

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Bridget's Church of England Primary School

Vision

We use Psalm 119-105 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path' as our school's vision to guide children, staff, governors and our community through every day school life and beyond. Our three year rolling programme of Christian Values are the tools we use to live out this vision by following in Jesus' footsteps.

St Bridget's 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 permeates through the life of the school, guiding leaders, staff and pupils in their decisions. Christian values, such as justice, give pupils the tools they need to choose the right path.
- St Bridget's is a welcoming community, where kindness and care are evident throughout. Pupils and adults are accepted as the unique individuals they are and given the support they need to thrive.
- A powerful culture of inclusion and care for creation drives school leaders to make decisions that prioritise equity and justice. Pupils take responsibility for their actions and understand their own rights and the rights of others.
- The Christian vision inspires pupils and adults so they believe they can achieve more than they first imagined. Leaders work tirelessly to broaden pupils' horizons and guide them to find their own pathway in life.

Development Points

- Ensure the new religious education (RE) curriculum is well balanced in order to deepen pupils' understanding of a diverse range of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- Embed the school's shared understanding of spirituality beyond collective worship so that it becomes an intrinsic part of the wider curriculum. This is to enhance opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to explore justice issues. This is to enable pupils to initiate action to challenge injustice when they come across it.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision drives and infuses life at St Bridget's. Being guided to 'choose the right path' is the natural language of pupils and adults. Leaders' desire to equip pupils with the tools to choose the right pathway in life drives decision making. The vision is a living reality for governors. They give freely of their time and skills to support the school and help 'light the path'. The Christian vision supports pupils in their decision making. As one pupil put it, 'God will always be with us and lead the way'. They use the 'school psalm' to help them think about how the choices they make now might affect them in the future. Inspired by the mountainous landscape locally, pupils are supported to 'lift their gaze' and raise their aspirations. Pupils firmly believe that adults in school want to help them to be the best person they can be.

Inspired by the vision, the curriculum is underpinned by the principle of guiding pupils on the right pathway. Some pupils need more support than others to find their way. Staff work tirelessly to remove barriers to learning so that all pupils can develop their unique talents. The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Individual pathways are created so that pupils who need additional support can make progress. Pupils benefit from regular visits to support their appreciation of the local area. Opportunities for spiritual development exist, for example, in personal, social, health and economic education. However, these are not yet embedded across the wider curriculum, so opportunities for spiritual growth are sometimes missed.

Collective worship is a valued part of the school day. Gathering each day strengthens this community and binds individuals together as the St Bridget's 'family'. Strong partnership with local churches enriches this time and enhances spiritual growth. The local church takes seriously its responsibility to 'shine the light of God's word' in the school and wider community. Families benefit from having an opportunity to worship together as part of the school community at regular church services. A local church group also provides an extra-curricular club to enhance spiritual development further. Collective worship provides time to reflect and allows adults and pupils to learn from one another. Staff speak of having 'lightbulb moments' in which they understand pupils' perspectives more clearly and grow spiritually themselves. Collective worship is a time for everybody, regardless of background or beliefs. All are welcome to participate as they feel comfortable. Collective worship is an inspirational time when pupils reflect upon their own lives and grow spiritually. For example, pupils are inspired by the biblical figure of Barnabas whose name means 'son of encouragement'. Pupils take this message into the rest of school life and encourage one another to 'be like Barnabas'.

St Bridget's is an inclusive community where pupils and staff are cared for and treated with respect. Leaders prioritise wellbeing, and adults are supported to develop in their professional roles. Staff generously assist one another and speak warmly of colleagues as their 'work family'. Driven by the vision, staff are happy to be guided on their path by one another regardless of role. Staff model what it is to be lifelong learners and that adults still need guidance to choose the right path. Pupils learn from adults who seek 'to light their path'. Parents value being known as individuals. This personal care, support and encouragement enables their children to thrive. Leaders take strategic decisions to ensure there is support for good mental health across the school. This includes investing in training for a colleague to become an emotional literacy support assistant. This supports pupils to succeed. Diversity and difference are not only accepted at St Bridget's, but are celebrated. Pupils explain how they try to be kind like St Bridget. There is a powerful culture of respect between pupils.



Pupils learn about responsibility throughout their time at St Bridget's. All pupils have leadership roles, from nursery to Year 6. Through this leadership, pupils develop Christian values as 'tools' for living out the school's vision as they learn to serve one another. Pupils learn to balance their own rights with responsibility towards others. When they find this challenging, pupils draw on the value of perseverance. As one pupil put it, 'I used to give up easily but now I keep going'. Drawing on the Christian vision, leaders take decisions driven by a desire for justice. Leaders consider carefully how they steward the school's and the planet's resources to best effect. Inspired by their local surroundings, creation care is a particular priority at St Bridget's. Pupils wrote to the school gardener to ask for the school field to be left to grow for 'no mow May'. As a result, local community members thanked the school. This practice has continued as areas of the field are left to grow wild to benefit insects. Older pupils ran a campaign to reduce dog fouling and litter in their locality. They contacted the council who supported pupils' actions. Pupils at St Bridget's have a strong sense of justice. Currently, much of the action to tackle injustice is adult led as staff guide pupils on the path of justice. Pupils are beginning to explore how they might take the lead and initiate action themselves.

Driven by the Christian vision, leaders work to ensure the RE curriculum is a 'guiding light' to help pupils understand the world around them. RE is prioritised and pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically about their learning. Leaders monitor the RE curriculum and evaluate its impact. Recent monitoring has led leaders to implement a new RE curriculum. Staff benefit from training provided by the diocese. The curriculum provides pupils with a good knowledge of biblical texts and several Christian practices. Opportunities to understand diverse expressions of Christianity across a range of cultures are more limited. The school's Christian values, such as respect and humility, guide pupils to respect people from religions and worldviews that are different from their own. However, at present, the curriculum is not well balanced. This means that there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about a diverse range of religious and non-religious worldviews in depth. Leaders are aware of this and are making plans to address it. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship from a range of religions. RE learning is also enhanced by visitors coming into school to share how their beliefs impact upon how they live. These opportunities help to broaden pupils' horizons and deepen their understanding of difference.

Information

Address	Brigham, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 0TU		
Date	11 February 2025	URN	112271
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	92
Diocese	Carlisle		
Headteacher	Lisa Hemingway		
Chair of Governors	Kathryn Chambers		
Inspector	Caroline Weir		