



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Thornton Dale Church of England Primary School	
Address	Castle Close, Thornton-le-Dale, Pickering, YO18 7TW
School vision	
<p>For every child to love learning in a safe environment where they feel nurtured, valued and happy. We aim for a culture of exceptionally high expectations and an innovative approach to inspire our children to believe they can achieve excellence. This is rooted in our core values of kindness, friendship and respect.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Parable of the Mustard Seed - Mark 4: 30-32</p> <p>"What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooted in the Parable of the Mustard Seed, the school's Christian vision, and associated values, underpin the school's life and direction. • Committed leaders, including governors, trust leaders and staff know and understand the community the school serves. They work to ensure that pupils and their families are nurtured and supported. Links between the church, community and school are strong and mutually beneficial. • The inclusive curriculum is designed so that all pupils can access learning. Pupils with additional needs, or who are vulnerable, receive bespoke support which enables them to flourish. • The rhythm of inclusive and invitational collective worship gives an important moment of focus in each school day. It is highly valued by members of the school community, pupils and adults alike. It provides meaningful contemplation, effectively supporting shared reflection and spiritual growth. • High quality religious education (RE) is a strength of the school. Dedicated leaders have developed a challenging, broad, balanced, sequential curriculum. It enables pupils to learn about Christianity as a living faith, world religions and worldviews. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared language and understanding of spirituality. This is so that pupils have increasingly deeper opportunities to explore and articulate their own spiritual development. • Building on their growing experience at local level, extend pupils' ability and opportunities to challenge issues of injustices nationally and globally. 	
Inspection findings	
Thornton Dale is a small, rural school where every person is included, thoroughly known and	

genuinely nurtured and cared for. As a result, all feel valued. The Christian vision is understood and embraced by leadership at all levels. It informs policy making and decisions, ensuring that it is deeply embedded in the life of the school. Pupils and adults articulate the vision using the Parable of the Mustard Seed. All recognise that the school creates the right conditions, just as in the parable, for learners to be nourished and to grow. The vision at Thornton Dale is closely aligned with that of the Elevate Learning Trust. Within the multi-academy trust (MAT) family of schools, pupils and their families lie at the heart of everything that they do. The relationship between the school and the trust is based on collaboration and support. It strengthens the expression and reality of the school's Christian vision and provides opportunities for school improvement and staff development. The strong leadership team, including governors and colleagues from the MAT closely monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision.

The vision inspired, knowledge rich curriculum has been carefully designed to meet the needs of all and strengthen learning. The curriculum supports all pupils to be the best that they can be. This enables vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs to thrive. Inspiring educational visits and enrichment activities contribute to a gradually deepening spirituality as pupils move through school. An example of this, is the school's ambitious opportunities pledge, which offers a wide variety of visits and experiences. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and forest school provision further enhances opportunities. As a result, pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning and the exciting things they do at school. The school is developing its approach to spiritual development within the curriculum. Throughout the day, there are opportunities for spiritual growth. Including opportunities for quiet reflection, appreciating the inspiring local environment or discussions on the big questions of life. However, a shared language used to describe spiritual experiences is less developed. This limits the ability of adults and pupils to talk with increasing depth about spiritual growth.

Collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. All pupils attend and enjoy coming together. Pupils are familiar with the liturgy and traditions of the Anglican Church. They are able to explain the idea of the Trinity and the symbolic reference of three candles used in worship. The strong partnership with local churches enriches this Christian family, nourishing the spiritual lives of all. Their weekly involvement in worship and their chaplaincy are invaluable. For example, pupils enjoy the clergy led, 'Open the Book' as it helps them to learn and remember biblical stories. Pupils relish participating in worship and the pupil led spiritual leaders team, have begun to be involved in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of it. The effective partnership work within the MAT and the diocese has provided continued professional development to ensure continuous improvement of worship. This has resulted in the enhancement of pupil reflection and the planning of worship.

Strong relationships across the school embody the Christian vision and support staff and pupil mental health and wellbeing. New staff quickly recognise the exceptional bond they feel as a result of the school ethos. Staff describe it as a family who nurture and watch over each other. They feel valued and encouraged to develop and succeed. One member of staff said, 'we are given big opportunities in a small school'. Parents remarked that school is filled with warmth and care and that staff are a source of support. Pupils of all ages play well together at breaktimes. 'Buddy' pairings of older pupils with Reception pupils support wellbeing. Robust pastoral support systems ensure emotional wellbeing is a priority. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their emotions and use coping strategies by using colour monster inspired feeling cards. This enables pupils to identify their emotions during the day and for staff to be able to assess how the pupils are feeling. Pupils talk about how they appreciate the intervention from staff when they feel angry, sad or frightened. This has a positive effect on the mental health of pupils enabling all to flourish.

The Christian vision is realised as pupils show kindness, friendship and respect in practical ways within the local community. Community links are strong and the school proactively supports

vulnerable people within their village. Pupils talk passionately about their partnership with The Hall Residential Care Home and the Village Hub. These partnerships help pupils to engage with local social action projects which inspire them to be champions for change. This work includes litter picking in the village and planting trees in Dalby Forest to help raise awareness of climate change. Across the school, pupils regularly discuss current issues of inequality and injustice. This work is promoted well by the global changemakers pupil group. Through debate, they develop strong feelings about issues, such as global conflicts and the environment. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to initiate projects to contribute to change at a national and global level. RE is a strength of the school. Leaders have ensured that RE is very well planned and delivered using various resources including the Understanding Christianity programme. The curriculum is challenging, sequenced, relevant and engaging. Impactful training from the diocese and MAT has led to the RE leaders providing enriching support for teachers within the school. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding is flourishing. Pupils speak enthusiastically about RE and have a strong understanding of a range of world religions and views. Pupils see their RE lessons as a safe space to ask big questions and reflect on the answers. Pupils' religious literacy is enhanced through meeting representatives from a range of religious backgrounds and visiting places of worship. These wider opportunities further enrich the spiritual development of pupils.

Throughout the school, displays and reflection areas emphasise the spiritual journey that the school is on. Parents, staff and pupils support the school's Christian vision and recognise the benefit it has for their school community. This is demonstrated through a current community project to create a spiritual garden. Leaders at all levels are determined in their drive to empower the school community to flourish and grow like the mustard tree. They work tirelessly, to ensure everyone is valued by being grounded in the roots of, kindness, friendship and respect.

The inspection findings indicate that Thornton Dale Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	23 November 2023	URN	147763
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	141
Diocese	York		
MAT/Federation	Elevate Multi Academy Trust		
Miss	Camarah Mosey		
Chair	Gaynor De Barr		
Inspector	Kirsty Harrison-Brown	No.	2228