

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Netherton Church of England VC Primary School				
Address	Highbridge Road, Netherton, Dudley, DY2 0HU			
Date of inspection	19 March 2019	Status of school	VC primary, Diocese of Worcester Multi-Academy Trust (DoWMAT)	
Diocese / Methodist District	Worcester	URN	103841	

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Netherton school has 384 pupils on roll, including 48 children in the nursery and 13 two-year olds. The school serves an area of high deprivation. The majority of pupils are White British with many different ethnic groups, including a significant Muslim community. A significant minority of pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. Since the last denominational inspection, the school has become an academy, joining the DoWMAT in November 2017. Recently four teachers have been appointed.

The school's Christian vision

We believe that no child's dreams or ambitions should be limited by social injustice. We will give all of 'God's Children' the skills they need as they journey towards their Super North Star.

'Where dreams are made and futures created'

'For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?' Luke 9:25

Key findings

- The headteacher has a strong personal vision which reflects the school's context.
- Netherton is highly inclusive, aspirational and supports children relentlessly to reach their full potential.
- Harmonious relationships are based on respect due to a good understanding of and empathy for difference and diversity.
- Strong commitment to developing early years and working with parents reflects accurate evaluation of where the school's priorities lie.
- RE has a high profile in school and along with the deeply embedded Christian values has a positive impact on the wider life of the pupils.
- Collective Worship is an expression of the school's vision of inclusivity. It is uplifting and enriches spiritual development.

Areas for development

- Refine the vision to make it theologically based so it is widely known as rooted in the Christian narrative and driving school improvement.
- Leaders at all levels (trust and governors) to ensure systematic and robust monitoring and evaluation in order to secure sustained improvement as a church school.
- Extend pastoral support for families so attendance improves for the most vulnerable and learning is maximised.

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

Improving pupils' life chances is what is at the very heart of Netherton school. All stakeholders have a deep commitment to inclusion, the school celebrates diversity and welcomes all as 'God's children'.

The broadly Christian vision of inclusivity and aspiration is lived out passionately by all. It strongly reflects the local school context and the community it serves. The vision does not yet have clear theological roots. However, leaders are committed to moving forward, along with the whole school community to embed their vision with Christian beliefs and narrative at its core. The vision is supported by seven core values which are confidently articulated and actively lived out in the pupils' lives both at school and beyond. Mutual respect and excellent behaviour emanate from such values as respect, acceptance and forgiveness. Harmonious relationships are a result of a very strong culture of embracing, respecting and understanding difference and diversity. This allows all to live well together. The school use 'Compass for Life', a values led programme which is attributed to the vision as it gives pupils aspirations for their futures. The children realise that if they work hard, they can fulfil their potential, gain their 'Super North Star' and shine like stars throughout their lives.

The inclusive, nurturing, supportive community is valued by staff who praise the polite, well behaved children. Life for many pupils can be complex so the school is a haven for many, providing security and structure in their lives. A love of learning is fostered in tandem with a sense of self-worth. The pupils here feel safe and happy and are very keen to learn. Those who join mid-year settle quickly because adults and pupils take the time to welcome and befriend them. They trust their teachers for both their learning and their care. A Year 2 pupil expressed this simply as 'it's the best school because teachers take care of children.' Parents too feel supported by the school, one parent commented that since transferring to Netherton 'my girls have thrived and enjoy coming to school.' It is clear that the school seeks to lighten the lives of those experiencing dark times. Pupils and parents said that bullying in any form was highly uncharacteristic of the school and describe how problems which arise are quickly and effectively resolved.

Good behaviour reflects the school's determination that pupils feel they belong and are treated with respect. Acceptance along with respect are values that clearly matter enormously to pupils. Leaders and staff are rightly proud that many vulnerable pupils who have had difficult experiences at other schools, have moved to Netherton and have settled and flourished. This is testament to the school's vision and commitment of the staff team. Netherton is known as a school that 'can turn challenging behaviour around.'

Pupils challenge injustice and inequality and are courageous advocates for change in support of local and national charities. Through both fundraising and the curriculum they are aware of global issues. Within this community, pupils' characters are shaped and they are inspired to action. For example, the Church team recently led an assembly on water aid and the pupils are very proud that the school is a local centre for recycling crisp packets. There was a recent cake sale for comic relief and one pupil commented that 'we raise money for people who aren't as healthy as us, it gives me joy in my heart.'

Extending pastoral support to families in order to improve attendance and maximise learning has been recognised as a key priority by leaders along with strong commitment to developing early years. The DoWMAT is supporting leaders and staff to raise progress and attainment for all pupils. High mobility levels affect data. Support strategies for vulnerable groups of children are currently under review and new resources are being implemented, such as 'Talk Boost'. There is also a strong focus on improving attendance. Governors provide support to the headteacher and leadership, have a regular presence in school and promote the school's Christian values and vision. However, leaders, including governors and the DoWMAT have yet to put sufficient rigorous and regular systems in place to formally monitor and evaluate the school as a church school in order to secure sustained improvements.

Leadership of religious education (RE) is strong. Children learn about other faiths through sharing experiences and direct teaching. Knowledge and understanding of cultures and faiths different to their own are of a high standard. Pupils understand that Christianity is a worldwide faith. Pupils enjoy lessons from the "Understanding Christianity"

resource and RE leads report that progression in the subject is clearer, deeper learning is taking place and there is a better understanding and use of religious vocabulary. One Year 6 pupil explained that 'incarnation means when the spirit of God came down in human form.' Effective assessment procedures inform planning and allow pupils to know how well they are doing. The school speak of a positive relationship with the diocese. Leaders and staff regularly engage in training opportunities and guidance from the diocese that wholly support the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is engaging, thought provoking and uplifting. The co-ordinator is exceptionally committed to making acts of worship joyous experiences. Collective worship affirms the school's Christian values and encourages forgiveness, reflecting Jesus' teaching. Regular opportunities for reflection support and develop pupils' personal and spiritual development. The pupils enjoy praising God through singing, they enjoy hearing Bible stories as well as learning more about the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer is an important part of daily life at Netherton. In collective worship pupils follow a 'prayer drill' to make sure they are calm, still and ready. Prayers are written and read out by pupils as well as pupils being given time to pray independently. The church team talk enthusiastically about being involved in planning and leading collective worship.

Extra-curricular activities such as trips to the beach, Drayton Manor and Somme result in a widening of pupils' horizons and life experiences. They also contribute to other opportunities for spiritual development which are woven into the curriculum. The decision to invest in projects, such as Forest School, allows the more vulnerable pupils to gain confidence, improve behaviour and develop resilience but also provides valuable spiritual experiences. Staff understand the limited horizons of some pupils and ensure that time in school raises aspirations for the future. This is attributable to the school's vision of making dreams a reality and creating positive futures. All stakeholders work tirelessly to ensure that every child has the best chance possible to reach their super 'North Star' and to shine as a light in the community beyond school.

Headteacher	Andrew Rushton
Inspector's name and number	Kerry Geddis
Quality assurance assessor	Allyson Taylor 768