

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Whalton Church of England Primary School

Vision

Love your Neighbour as yourself so we can all aspire, believe and achieve to be the very best that we can be.

Whalton Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Notable Strengths

- The school lives out a strongly embedded Christian vision. Leaders are deeply committed to enabling members of the school community to be the best that they can be.
- School leaders are highly aspirational for pupils. Inspired by the vision, they provide a bespoke curriculum that develops pupils holistically.
- Collective worship is a joyful and engaging part of the day. It is expertly planned and delivered for pupils to grow spiritually.
- Leaders use the school vision and values meaningfully to inspire a culture of love and care. Consequently, both adults and pupils go out of their way to help one another.
- The curriculum for religious education (RE) is thoughtfully planned and well sequenced. As a result, it enables pupils to develop a secure knowledge of a range of religions and worldviews.

Development Points

- Ensure every explicit opportunity is taken to share spiritual moments with pupils. This is to enable pupils to flourish spiritually.
- Review the use of assessment within RE to ensure that it is appropriate for all pupils in assessing their progress. This is to enable adults to know how well pupils are progressing. It also helps pupils to understand how to implement the next steps in their learning.
- Enhance pupils' learning about a culture of justice. This is to deepen their appreciation of how actions can make a positive difference to others.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

The school's Christian vision, firmly rooted in Matthew's Gospel, permeates school life and its actions. This underpins pupils and adults' ability to flourish. They are challenged and supported to love their neighbour and aspire to be the very best that they can be. The values of trust, friendship, forgiveness, honesty, hope and love are understood as intrinsic human values. Referenced throughout the day, they help pupils and adults to connect their vision to everyday interactions. This in turn creates a calm, nurturing and purposeful learning environment. Governors' knowledge of the school and the commitment to the vision drive their decision making. The impact of this is seen in the investment in external agencies and the opening of the 'cosy cabin' to further support pupil need. Strategic monitoring through visits and discussions ensures that targeted actions directly enhance opportunities for both pupils and staff. A highly committed staff team, effective collaborations and fruitful partnerships strengthen Whalton's provision as a Church school.

Vision and Curriculum

The vision underpins a bespoke curriculum, thoughtfully crafted to secure pupil flourishing. The school's curriculum creatively combines the academic with a character development approach where the vision and values are threaded throughout. This provides a firm basis for a strongly felt Christian ethos, high aspirations and a nurturing environment. Leaders and governors have made bold decisions to ensure that the school is equipped to cater for pupils' specific needs. Working in rich partnerships with external organisations and within the federation enables robust support for pupils. This collaboration and investment in staffing and workspaces provide robust support for pupils facing barriers. This ensures they receive the tailored help needed to access the curriculum and develop holistically. Staff frequently and proudly 'go the extra mile' to guarantee that provision is adapted and personalised. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other additional needs are thriving. Determined leaders provide inspiring, inclusive experiences where everyone believes they can achieve. Leaders are clear about what spiritual development entails. There are many planned opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum, but these are not always used effectively. This limits pupil's chances to grow spiritually.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is at the heart of the school. It plays a major role in deepening the understanding of the vision and values and how these can be applied in daily life. Rich worship, planned by leaders and local clergy, allows pupils and adults to flourish. This goes beyond mere words, seen in how pupils confidently connect worship stories to the vision, values and their actions. Pupils value and enthusiastically embrace worship time together, finding daily inspiration, gratitude, and joy. Pupils know that worship is invitational, where everyone's participation is welcome and encouraged. This enables those of religious faith and none to engage with readings, responses and prayer. Bible stories are brought to life and making them relevant to today's world. A flourishing partnership with local clergy is deeply valued by adults and pupils. This results in a rich variety of experiences and support that enhances school life. This well-established collaboration is a clear strength, significantly impacting the spiritual growth of the school community. This is a school where prayer is important and as such, the school day is punctuated with the invitation to pray during worship and at other times. This is highly valued by the pupils who especially like the opportunity to pray with and for others. As a result, pupils and adults flourish.

Vision and School Culture

Whalton is a small school with a big heart which strives to care deeply for all. Pupils, even the youngest, understand what it means to love your neighbour. Leaders, inspired by the vision, sustain a culture characterised



by kindness, inclusivity and acceptance. It is a school where 'it is cool to be kind'. As a result, relationships between pupils are exceptional. Pupils work and play together, across year groups, with older pupils supporting younger ones. This strengthens the community ethos of lovingly serving one another. When disagreements do occur, the value of forgiveness underpins resolution and reconciliation, maintaining a supportive and respectful environment. Remarkable parental partnerships are fruitful for pupils. Parents appreciate that they are listened to and supported. This enables strong relationships to thrive. Adults feel cared for and supported because their wellbeing is important to school leaders. Staff embrace opportunities to develop both professionally and personally, fostering a culture of trust, honesty, and gratitude. Consequently, staff flourish.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Strong partnerships impact positively and reciprocally on people's lives at Whalton. For instance, staff actively engage with the diocese and highly value the guidance provided. This collaboration directly informs and strengthens the school, supporting the drive for continuous improvement. Links with the local community, such as the Whalton show, build mutually beneficial partnerships. There are a range of opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles such as RE ambassadors, eco warriors and school councillors. This enables them to build confidence, develop responsibility and contribute positively to the school community. Pupils at Whalton know that they make a difference. The school's vision inspires them to act and to show others how they can love their neighbour. This includes toilet twinning around the world and supporting a local food bank. Effective curriculum planning and carefully designed collective worship support pupils to explore ethical decision making, rights and responsibilities. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of fairness and treating each other well. However, pupils' understanding of the concept of justice is limited. Thus, their understanding of how they can take action to promote justice is underdeveloped.

Religious Education

Leaders ensure that RE has a high profile across the school. They are committed to developing subject leadership and are well supported by diocesan and church partnerships. This strengthens curriculum design and staff confidence. The curriculum is thoughtfully sequenced. Designed to meet the needs of the school community, it supports pupils in mixed year groups to creatively build on prior learning. Pupils are encouraged to ask thoughtful questions and reflect on issues of belief and faith in their lessons. They also benefit from a range of experiences of visiting places of worship and visitors from faith communities. This engages them in their learning and extends their knowledge of religious practices and beliefs. Pupils enjoy RE and are proud of their work and talk about what they have learnt with confidence. They respond very well to sacred texts and have impressive religious literacy.

High quality teaching enables pupils to learn well and make progress over time. Teachers expertly create a learning environment where pupils explore their own perspectives while developing a deep respect for the diverse beliefs of others. Current assessment in RE is underdeveloped and requires revision to meet pupils' varied needs. It does not fully reflect the progress pupils are making and existing systems are not always appropriate for every learner. Consequently, pupils cannot always identify how well they are doing or understand the steps needed to improve their work.

Information

Address	Copper Chare, Whalton, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 3XH.		
Date	31 March 2026	URN	122302
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	24
Diocese	Newcastle		
Federation	Federation of Whalton and Longhorsley Church of England Schools		
Headteacher	Nichola Brannen		
Chair of Governors	Paul Truscott		
Inspector	Natalie Dodd		