



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Topcliffe Church of England Academy	
Address	School Lane, Topcliffe, Thirsk, YO7 3RG

School vision

'Love your neighbour as yourself and do to others as you'd have them do to you.'
This teaching enables us to grow and flourish as positive and hopeful citizens of tomorrow's world, believing there are no limits on what we can achieve if we are kind and work together. This vision makes our school a truly special place to learn, as together we live out our core Christian values of compassion, respect and community. We use the story of The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), to further explore our vision through the idea of treating everyone equally, being selfless and loving across barriers.

School strengths

- A nurturing, supportive and joyful expression of the school's Christian vision is a living reality at Topcliffe Church of England Academy. This enables pupils and adults to flourish through the compassionate and respectful relationships that are expressed daily.
- Inspirational leaders ensure the Christian vision is deeply embedded. It shapes and enriches the curriculum and securely underpins the learning experiences of pupils.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the school and characterises a worship life that is inviting and inspiring. It is reflective of a culture centred on the core Christian values of compassion, respect and community.
- Opportunities for pupils to challenge injustice, build positive relationships and make ethical choices are deeply embedded. Pupils know and understand who their 'neighbours' are enabling them to grow and flourish as citizens of tomorrow.
- Pupils talk confidently about theology, philosophy and the impact of faith on their lives. This is reflective of the high profile and priority given to religious education (RE) by all leaders.

Areas for development

- Further enhance and enrich the school community's understanding of spirituality, to improve pupils' articulation of their own spiritual development.

Inspection findings

A nurturing, supportive and joyful expression of the school's Christian vision characterises life at Topcliffe Church of England Academy. Relationships built on compassion and respect are expressed daily making this school a special place to learn. Adults and pupils flourish as they aspire to live out their core Christian values of compassion, respect and community. Pupils confidently use the parable of the Good Samaritan as the example of how others should be treated.

The school's distinctive Christian vision resonates with that of the Elevate multi-academy trust (MAT). Together they recognise their roles as partners, creating and being answerable to the local

community with autonomous visions that co-exist. The relationship between the school and the trust is characterised by collaboration and the ambition for pupils and adults to grow and achieve. Leaders ensure that the school's vision permeates daily life at Topcliffe. Their expertise and compassionate leadership ensures the vision continually enhances the work of the school. All members of the school community share the same commitment to loving their neighbour. This is demonstrated by the enriching relationships that are reinforced daily. Parents recognise the open, invitational and supportive ethos that characterises relations between themselves and all school staff. Pupils know that they are cared for, will be listened to, and are treated with respect.

Compassion, respect and community are the essence of daily life that shape the aspirational and inclusive curriculum at Topcliffe. Leaders and staff work tirelessly to ensure no pupil is left behind through their 'keep up, not catch up' approach. The school's higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) are expertly supported. Pupils thrive in the ambitious learning environment and as a result of the opportunities that are afforded to them. Leaders ensure the learning experience for pupils enables them to grow into hopeful citizens of tomorrow's world. They recognise that to achieve this, pupils need to experience the world beyond the local area. Opportunities for pupils to participate in rich learning experiences beyond the school are strongly embedded. These enable pupils to flourish and learn about those who are their 'neighbours' beyond their local community.

Collective worship is at the heart of the school and illustrates a worship life that is inclusive, invitational and inspirational. It is reflective of a culture centred on the core Christian values of compassion, respect and community. The trust fully supports the worship and spiritual life of the school which is exceptionally well led. Pupils' involvement in the organisation and leadership of worship enhances the worship life of the school. 'Spiritual leaders' from years 5 and 6 plan and deliver worship on a weekly basis. Moments of silent reflection, joyous singing and symbolic actions reflect the inspirational nature of worship for all present. Inclusive opportunities to participate are commonplace, strengthening the spiritual bonds of the school community. Local partnerships further reinforce these worship links for all. Representatives of the local church community deliver Open the Book sessions and the local vicar regularly leads worship. Parents and carers are invited to attend weekly worship on Fridays and pupils talk proudly of receiving their school values certificates in their presence. Leaders recognise that work is required to enrich the school community's understanding of spirituality and pupils' articulation of spiritual development.

Opportunities for pupils to challenge injustice, build positive relationships and make ethical choices are deeply embedded at Topcliffe. Leaders are nurturing responsible citizens who look beyond themselves and explore regularly the question of accountability towards others. Pupils speak confidently about their reflections on philosophical questions and recognise their 'neighbours' as being all of humanity. This constant reinforcement of the school vision and values builds a sense of togetherness and respect for all. The outworking of the vision is demonstrated in a long-term project pupils participate in. Pupils throughout the school speak enthusiastically about supporting a partner school in Madagascar where they have pen-pals. As agents of change they highlight the needs of their partner school to the local community and build lasting relationships centred on compassion and support. Participating in meaningful action such as sponsored walks around the school field carrying buckets of water are powerful and memorable moments. Regular and ongoing engagement in local projects reinforces this sense of accountability towards others. These experiences highlight the nature of the Good Samaritan for all. It helps pupils to grow and reflect on the concept of shared responsibility.

A culture of wellbeing is nurtured and enhanced at Topcliffe. Leaders maintain the highest standards in the school's dignifying and equitable culture. Support from the Elevate Trust and York Diocese Board of Education provides effective continuing professional development for staff. Positive



internal school relations create a community of support which enables the whole staff body to flourish in harmony. The introduction of performance development groups for teaching staff has created a sense of togetherness and shared responsibility. Staff work collaboratively with a nearby Church school focussing on areas such as adult and pupil wellbeing. Staff are determined to deliver the best circumstances for both adults and children in which they can thrive.

The RE curriculum at Topcliffe is confidently led and effectively planned. RE is given high priority by all leaders. This is reflected in the philosophical and theological debates and discussions that pupils maturely recount. The RE curriculum drives opportunities for pupils to regularly explore who their 'neighbours' are. Pupils consistently demonstrate this understanding in their interactions and thoughtful reflections. Through carefully selected trips, throughout their time at Topcliffe, pupils learn about the diversity of faith. Pupils experience immersive periods of work in RE as a result of the curriculum structure. High impact and regular reflection embeds this work. Monitoring of RE by the subject lead and the governing body demonstrates high levels of accountability.

Topcliffe is expertly led by leaders who selflessly strive to achieve the best for the whole school community. Pupils and adults live out the vision through compassionate and respectful relationships underpinned by the story of the Good Samaritan. Inspired by the school values, the school community lives and learns together in an environment that is both highly nurturing and aspirational.

The inspection findings indicate that Topcliffe Church of England Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	5 February 2024	URN	144840
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	130
Diocese	York		
MAT/Federation	Elevate Multi Academy Trust		
Executive Head Teacher	Abigail Clay		
Chair	Richard Tindall		
Inspector	Kevin Taggart	No.	2246