



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Selby Abbey C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address New Lane, Selby, YO8 4QB

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 **Good**

School's vision

Our vision is to create a happy school family where all children and staff become the very best they can be within the context of Christian belief, practice and values. Children in our school will develop enquiring minds, respect for themselves, others and the environment, resilience and adaptability to flourish.
(John 10:10)

Key findings

- Selby Abbey is a school where every individual is known well and supported to become the very best they can be. The outworking of this vision, alongside extremely caring leadership, leads to a tangible sense of community.
- Compassionate, high-quality support for vulnerable children and their families enables all to flourish. This is a clear expression of the vision.
- A courageous curriculum and good teaching lead to pupils progressing well, including in religious education (RE). There is also a clear focus on the development of pupils' character that prepares them well for the next stage of their lives. Leaders are keen to build on this further through the development of international links.
- Collective worship unites the school community and reinforces an understanding of Christian values. Pupils are confident in leading worship and delight in doing so regularly. They are keen to be more involved in taking a developmental role.
- Partnerships and positive relationships are key strengths in the school. Mutually beneficial connections with Selby Abbey enhance the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Areas for development

- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop their role in evaluating worship so they can be effective in introducing change.
- Continue to pursue international links to enhance character development and a deepening global understanding of diversity.
- Continue with recovery plans so that gaps in learning in RE continue to be filled and enrichment activities return to their strong pre-pandemic position.

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

The headteacher and staff team lead Selby Abbey with compassion and are unswerving in their commitment to ensuring all pupils flourish academically and personally. The vision, rooted in living life in all its fullness, means that the school offers hope and aspiration to all members of the school community. During lengthy periods of remote learning and school closures the school lived out its vision through the support and care shown to pupils and adults.

The sense of community is palpable. Not only do all learners experience quality teaching and learning, but equally all staff experience focused support and training. One staff member commented, 'we are like an extended family, our Christian values drive everything'. The headteacher is a mentor for the Church of England's National Professional Qualification in Headship and other senior staff support the Diocese through church school networks. Since the previous denominational inspection, much has been done to embed the school's Christian vision. This means that it is lived out across the school's work although this is not always well-articulated. School leaders, including governors, work closely with the Diocese to ensure the school's ongoing development. This has involved training to ensure a shared understanding of spiritual development and making use of national guidance from the Church of England.

The headteacher and governors have shaped provision to ensure all flourish, based on a genuine understanding of the locality of the school. They have appointed a highly effective inclusion team who offer bespoke support which enables pupils and parents alike to feel at ease and ensures that every step of success is celebrated. Case studies evidence a deep concern at an individual level and impactful support provided by knowledgeable staff. This team works with sensitivity and rigour in equal measure. Governors make vision-led decisions to spend funds beyond the usual grants to ensure high quality external support is provided. Parents feel highly supported by the school and explain that staff always go beyond their expectations in their care for pupils and their families.

The impact of the vision is vividly seen in the enthusiasm that pupils and parents have for their school which they describe as 'a happy family'. Pupils are supported to live well together. Positive relationships are a feature of this community, pupils are kind and welcoming and say they feel safe in school. When a problem occurs, pupils are clear that adults will help them resolve matters. Pupils refer to solving problems through the values. One said, 'even if I don't agree with someone, I can still show compassion'. An ambitious curriculum is enriched by bold curriculum choices which inspire learning, develop character and underpin strong academic achievement. Pupils are encouraged to become advocates of change through a curriculum that explores how to take care of themselves and the world around them. For example, a recent project on Water Aid led pupils to write to local companies expressing their concerns. Pupils are respectful of each other and welcome new arrivals into school. One child commented, 'everyone is welcome here and we don't judge a book by its cover'. The focus of the vision on resilience supports pupils to persevere when work or life becomes challenging.

A shared understanding of spiritual development is in place. Opportunities across the curriculum are identified and unplanned opportunities are taken. Pupils talk about how looking through windows, mirrors and doors makes you think differently. A visit to the chapel on a recent visit to Eden Camp was described by a member of staff as a time of comfortable silence, a typical child-led moment of spirituality. Reflection areas, prayer books in classrooms and special spaces outside in the grounds are used to support pupils to reflect spiritually.

RE makes a positive contribution to the vibrant curriculum. The subject is popular, particularly when it involves discussion, drama or artwork. As a result of thoughtful planning, pupils have a good understanding of the main concepts of the major religions studied and of world views. A Humanist, on a recent visit to Year 5, commented on the pupils' ability to challenge through questions. The subject is well-led by a skilful and committed team who have made sure that gaps in learning, caused through the pandemic, have been identified and well-sequenced plans have been adapted accordingly. A strong offer of visits to places of worship and visitors from a range of faith traditions is being reintroduced to bring relevance to the subject.

Worship binds the school community each day and is highly valued by pupils, including opportunities maintained throughout the pandemic. Worship is planned to explore Christian values and to relate biblical teaching to current events, such as Black History Month or COP26. Church Ambassadors plan and lead worship regularly and delight in doing so, describing their role as 'spreading the word about why God sent Jesus to the world'. Pupil opportunities to

lead worship reach beyond the school. For example, pupils planned and delivered Stations of the Cross for the Selby Abbey congregation. Opportunities for pupils to play a part in the evaluation of worship are underdeveloped. Singing is central to worship and is both joyous and uplifting. Prayer is a regular feature of the school day and pupils are developing an understanding of the Lord's Prayer. Collective worship is enriched by the strong, mutually beneficial, partnership with Selby Abbey and other local churches. As a result of inclusive and engaging worship, pupils have a good awareness of a range of Bible stories and the main festivals in the Church's calendar. One child recounted the story of Zacchaeus and how this had been a lesson in 'not excluding anyone' and how this had impacted on making friends in the playground.

Selby Abbey is a highly effective Church school with pockets of excellent practice. Most notable is the outworking of the vision which enables all pupils to flourish with a clear commitment to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. As such, the school gives its pupils secure foundations for being the very best they can be now and into the future.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	8 December 2021	URN	121586
Date of previous inspection	14 November 2014		
School status	Voluntary controlled	NOR	350
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese / Methodist District	York		
Headteacher	Jo Jennings		
Pupil profile	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.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Darren Dudman	No.	C1808