

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Penistone St John's Voluntary Aided Primary School			
Address	High Street, Penistone, Sheffield S36 6BS		
Date of inspection	28 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese / Methodist District	Sheffield	URN	136941

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	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Penistone St John's is a primary school with 550 pupils on roll. 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 in line with national averages. The school is expanding to three forms of entry and has six new classrooms under construction. It combined with the infant school in 2012, when the current executive headteacher was appointed.

The school's Christian vision

We draw on our core Christian values of love, honesty, faithfulness, kindness and forgiveness to enable all children to become the 'best versions of themselves', because 'God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, love and self-discipline' and we know that 'I can do everything through Him who gives me strength'.

Key findings.

- The deeply Christian vision of enabling each to be their 'best version' empowers every area of school life. All know, understand and demonstrate the vision and strive to fulfil it. Pupils and staff cite Biblical passages which underpin the vision and many see these as relevant to daily life.
- The school's executive headteacher and her leadership team act as exemplars of the vision, so that their Christian love inspires and transforms pupils. As a result pupils make excellent progress in personal and academic terms.
- Pupils are inspired by RE taking every opportunity to explore deep questions of faith and belief.
- All adults on-site display love, honesty, faithfulness, kindness and forgiveness, so all pupils including the most vulnerable are cherished as of immense value to God.
- Pupils partner staff as leaders of the wellbeing and collective worship teams. The worship committees in both key stages, comprising pupils and staff, lead inspiring worship. Collective worship is a central pillar of the school's excellence.

Areas for development

- To strengthen further the partnership between school and church, to explore ways to meet the needs of the wider community.

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

St John's has a transformational impact on all its pupils, grounded in the desire for all to be 'the best version of themselves'. Its vision is deeply rooted in the Bible and all pupils understand its theological importance. They quote and explain fully the two scripture verses which underpin it. Progress is above average or better across the innovative and stimulating curriculum. Particularly notable is its ability to nurture vulnerable children, so that they reach their full potential by Year 6. Since her appointment in 2012, strong Christian leadership from the executive headteacher has effectively directed the process of moulding two school communities into one. Any barrier to school progress is challenged and addressed. Improvement is delivered through the school's vision, which is constantly referred to in all aspects of school life. The distributed leadership team, with the governors, have used the vision to drive forward improvement since the last inspection. As a result, they also strive to be 'their best'. Governors are now fully aware of the school's challenges and have established systems for monitoring Christian distinctiveness. These are exceptionally effective, with a clear process linking evaluation with planning and implementation.

Partnerships, such as the link with Sheffield diocese, are not only benefitting St John's but providing an exemplar of fine practice for other schools in the diocese. Through carefully planned staff training, including peer coaching, leaders ensure that all staff members flourish. Staff testify to a constant striving for excellence, linked with leaders' deep concern for their wellbeing. Future church school leaders are grown at St John's through the example and training provided by the staff to and for each other. All staff ensure equality of opportunity for pupils. Pupils clearly display love, honesty, faithfulness, kindness and forgiveness in daily life, to adults and to each other, without the prompting of staff. Behaviour is excellent, with plenty of praise from staff each day promoting the school's values. Attendance is excellent because pupils love to attend. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively, with constant reference to the value of kindness. Treating all with dignity and respect creates a most happy and harmonious school, where reconciliation and forgiveness abound.

The vision for pupils to be their best results in them gaining exceptional leadership skills. Most impressive is the work of wellbeing ambassadors, who are guided in their work through a highly committed member of staff. The small team autonomously delivers the school vision by a highly engaging programme of games and activities for vulnerable pupils. They are well-trained, given responsibility and discharge it with enthusiasm. They give exceptional service. Each pupil in their care feels immensely valued and expresses genuine thankfulness to older peers. Pupils also relish the opportunity to share leadership of the school through School Council, worship committees or other quality acts of service. Older pupils assist with school lunches on the infant school site, where they demonstrate service above self, even scraping lunch plates as an act of love.

The Christian vision informs curriculum planning and the school's values are delivered through dynamic learning programmes. Pupils readily make connection between the values and their targets and tasks, so that Bible characters are used as exemplars of faithfulness, forgiveness or honesty. One pupil was enthralled by the example of Esther, another by explaining how Noah must have felt when building the

ark. Older pupils were able to debate the tensions between science and religion, with many opportunities provided to agree or disagree with their peers. Thus pupils learn to listen to the views of others, and admirably put forward their own ideas while respecting those of others.

A well-planned and superbly delivered religious education curriculum is at the centre of pupil learning. It makes a significant contribution to the whole curriculum, but especially to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils show acceptance and understanding of difference, celebrating what they can learn from others. Through RE and the wider curriculum pupils are able to tackle 'big questions' such as those global issues of poverty, deprivation and exploitation. They talk of RE with enjoyment and enthusiasm, readily explaining how discussions in RE have contributed to the excellent behaviour across the school. Regular trips ensure pupils visit many places of worship, so promoting deep understanding of global faiths and other Christian traditions. Year 5 pupils visit Emmanuel Methodist Chapel to learn of the work of Hudson Taylor, a Barnsley missionary, who brought the Christian faith to China. His example resonates with pupils. A well-planned day links faith with strategies to maintain their own wellbeing. Pupils show admirable depth in their knowledge of Christianity, thanks to the skilful adopting of Understanding Christianity as a resource.

Global partnerships make an excellent contribution to pupils' understanding of worldwide issues. They communicate by computer with a school in Ghana and are developing links with the diocese of Bondo in Kenya. Pupils give money generously to the school through a local charity and gain a deep understanding of injustice. They develop as courageous advocates of sharing the world's resources equitably. They also show enthusiastically the grateful letters and photographs they have received through this partnership. They are truly developing as global citizens, a quality of which they are immensely proud.

Pupils' leadership of collective worship is excellent. Pupils in both key stages take responsibility for worship leadership. These pupils have a clear way of reporting back to staff and governors on what has worked well, and so have an established role in strategic planning. Year 6 pupils reel off examples of worship changing their attitudes and behaviour. Even the Year 2 pupils are comfortable with planning, leading and evaluating worship, incorporating reflection and meeting requests for prayer from the other pupils. Thus pupils feel they share ownership of collective worship and its delivery. Reflection areas in classes provide strong support for spiritual development and wellbeing. Pupils who ask for support confirm that wellbeing ambassadors are swift to respond to requests. Foundation governors take class and key stage worship, including an 'Open the Book' programme which has given all years a very good biblical knowledge. Parents and the community are regularly invited into worship and hence feel a real empathy with the school's vision. The local incumbent is enthusiastic about holding some of his church services in school, in order further to cement St John's strong links with its community and enable a wider participation in worship.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

RE teaching and learning is highly effective and is always good or better. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress enables all pupils to discern both their goals and how to reach them. Pupils in RE make at least good and often excellent progress from nursery to Year 6. Disadvantaged pupils, some with additional needs, flourish at St John's.

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