

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Kirkstall St Stephen's Church of England VA School</b>	
Address	Morris Lane, Kirkstall, LS5 3JD
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Good

School's vision
'We are cherished, we are challenged, we are children of God,' This is based on 'Blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have their confidence in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water, that sends its roots out by the stream.' (Jeremiah 17: 7-8)
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The distinctly Christian vision permeates every aspect of the school's work enabling flourishing of pupils and adults. Governors use it implicitly to guide decisions but do not explicitly evaluate its effectiveness.</li> <li>• Pupils flourish because the vision driven, tailored curriculum is deep and rich with many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually and to ask big, philosophical questions.</li> <li>• Behaviour is exemplary because pupils know that they are cherished and accepted. Living out the vision in this way gives them confidence and a model for their own behaviour, ensuring dignity and respect for all. Pupils' understanding of how values can help guide their lives is less well established.</li> <li>• The impact of collective worship is profound. This welcoming and inspirational time together nourishes every child and adult, and is at the root of all flourishing.</li> <li>• The newly embedded, effective and challenging religious education (RE) curriculum enables pupils to learn well in RE. However, pupils' books do not regularly capture the depth of their understanding .</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement plans to enhance pupil understanding of the link between the firmly established vision and its theological underpinning using a familiar biblical narrative.</li> <li>• Ensure that governors contribute to robust monitoring of the impact of the school vision, so that all leaders systematically evaluate how well it leads to the flourishing of pupils and adults.</li> <li>• In RE, ensure that all pupils have frequent opportunities to show what they have learnt through independent work. This will make clear pupils' progress and enhance their flourishing through RE.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

Kirkstall St Stephen's is a warm, welcoming school where everyone feels cherished and is deeply valued. The Christian vision is the root that feeds love and acceptance, and embraces everyone within the school community. It is long established and deeply embedded, and is at the heart of every decision that leaders take. Governors fully support the school, with many taking on a link role to specific areas such as worship, RE and special needs provision. They speak passionately and knowledgeably about the school's work. Governors articulate the vision clearly and can give examples of how decisions they have made reflect the vision in action. However, they do not have robust, systematic mechanisms for explicitly and regularly monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the vision on the flourishing of pupils and adults. School leaders feel well supported by governors, who take time in meetings to ask about their well-being as well as addressing school improvement. Staff know that their well-being has a high priority and feel able to approach leaders with any concerns. Staff feel cherished. They also frequently feel challenged because of the nature of their work, which they acknowledge can be tough at times. However, they appreciate that leaders value them for their unique contribution to the school's work. This gives staff the strength to continue to 'give their all' despite the challenges. Thus, leaders embody the vision as they support adults to flourish.

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum and pupils are eager and enthusiastic learners. Teaching staff effectively support all pupils including those with special needs and disabilities (SEND), to access their learning. Staff teach all pupils to have a growth mindset in order to face challenges with positivity. Leaders emphasise the importance of this within the school vision, recognising that appropriate challenge is very necessary. Pupils are very clear about how they learn. They know that 'if you never fail, you never really learn anything new'. Pupils are hopeful for their future because they know staff in school cherish and value them. Planned opportunities to develop spiritually, such as experiencing awe about God's world in science teaching, enrich the curriculum. A wide variety of challenging learning opportunities enable all pupils to develop emotionally and academically. Pupils take social action and have a good understanding of becoming agents of change. They care deeply about unfairness in the world, which inspires them to support Fairtrade. They channel their anger over litter into action to remove it through litter picking. They look more globally at issues linked to climate change. They challenge themselves, as the school's vision says they will, to make a difference. Hence, pupils recognise that by taking action locally, or by writing to their MP, they can encourage wider change. They recognise the Christian values in such work and are motivated by those values. Pupils flourish personally and socially because of the many and varied opportunities within the curriculum.

Relationships are particularly strong at Kirkstall St Stephen's, fostered by the care each member of staff displays for every child. Pupils see this and emulate it in their interactions with each other. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is exemplary. They speak politely and conduct themselves well. Pupils love school because they feel safe and supported. Staff provide targeted support to pupils who need additional help to manage their behaviour. Other pupils too, are spontaneously supportive of their peers, immediately stepping forth with encouragement when someone needs help. Exclusions are used only as a last resort and often trigger further external, necessary support for the child. The Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation underpin restorative behaviour management as exemplified in the highly effective policy. Pupils' acceptance and celebration of their differences ensures dignity and respect for all. Pupils flourish because they cherish each other and are well equipped to step out into the world beyond school.



Collective worship is a particular strength of Kirkstall St Stephen's. It truly is at the heart of school and transforms pupils' lives. It nourishes everyone as it brings to life the school vision. All value the time to come together. Worship is warm, welcoming and inspirational. Pupils and adults engage enthusiastically in their response to greetings. Many take the opportunity to pray thoughtfully and there is a pervading sense of peace, reverence and awe. Leaders plan worship carefully so that pupils' are knowledgeable about Bible stories, social action and the importance of reflection time. It fully engages pupils and inspires them to explore their potential as children of God. Pupils are also inspired to take social action locally, nationally and globally to try to change the world for the better. Reflective areas in classrooms and outside invite pupils to extend reflection and prayer beyond gathering for worship. All pupils value the chance to use these opportunities and several do. The collective worship crew meet regularly to plan, evaluate and develop worship. As the school year progresses, the crew become more skilled and take a greater lead. Pupils describe how worship makes them feel secure, cherished and accepted. It also reminds them that when they feel most challenged, support is always there. In this way, worship embodies each aspect of the vision. School leads regular services in church, enabling pupils to experience formal Christian traditions. There is a strong bond between the school community and the incumbent, who is the chair of governors. Parents value myriad opportunities to join worship in school and at church and speak warmly about the feelings it invokes. Thereby, collective worship has an extensive, positive impact as it enables exceptional flourishing of every member of the school community.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners in RE because of the ambitious, well planned curriculum, which includes deep, thought-provoking questions. This provides good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually. Many pupils display very good understanding when explaining about varied beliefs. They find it fascinating to learn about a variety of world religions and views and are knowledgeable. However, pupils' work does not fully reflect their learning. This is because not all pupils have regular opportunities to demonstrate their progress in learning through independent work. Leaders are continuing to provide focused professional development to improve teachers' expertise and increase confidence. An effective partnership with the diocese is also driving improvement. This is enabling teachers to develop pupils' philosophical and religious understanding, including core theological concepts. Analysis of pupil tasks by the RE leader indicates that pupils are learning well and progress is good.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Good
	<p>Progress in RE at Kirkstall St Stephen's is good because pupils follow a rich and challenging curriculum. Teachers are rapidly developing the confidence to encourage pupils to think deeply about a range of theological and philosophical questions. This enables them to flourish in their learning. However, progress is not evident in all pupils' independent work. This is because they do not have sufficient regular opportunities to demonstrate what they know.</p>		
Information			
School	Kirkstall St Stephen's Church of England VA School	Inspection date	9 November 2022
URN	108043	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided
Diocese/District	Leeds	Pupils on roll	199
Headteacher	Phillip Sheppard		
Chair of Governors	Stephen Kaye		
Inspector	Melanie Barratt	No.	2104