

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

### St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

<b>Address</b>	Crossgate Peth, Durham, County Durham, DH1 4QB		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	23 May 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary Controlled Primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Durham	<b>URN</b>	114230

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

#### School context

St Margaret's is a primary school with 423 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. 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. The school is the lead school in the St Margaret's Durham teacher training partnership.

#### The school's Christian vision

"Let your light shine" epitomises our vision, where we strive for the best provision for all, within a stimulating, happy and caring community, inspired by Christian faith and practice. Each individual's skills and talents are nurtured, celebrated and shared, allowing them to flourish and make a positive difference for all.

#### Key findings

- Exceptionally positive and loving relationships, securely underpinned by the Christian vision, and enhanced through values that are clearly understood by the entire school community, enable all to flourish.
- Governors and school leaders have created a dynamic momentum by which the impact of the vision is transformational throughout the school and is felt beyond the school itself. The school has excellent capacity to further support other schools.
- Worship, that is both invitational and inclusive, is the beating heart of the school. Prayer is deeply embedded into all areas of school life and is significantly enhanced through the creative use of meaningful reflection areas.
- Religious education (RE), and indeed all learning, is tailored to pupils' naturally inquisitive and questioning nature. This is powerfully enhanced through opportunities to engage with 'big questions' from which comes a mature depth of theological reasoning and real love of learning.
- The living out of the vision, enhanced with the school's 'hand of values,' ensures that behaviour is exemplary throughout the school and impacts far beyond school in loving and caring actions.

#### Areas for development

- Extend pupils' experience of the Eucharist to further enhance their spiritual growth.
- Like a beacon of light, search out further opportunities beyond the school to share leaders' outstanding understanding of how a clear Christian vision enables all to flourish.

**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**

Leaders, staff and pupils are energised by the biblically based vision that all should, 'Let your light shine.' The school does not just shine; it powerfully glows like a beacon of light within the school and beyond. Dynamic and passionate school leaders fully understand the needs of the school community. They ensure that the impact of the school's vision shapes and drives the strategic and day to day decisions which are taken. Leaders at all levels, including governors, passionately articulate that 'our vision is central to all that happens.'

The vision is fundamental to the excellent standard of teaching and learning that the pupils at St Margaret's enjoy and has generated an infectious culture for all to live out this vision. As a direct result of this, the unique needs of every individual are met and adults and pupils thrive. Academic standards and progress measures for all pupils are very high and are meticulously tracked throughout the year.

Leaders are outward looking and ensure that the impact of the vision is felt beyond the school itself. The decision to actively support a local school is described as, "using our light to support others" and demonstrates leaders' passion to enhance learning beyond their own school. There is a wide skill set amongst governors who are exceptionally rigorous and effective in their drive to ensure the school's vision impacts on the strategic direction of the school. The establishment of the school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programme immerses aspiring teachers in teaching which has Christian values at its heart. Trainees benefit from the very high standard of pastoral care and guidance provided by the school.

Pupils' natural curiosity and rich questioning are met, and extended, through skilled teaching and an innovative curriculum which is tailored to the needs of the all learners. Pupils speak with utter delight about the wide breadth of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that the school provides. The poppies art work created for Remembrance Day and the harmonious sound created by the talented orchestra are just some of the myriad of opportunities that pupils have to discover, and use, their gifts and talents. This rich diet of learning enables the gifts and talents of all pupils to flourish.

The school's vision and values of love, caring and community enable pupils to explore opportunities to be courageous advocates for change in the local and global communities. The school's link with Burundi, enhanced by the visit of the Bishop of Burundi, has opened the horizon of 'caring for your neighbour' far beyond the school itself. This link with one of the world's poorest countries and many other charitable ventures enables pupils to actively support those in need and share the resources that they have with gratitude and genuine care. Pupils can clearly articulate a biblical theology for such charitable acts and suggest it fits with their value of being 'Christ-like' and their vision to enable others, as well as themselves, to 'shine.'

St Margaret's is a deeply caring and nurturing community that considers the needs of all pupils and adults; the school's vision and values are central to this. As a result of this, relationships are outstanding, creating a safe and harmonious school community where all are treated with the highest standards of dignity and respect. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of the power of forgiveness and reconciliation which they model in and outside the classroom. Good mental health for all is directly enhanced through these nurturing relationships.

Parents and adults speak of the school being more like a family where all are special and cared for. Parents passionately articulate the impact that the school's vision has in areas such as tolerance and respect. One parent movingly described how the school has supported her child in dealing with bereavement at home through the impact of the care of the local Rector and the staff within the school. The Rector is actively involved in the school and is seen by all as an integral member of the school family. He has developed excellent relationships within the school which ensures that the link between school and church is exceptionally strong and mutually beneficial.

Policies, based on the Christian vision of the school and national Church of England guidance documents, are foundational to a culture where all are valued. Governors and leaders, including the business manager, seek to ensure that all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, have equal access to the array of opportunities that the school provides. Governors demonstrate a clear link between this and their understanding of the vision of the school. As one governor noted, 'it is not what we do but why we do it,' making explicit reference to the impact of the vision of the school on the strategic and operational decisions that are made.

Worship is the very heartbeat of the whole school and is accessible to all. The exemplary leadership of collective worship ensures that all staff and pupils feel confident in leading worship. The innovative link between Understanding Christianity and worship planning significantly enhances worship and enables a clear progression in theological understanding.

Worship is valued by adults and pupils and provides them with celebratory opportunities for joyful singing and formational moments of deeply reflective peace and prayerful reflection. Worship provides parents, staff and pupils with profoundly meaningful time to develop their own personal spirituality. Staff regard worship as 'therapeutic and valuable and model joyful singing to the pupils. Pupils are immersed in a sea of reflective thoughts and art work throughout the school which enhances their spiritual growth and celebrates their highly creative gifts. Pupils appreciate the wide array of prayer spaces and reflection areas which provide meaningful time to reflect in a quiet environment; further enhancing pupils' good mental health.

Innovative practice in worship weaves seamlessly into the RE curriculum and significantly enhances it. RE is strongly valued by adults and pupils and its impact goes well beyond the classroom into pupils' compassion for others and their courageous advocacy evidenced in the recent Christian Aid Global Neighbours award. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the cultural and religious practices of a number of world religions including Christianity. RE inspires pupils and their naturally inquisitive thirst is quenched through their theological and philosophical questioning. Pupils thrive in the safe space that RE allows for them to consider and answer these questions. The impact of the excellent provision of RE and collective worship manifests itself in extremely caring relationships where pupils and adults are united in living out the schools vision, enabling all to flourish and to brightly 'shine.'

Headteacher	Helen Tait
Inspector's name and number	Paul Rusby 938