

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Pocklington Church of England Infant School			
Address	Maxwell Road, Pocklington, York YO42 2HE		
Date of inspection	13 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese / Methodist District	York	URN	117987

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	Requires Improvement
Additional Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Pocklington is an infant school with 159 pupils on roll. A nursery with 17 pupils was opened in January 2019. 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. There have been significant changes to leadership and staffing since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher. There has been no incumbent at All Saints' Church for a period of two and a half years.

The school's Christian vision

We strive to provide quality learning experiences that enable everyone to reach their potential within a stimulating, safe Christian ethos and environment. At Pocklington Infants we recognise we are all (adults and pupils) children of God. We use child friendly language to explain our vision 'Happy Children, Loving Learning' to pupils. This vision is founded on the Bible text from Proverbs 8.

Key findings

- Pocklington is a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing school whose staff support pupils' social and emotional needs well. The wellbeing of the whole school community is a priority.
- The headteacher's commitment to do the best for all the pupils in the school is rooted in her Christian faith and a dedication to Church school development.
- Collective worship is inclusive and forms an important part of school life. Prayer is a central part of each school day and contributes to spiritual development. However, pupils are not yet fully involved in planning, leading and evaluating worship.
- Pupils speak positively about RE. They enjoy learning about Christianity and other world faiths and are beginning to ask big questions about life and faith.

Areas for development

- Embed the biblical narrative of the school's Christian vision and its underpinning so that the whole school community can identify and articulate it as an integral focus of the school's onward journey.
- Ensure a robust approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness as a Church school so as to drive systematic and sustained development.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship to further develop their ownership and engagement.

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

Pocklington Infant School is an inclusive and nurturing school that has experienced significant changes in leadership and staffing since its last inspection. In addition, the local church has been without an incumbent for a period of two and a half years. The headteacher and governors remain wholly committed to developing the distinctiveness of their Church school and the school's Christian vision has been revisited. The vision, its biblical underpinning and the school's four chosen values can be seen displayed throughout the school. However, stakeholders are not able to consistently articulate its biblical foundation so as to give it coherence and relevance. As a result they do not attribute the successes of the school to the outworking of the vision and neither does the vision fully inform and shape development plans and policies.

The new chair of governors, in post one week at the time of inspection, and the governing body are fully supportive of the headteacher and the school. Close working relationships have been forged with a local Church of England infant school and both governors and leaders speak very highly of the support received from the diocese. There is a shared focus for improvement and governors have recently undertaken training to enable effective governance of a Church school. However, whilst governors visit the school with some regularity, they do not have a robust approach to monitoring. Therefore, the school's understanding of itself as a Church school is not based on evidence and analysis.

Inclusive and invitational daily collective worship offers adults and pupils a time for reflection. The majority of worship is led by the headteacher who describes it as a time to 'celebrate that we're part of something bigger than ourselves'. In the absence of an incumbent at All Saints' Church, worship on a half termly basis is led by the Reverend Les Slow who is also a governor at the school. His worship, and that led by a local Open the Book team, has further developed pupils' understanding of the Bible and its teachings. Worship led by the Reverend Broadhurst from All Saints' Church and the Reverend Simpson from the Methodist Church also enhances pupils' worship experience. All staff have received training on collective worship led by the diocese and a variety of resources is available to support planning. Each act of worship begins with the lighting of the candles. Pupils recognise the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity and how this is represented in school by the Bible, cross and candle which are found on the worship table. They speak of how these things can also be found in reflection areas in classrooms and explain that they are 'all God – all the same thing'. Pupils help organise collective worship and enjoy it when they can read out prayers or act out stories. They can continue their reflection and response beyond worship through tasks and challenges. These opportunities for spiritual development can be seen in reflection areas around school. Pupils are involved in the leadership of the worship which happens in church each term and these services are valued by pupils and parents alike. One parent spoke of the church services as 'bringing the community together'. Pupils also have the opportunity to lead worship as a class and the after school club Jesus and Me provides opportunities for pupils to lead worship. However, pupils do not have opportunities to plan, lead or evaluate worship regularly or in a systematic way. Consequently, leaders have limited information to ensure that worship is always engaging and relevant for pupils and the extent to which it supports their spiritual development.

The school considers RE to be a core subject and has invested in training to both raise the profile of RE and to increase the subject knowledge of teachers. RE develops pupils' understanding of the Christian faith, its festivals and traditions. Pupils also learn about other faiths and this helps them to understand more about the world around them. As one Y2 child explained, 'You can chose if you'd like to be a Christian, a Jew or a Buddhist but you have to know about it first.' Pupils have visited some places of worship but the school recognises that further links could be developed with other faith groups locally. For example, links with the local Buddhist centre in Pocklington are currently being explored. Pupils are given the opportunity to identify similarities and differences between religions helping them to begin to make connections. Monitoring of RE has begun to bring about improvements within the subject. For example, the introduction of learning objectives and success criteria has begun to sharpen the focus of RE as an academic subject. The assessment system evaluates each pupil's understanding of the learning and this is beginning to inform teaching.

The school's wider curriculum is based on cross-curricular themes, providing opportunities for visits and special events throughout the year. As a result, pupils are able to flourish and broaden their experiences. In order to live out the vision 'Happy Children, Loving Learning', there has been an investment in staff training across a range of areas of learning. Consequently, academic outcomes have improved over the last two years. The curriculum encourages pupils to be respectful of one another and to treat each other with dignity. Pupils have some knowledge of the wider world and the school has developed links with a school in Uganda, supporting the community by sending books. Pupils' knowledge of global needs is limited, as is their knowledge of Christianity across the world. Pupils talk about the school's charity work and speak enthusiastically about 'Pudsey Day' but are not yet able to say why they participate in events for charity nor explain how it supports others in need. Whilst they are supported to join in with recognised events, they have yet to develop ownership and be compelled to take action out of a sense of injustice. The school has registered to participate in the Archbishop of York Young Leaders Award in order to develop pupil leadership and courageous advocacy.

The emotional wellbeing and mental health of all associated with the school are seen as important. The school has invested in an emotional literacy support assistant who supports children and adults from a dedicated room deliberately placed 'at the heart of the school'. Links have been established with the Children's Centre and with national agencies in order to support pupils facing challenging circumstances. The schools' vision of 'Happy Children, Loving Learning' sits at the heart of this support. One parent, speaking of the school, said, 'Here is a place where there is a genuine care and interest in the wellbeing of children and families.'

Pocklington has been on a developmental journey of improvement. More recent stability in governance, leadership and staffing means that the school is now well placed to further grow the green shoots already emerging.

Headteacher	Dr Lynn Bartram
Inspector's name and number	Philippa Boulding 965