

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bridekirk Dovenby Church of England Primary School

Vision

At Bridekirk Dovenby School, we nourish the uniqueness of our community. Rooted in love, a rich and diverse curriculum enables all to flourish and grow. Confident and secure, our children reach out, ready to embrace the seasons of life in all its fullness.

Psalm 1 'They are like trees, planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all they do, they prosper.'

Bridekirk Dovenby 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.

Strengths

- The Christian vision is known and lived here. The image of a tree 'planted by streams of water', enables pupils and adults to flourish and grow, guiding and driving the work of the school.
- The work of this school is rooted in love, supporting the whole community to embrace the different seasons of life. Pupils and adults are safe, valued and cared for which enables them to thrive.
- Wellbeing and inclusion are at the heart of this Church school. Each person is fully embraced as an individual and their uniqueness is celebrated and cherished.
- Strong partnerships with parents, the church and the local community strengthen this school as a Church school. The school is a hub for the community, helping pupils to reach out beyond themselves.
- Collective worship is inclusive and inspires pupils and adults to make changes and take action in response. Pupil and adults value opportunities for stillness and reflection which enrich the spiritual life of the school.

Development Points

- Embed the new religious education (RE) curriculum, ensuring it is well-balanced. This is so that pupils grow in knowledge of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, including developing an understanding of the diversity within the worldviews studied.
- Extend opportunities to explore justice issues and learn advocacy skills in a carefully planned and sequential way throughout the curriculum. This is to empower pupils to take action to challenge injustice when they come across it.



Inspection Findings

The refreshed Christian vision drives the work of this nurturing church school. Its biblical underpinning in Psalm 1 is part of the natural language of leaders, staff and pupils. Pupils confidently explain how each person is like a tree, with its roots planted in love. The skills and values they learn at school are like the fruits of the tree. This imagery enables pupils to persevere in their learning as they firmly believe that over time their 'fruit' will grow. Similarly, staff draw strength from the vision, understanding that they too can 'flourish and grow' alongside pupils. The vision sustains this community and permeates through the daily life of the school.

Guided by the Christian vision, leaders create a 'rich and diverse' curriculum and provide varied enrichment opportunities. Pupils benefit from regular visits and visitors to support their understanding of the wider world beyond their immediate locality. A wide range of texts is used in lessons and pupils can also access these in the newly updated library. This provision supports pupils' growing awareness of the importance of including everyone. Dedicated staff know pupils well and work tirelessly to tailor the curriculum to meet their needs. Parents praise staff highly for supporting their children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Inclusion of those with SEND is strong. Their uniqueness is celebrated, enabling them 'to flourish and grow' alongside their peers.

Opportunities for spiritual development are nurtured. Pupils and staff value pausing for 'spiritual moments'. This enables pupils and adults to recognise their own spirituality. The school's beautiful outdoor space and surroundings are used to good effect to enable pupils, and adults, to grow spiritually. As one pupil put it, 'I feel calm and relaxed in the sensory garden, and just love to sit and look at nature'. An extra-curricular 'big questions' club also enables pupils to develop spiritually beyond the taught curriculum.

Carefully structured and purposeful collective worship is a valued time each day. Pupils and adults cherish the opportunity for a few moments of calm during the busy school day. Collective worship also provides space to look outwards by exploring issues in the news and reflecting on injustice. Links with local clergy who lead worship in school each week enhance collective worship provision. This strong partnership enriches spiritual flourishing by enabling the school and local community to worship together at special church services. Collective worship inspires pupils to respond to what is shared. For example, inspired by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), 'life on land', pupils planted wildflowers and installed a hedgehog house. Engaging with issues of justice helps pupils and adults to develop spiritually by enabling them to 'reach out beyond themselves'. Each Friday, 'golden jumper' awards are given to pupils who have put that week's collective worship message into action. For example, a pupil received the 'golden jumper' for including others in their class who find it more difficult to join in during group work. Governors monitor collective worship through visits. School leaders monitor it more informally. This information is used to evaluate and make changes.

Strong relationships create a culture of inclusion enabling pupils, and adults, to feel 'confident and secure'. Older pupils lead break time clubs for younger pupils. Caring for, and treating one another well, is a nurturing thread that runs through the school. This is a school where all are included and loved for who they are, individually and uniquely. Staff are supported by leaders, and by one another, viewing the school as 'family'. Governors balance their responsibility to hold school leaders to account whilst also ensuring staff wellbeing is prioritised. Leaders have begun adapting the curriculum, weaving in opportunities to celebrate a range of backgrounds. This fosters respect in pupils and helps them to live well together, embracing and respecting difference.



Staff prioritise equity so that all pupils access what they need to 'grow and flourish'. Pupils understand that people have individual needs, and that justice means everyone has what they need to succeed. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and thus learn about responsibility towards others. Restorative conversations as part of the behaviour policy enable pupils to recognise when things go wrong and how to put them right. Pupils learn to speak up when something is not right in school. Through regular discussions about the news, pupils are growing in their awareness of issues of justice more broadly. This enables pupils to recognise injustice outside as well as inside school. Due to the unpredictable nature of the news, however, this work is more incidental than planned. At present, curriculum opportunities for pupils to engage with justice issues and take action to tackle the injustice they identify are limited. Outside of the taught curriculum, pupils are encouraged to participate in the 'Superkind award' to make positive changes in the world. For example, some pupils collected litter, others raised awareness about plastic pollution harming sea creatures. 'Rooted in love' for the world, governors commit to environmental justice and sustainability through participating in a 'Greener governance' campaign.

As a result of subject monitoring and evaluation, leaders are implementing a new RE curriculum. Pupils value RE as an important subject that teaches them to respect the beliefs of others. To support this further, the RE curriculum is enhanced by visitors from a range of worldviews. These encounters deepen pupils' understanding of a range of worldviews. Pupils can articulate the impact that faith has on the life of a believer and understand the important role faith plays in our society today. However, pupils' knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews other than Christianity is limited. Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a diverse global faith is developing. School leaders prioritise RE and are working hard to embed the recently adopted new curriculum. Active partnership with the diocese has strengthened staff confidence in teaching RE through professional development opportunities.

This is a community deeply rooted in love, where pupils and adults flourish and grow. The Christian vision drives school life at Bridekirk Dovenby. The belief that pupils and adults will yield fruit, creates a culture where all can prosper and thrive.

Information

Address	Dovenby, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 0PG		
Date	5 December 2024	URN	112270
Type of school	Voluntary controlled	No. of pupils	131
Diocese/District	Carlisle		
Headteacher	Julia Fish		
Chair of Governors	Rose Rowlands		
Inspector	Caroline Weir		