

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

### Richard Coates Church of England Primary School

**Address** Thornhill Road, Ponteland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE20 9QB

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**

**The effectiveness of religious education (RE)** **Excellent**

#### School's vision

'Let your light shine'

We seek to enable all to flourish and achieve their full potential within a caring and happy school where the Christian values of care, kindness and respect are at the heart of all we do.

#### Key findings

- The school's vision is firmly established in the minds of pupils and adults, so they all strive to 'Let your light shine'. All pupils know they aim to be the best they can be.
- The school treats all pupils as individuals with unique needs, so every child feels encouraged and valued.
- Pupils take significant leadership roles in social action through the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders' Awards, so that they act to the benefit of their community.
- Pupils behave well in all activities, showing acceptance of difference and forgiveness to others.
- Pupils grow in confidence through an excellent religious education curriculum, in which each one's progress is carefully monitored and each topic is taught in a way which enables them to flourish.

#### Areas for development

- Develop the role of pupils in sharing the development of collective worship. Involve them in monitoring, forward planning, conducting, choosing themes and interests for worship, increasing its impact both in school and in their community.

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

Richard Coates School is grounded in the value it places on kindness, respect and compassion. Adults and pupils aspire to 'Let your light shine' so that this vision is known and understood by all. Relationships are based upon kindness and respect at all levels, so that pupils flourish. At the heart of learning are the headteacher and her team, who embody the vision of the school. She is ably supported by a team of teachers, many relatively new to the school, who act out the school vision in daily interactions and strategic decisions. The school's vision has been manifest through the rigours of transition from a middle to a primary school and through the pandemic. School leaders at all levels have ensured pupils had access to learning through the

proactive distribution of chrome books, lap-tops and learning packs, as well as a weekly catch up with each pupil either through electronic means or on doorsteps. Parents spoken to were unanimous in their affirmation of the headteacher's role in keeping learning going throughout the pandemic.

The school has strong links with a community which is stimulated by its sense of aspiration. This outward-facing school lets its light shine in the community. Parents expressed delight in the acquisition on reorganisation of a new school building, which has many visual reminders of the school's Christian distinctiveness. These include an array of stars in the main corridor, testifying to the equal worth of every pupil in the school. Pupils support their local community through generous harvest donations, cake stalls and craft sales. Pupils see this as meeting a social need, rather than an act of Christian kindness. Older ones all participate in the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders' Awards, to the considerable benefit of their own personal development as confident citizens. Among the projects pupils have led has been a sale in Newcastle Market of items they made, in aid of a homeless shelter. The Awards scheme has heightened an awareness of community needs, so that pupils organise lending schemes of books and games and have written to people isolated in residential homes.

Governors know the school well and successfully support the headteacher in maintaining a distinctive Christian school within the overall provision of the Pele Trust. They support in practical ways and are resuming on-site visits, monitoring the school's development. The links between governors and Christian distinctiveness, worship and RE are re-starting so that governors are able to share in the development of these vital areas. Governors have been particularly active in ensuring that staff appointments have promoted the school's vision, by filling vacancies appropriately despite some interviews being conducted by electronic means.

The school's curriculum is ambitious, demanding of each pupil the acquisition of skills in a happy and collaborative atmosphere. Conduct in all areas of the school is one of its strengths. Pupils know what is expected of them and strive to excel. Exceptionally rare occurrences of bullying are quickly dealt with and appropriately recorded. This is a happy school, where pupils act out the vision during every moment of the day. It helps them to make positive choices and exercise forgiveness when others fall short. Squabbles are quickly settled, often without adult intervention. They delight in the gaining of certificates linked to kindness, respect and compassion/loving actions but also take pride in members of their class being honoured as well. RE makes a significant contribution to their learning, through a rich and engaging curriculum which challenges and demands from pupils high order skills. The RE curriculum is exceptionally well-planned, delivered and evaluated by all staff. Training of new staff is a strength of the RE Coordinator's work. The 'Understanding Christianity' resource has been thoughtfully adapted, so that in all stages pupils talk confidently of the transformative impact of their learning in RE. They show empathy with a range of other faiths, for example alternative creation stories, views of eternal life and cultural values. Older pupils can discuss racism and prejudice with confidence, demonstrating openness in listening to the views of others. Social and religious difference is accepted, as pupils recognize that 'we need to get on with each other'. Pupils readily explain how teaching in RE or collective worship has made them aware of injustice and unfairness. They had followed Marcus Rashford's campaign against food poverty, agreeing it has transformed their thinking on wealth distribution. They seize opportunities to make both their school and their community better by their readiness to shine.

Collective worship is developing through the 'Roots and Fruits resource'. There is a good balance between corporate worship in the hall and class worship, which is well planned and resourced. Worship during the pandemic was resourced both with online 'live' activities and with recorded video presentations on key themes. Worship proclaims the school's vision and is invitational and inspirational. All staff lead worship and new staff have clear guidance and support provided, so that they soon lead class worship with confidence. The incumbent is a frequent visitor to school, so that adults and pupils see him as a support in times of trouble. The headteacher invites a team of providers from a number of denominations and from the Mustard Tree worship group, so that pupils encounter differing styles of Christian worship. Music and liturgical responses enhance worship. Pupils write their own prayers for use in prayer corners and in a reflection area. This last resource was provided specifically at the request of a pupil, providing a calm place in a busy school to sit aside and pray. Some pupils speak openly about praying during the school day. Parents in responses to questionnaires value the school's emphasis on spiritual development, so that families pray more regularly. A group of pupils are identified as worship warriors, willing to help lead, review and develop worship activities. As yet this resource is still developing, so these pupils are yet to make an impact. Pupils love visits to St Mary's, their local church, where they lead worship for festivals including harvest, Christmas, Ascension and a school leavers' celebration. The school reaches out to its community and to the City of Newcastle through extra-curricular visits which are warmly appreciated as evidenced by tributes on social media and in 'Grapevine', the church magazine for Ponteland. The headteacher is a regular contributor, shining the school's light in its community.



**The effectiveness of RE is**

Excellent

RE learning throughout the school is highly effective in all years, through a rich and engaging curriculum. RE enables all pupils to progress, including those with SEND and the most able. High levels of religious literacy enable pupils insightfully to compare and discuss a range of faiths and beliefs. Through asking perceptive questions, pupils have developed skills to interpret, use empathy and think for themselves. They know their own strengths in discussing religious themes and how they can build on them. Teaching therefore is highly effective.

**Contextual information about the school**

Date of inspection	Tuesday 19 October 2021	URN	145784
Date of previous inspection	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2015		
School status	Primary	NOR	335
Name of MAT	Pele Trust		
Diocese	Newcastle		
Headteacher	Heather Cape		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The school has recently undergone significant change from a middle to a primary school. They have helped form a new multi-academy trust of six schools. There have been extensive staffing changes and increased admissions to all year groups. The school's founder was a local ship-builder, Richard Coates. He established the school in 1719.		
Inspector's name	David Shannon	No.	617