staff are trained to deliver consistent behaviour management frameworks that ensure every child is supported to learn. This is celebrated in each classroom where pupils are recognised for living out the school's Christian vision. As a result, pupils demonstrate a joy for the school and their learning. Pupils who have struggled in other school settings have been fully embraced through the generous outworking of the Towcester's Christian vision. The school adapts to meet the needs of the child. Its flexible and creative approach ensures that pupils are listened to, and their needs are acted upon and this enables them to flourish. As a result, the community consistently values all God's children in the compassion it shows.

The curriculum and extra-curricular activities, prepare pupils for life, enabling them to grow and experience life in all its fullness. Prayer spaces, established by the local church, and lunch time clubs support all pupils, including those who struggle. They offer a range of nurturing activities that promote positive relationships in the school. Pupil's uniqueness is explored in the purposeful Relationships and Sex Education curriculum, enabling them to be confident and considerate individuals. Opportunities for pupils to explore spirituality in the school are rich and varied. They enable pupils to have personal experiences of reflection and stillness. Reflecting the school vision, they equip pupils to listen, question and respond to the world God created. Every pupil is provided with times throughout the day to stop, think and reflect. This contributes to pupils being calm, confident and flourishing in their daily experience.

Collective worship is transformational in the daily life of the school. Worship is exceptional because it is inclusive and seen as a conversation with God. As a result, pupils have a deep and meaningful connection to God through prayer. Here, they ask him questions and hear his answers. Vibrant, joyful singing is a key part of daily collective worship which everyone finds deeply moving and uplifting. Christian teachings within worship have a real impact on the school community. They help to promote the vision and secure the atmosphere of loving care and support for one another. Worship builds a strong sense of community. During COVID lockdowns, worship was the most important part of the day. It resulted in the school coming together both virtually and physically to worship as one. It equipped the school with resilience and compassion. It enabled an all-encompassing loving culture. The richness of the church year is celebrated through the seamless links with the local church. The result is a school identity of tradition, generosity and grace. Pupils play a key role in planning, delivering and monitoring worship. Their voice is heard and acted on by senior leaders on a weekly basis, keeping worship dynamic and empowering. The result is collective worship is a bold, cohesive statement of the Christian foundations of the school.

Pupils flourish in RE as it is led well and is seen as a core subject. Senior leaders and governors invest in it and ensure that it meets the requirements of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The syllabus is provided by the diocesan academy trust, and through effective planning, it meets the needs of every pupil. Recent reviews have reduced content to ensure that more time is available for deeper learning, resulting in pupils becoming critical thinkers. RE is a safe space in the timetable that enables pupils to challenge ideas, reflect and shape their knowledge and understanding of world faiths. It also allows them to critically reflect on Christianity as a living, diverse world faith. RE lessons embrace more opportunities for creative approaches to learning including art and drama. As a result, pupils enjoy the subject and can explore and develop their understanding and thinking in different ways. Pupils demonstrate good subject knowledge and this enables them to understand the modern world around them and the differences in it.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	11 March 2022	URN	142650
Date of previous inspection	17 March 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled primary school	NOR	388
Name of MAT/Federation	PDET		
Diocese / Methodist District	Peterborough		
Headteacher	Sally Beaton		
Pupil profile	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 above national averages.		
Additional significant information	The headteacher took up post in September 2021.		
Inspector's name	Christopher Allen	No.	847