

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Spennithorne Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Spennithorne, Leyburn, DL8 5PR
School vision	
<p>Fruitful lives, rooted in love, a place to learn, love and grow.</p> <p>'Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.' (Jeremiah 17:7-8)</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's Christian vision, promoted by leaders and supported by effective partnerships, underpins all aspects of school life. Consequently this school is a place where pupils learn and grow as confident and resilient learners. • Driven by their vision, effective leaders and knowledgeable, supportive governors have steered this school on a rapid journey of improvement. As a result pupils and staff are flourishing. • Worship, centred on the vision and half-termly values chosen by the pupils, is a particular strength. • There is an exceptional culture of care and compassion for all, which results in strong relationships at all levels. Staff feel valued and fully supported and as a result, they provide excellent and loving role models to pupils. • Spiritual development is central at this school. Pupils, including those in the early years, are inquisitive and thoughtful and engage with big questions in an insightful way. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop the school's curriculum for religious education (RE), so that the religions taught are better understood as diverse and living global faiths. • Continue to expand opportunities for all pupils to be agents of change within the local and wider community. This is so that all are enabled to confidently challenge injustice and articulate the impact of the difference they can make. • Maximise planned opportunities across the whole curriculum to extend pupils' knowledge of the diverse world in which they live. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Spennithorne is a warm, welcoming school, 'rooted in love'. Driven by a distinctively Christian vision, this small rural school has been on a rapid journey of improvement as a church school over recent years. Strong leadership from the headteacher and very effective support from the local diocese has brought stability and direction. Spennithorne's vision is deeply rooted in the rural context of this school and as a consequence is understood and lived out by all. Governors have a deep</p>	

understanding of the vision and consider its impact at all of their meetings. Because of this, the vision has a direct influence on their decisions and school policy. As the result of regular monitoring governors know the school well and articulate strengths and next steps to improve pupils' learning. Federation with another small church school has significantly strengthened leadership at all levels. Staff value the opportunities this has offered them to develop their own leadership skills as they work across both schools. Bold decisions have been made to educate key stage 2 pupils at the partner school in the federation. The two schools operate as one, have the same vision and see themselves as one family. As a result pupils have wider friendships and more focused teaching which strengthens their learning.

Leaders have completely rewritten the curriculum over recent years. The vision now threads through all subjects. This ensures pupils are given strong roots of knowledge which promote fruitful and confident learning. As a result pupils are aspirational, resilient and respectful. Self-love and self-esteem are the building blocks that ensure all can be successful, no matter their starting point. Love, care and support is at the heart of the provision for all pupils. This means all staff know pupils very well. This includes those who are vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result teaching and learning is specific to the needs of pupils. The school has a shared approach to, and language for, spiritual development. Spirituality is woven throughout the curriculum, with both planned and spontaneous opportunities for reflection and awe and wonder embraced by all. This means that there is a thread of looking both inwards and outwards, in order to make meaningful connections. Pupils are inquisitive and thoughtful and engage with big questions in an insightful way. Therefore, they can speak about their own spiritual development in their understanding of their place in school and the local community. Leaders prioritise visits and visitors to expand pupils' experiences. Despite curriculum opportunities such as Black History month and exposure to carefully chosen texts, pupils lack a secure understanding of the diversity of wider British society.

The love which characterises the Christian vision energises the beating heart of this school. The language of love for others is used as the everyday language of the school. Adults demonstrate Christian love, therefore pupils learn to love one another and shape the people they are. Care and nurture for each unique individual is exceptional. This extends to the families, for whom there is a much-appreciated open door and listening ear at all times. Both parents and pupils agree it is 'like one big family'. This means that needs are immediately addressed with love and sensitivity. Relationships at all levels are remarkable. Behaviour is excellent and on the rare occasion incidents occur, they are dealt with sensitively and positively. There is a genuine openness and trust which staff appreciate. The mental health and wellbeing of all is given high priority by leaders as a way of living out the vision. Staff value the opportunities they have for high quality professional development to equip them for their roles. As a result they feel valued and fully supported.

Collective worship is inclusive and central to life at Spennithorne. The carefully planned and sequenced worship programme is underpinned by Christian values. Because these are chosen by pupil worship leaders, they help them to live out their vision, both at school and at home. Leaders ensure that creative and engaging worship develops pupils' understanding of biblical texts. As a result they are able to show how they are applicable to their own lives. This was seen when they explored the importance of truthfulness through the story of Adam and Eve. Time is provided for togetherness, reflection and moments of stillness which enhance the spiritual development of all. Reflection areas in classrooms help pupils to consider the school values and engage in spontaneous prayer. Strong partnership with local churches enrich worship. Families are welcomed to join seasonal services in Church, uniting the community, which they appreciate. Enthusiastic pupil leaders support and lead many aspects of worship. They regularly meet with the headteacher to evaluate the impact. As a result, worship helps to guide actions and offers fruitful opportunities for the pupils to question, reflect and develop spiritually.

The core values of compassion and love encourage pupils to look beyond their own needs. They talk with enthusiasm about how a visit from the local Foodbank inspired them to collect donations. They are keen to fundraise for local causes and share how they have raised awareness of medical

conditions suffered by fellow pupils. Older pupils are working towards the bronze award for Christian Aid's Global Neighbours accreditation. As a result they proudly talk of how they have raised funds to purchase land that will now be saved from deforestation. This scheme has recently been introduced and is starting to make a difference. It is enabling pupils see how they can impact the lives of those beyond their own community and seek justice for others. Younger pupils have less involvement. As a consequence, not all pupils are fully aware of how they can challenge injustice and make a difference to the lives of others both locally and globally.

RE is valued by all and given high priority. In line with the vision, to ensure all pupils deepen their knowledge, the RE curriculum has recently been rewritten. As a result pupils consider religions more deeply. Big questions, relevant texts and art work are used as stimuli to promote pupils' thinking. Consequently pupils engage well in RE lessons. There is a good balance of approaches covering the thoughts, belief and practices in the religions and worldviews studied. This ensures all pupils are beginning to develop a deeper understanding of what they study. This is evident in pupils' grasp of the theological concepts that lie behind familiar religious stories such as Christmas. Pupils speak enthusiastically about RE. However their understanding of religions as diverse, living and global is not fully secure. Therefore leaders have rightly prioritised financing resources and visits and visitors to enhance their understanding of a fuller range of faiths. Lessons are led with sensitivity to ensure that pupils feel safe to express their thoughts and personal responses. This was evident in early years during a lesson about 'being special'. The RE lead is well supported by the diocese and has a good understanding of the subject. Consequently, staff are well supported and have appropriate training to improve their knowledge. As a result of regular monitoring leaders, including governors are well placed to support further development of the subject.

The inspection findings indicate that Spennithorne Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	18 January 2024	URN	121517
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	38
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation			
Executive headteacher	Marie Mann		
Chair	Sam Wilmington		
Inspector	Susan Thackray	No.	979