

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Farnsfield St Michael's Church of England Primary School			
Address	Branston Ave, Farnsfield, Nottinghamshire, NG22 8JZ		
Date of inspection	05 March 2020	Status of school	Primary academy inspected as voluntary aided Minster Trust for education
Diocese	Southwell and Nottingham	URN	145640

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

St Michael's is a primary school with 271 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few 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 below national averages. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2020. The school became an academy in September 2019, joining the Minster Trust for Education multi-academy trust.

The school's Christian vision

love to learn, learn to love

'My commandment is this: love one another as I have loved you.' John 15 v12

- A beacon in the wider community, guiding others and shining light on one another.
- Creating well-rounded individuals who flourish and celebrate life in all its fullness.
- Treating each person as a unique individual, celebrating differences.
- Joining together on the same path, whatever the starting point, to guide one another to fulfil our full potential.

Key findings

- The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection. Christian values are understood and lived out by every adult and pupil in such a way that they impact significantly on the wider community.
- The headteacher and her staff are exemplars of service to all, effectively demonstrating how the Christian values inspire and transform pupils.
- Pupils are inspired by religious education (RE), taking every opportunity to explore matters of faith and spiritual development.

- The school's Christian vision and its worship are highly significant in the establishing of a diocesan new worshipping community, 'Connect Farnsfield'. School, village and church communities are being brought closer together, encountering and growing in faith together.
- Big questions are tackled across the curriculum. Pupils confidently articulate and express views so that they challenge and inspire one another, growing significantly in confidence and in faith.

Areas for development

- Provide support to pupils with their mental health, by training older pupils as wellbeing ambassadors, so that all pupils can access counselling from their peers.

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

At the heart of this exceptional church school is the vision 'love to learn, learn to love'. It is supported by Bible verses which are known, understood and demonstrated by all members of the school community. The impact of the school's distinctive Christian vision is seen throughout the highly innovative and Christ centred curriculum. Excellent practice is especially shown through the 'Connect Farnsfield' initiative and the constant valuing of pupil wellbeing. These are widely acknowledged and affirmed by the diocese and the school's local community. This school has made robust improvements since the last inspection and now is demonstrating excellence in all areas. The headteacher and her predecessor have energetically pursued a Christian distinctiveness which has a tangible effect on every pupil. The headteacher and her staff are exemplars of service based on the values of acceptance, honesty, happiness, perseverance, forgiveness, responsibility and respect. Every pupil aspires and all achieve awards for displaying the values, which have significant impact on their school lives. The staff challenge and address all barriers to learning, including those posed by significant impairment such as immobility or sight-loss. The governors conscientiously follow established systems for evaluating Christian distinctiveness. They seek and incorporate the views of staff, pupils and parents in strategic planning. One example is the planning, supported by the diocese, of the initiative of 'Connect Farnsfield'. Governors and school leaders meet regularly with the RE coordinator and the teacher overseeing Christian distinctiveness, to ensure school values are helping pupils transform their lives. All pupils flourish, particularly the vulnerable and less confident. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, following their teachers' example, showing acceptance, forgiveness and responsibility in daily acts of service. Pupils share leadership of the school as councillors, sports leaders, house captains, worship group leaders and anti-slavery ambassadors. They understand and powerfully advocate social justice and the eradication of poverty in the name of Jesus. An awareness day convinced older pupils that slavery is widespread even in our own communities, communicating to them concrete examples of modern exploitation.

This school is outgoing towards its community. Pupils participate in diocesan learning activities such as 'Time Travelling' at the Cathedral or 'The Big Sing' at the local secondary academy. Thus pupils join enthusiastically in the wider Christian worshipping community. Staff both lead and attend diocesan training, so that the school is a rich source of future church school leaders. The partnerships with the Minster Trust ensure St Michael's pupils benefit from mathematics activities, music opportunities and excellent transition links. Pupils flourish through education which allows them to develop all their talents. The school hosts governors' training on behalf of the Trust, thereby contributing its clear expertise in church-school links to a wider group of schools. The links with the local Anglican and Methodist churches are excellent. These are crowned by the fledgling 'Connect Farnsfield' service, linking the school with its community through informal activities and worship. A new vicar approaches this opportunity with enthusiasm, leading the spiritual input with thought and vigour.

Driven by the vision, all staff are passionate about ensuring equality for all pupils, in access to all learning opportunities. Hence trips and visits enhance the curriculum and are carefully planned to meet the needs of all. Each pupil therefore feels of incredible value in the eyes of God, or as one explained, 'you feel God makes you different'. Classroom sessions deliver the curriculum, including RE, through strategies that involve role play, pupil initiatives, drama and lots of debate and discussion. RE contributes profoundly to spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, so that the pupils are able to ask and answer big questions. Pupils exercise reflection, particularly when meeting ideas contrary to their own, and healthy discussions and debates demonstrate the acceptance of the views of others. Pupils make good or better progress in all subjects including RE, as a result of the vision 'love to learn, learn to love'. Pupils with special needs make exceptional progress, and talk readily about their enjoyment of school. One pupil had so grown in confidence as to help lead collective worship; another despite significant impairment had attended all the school visits and residential. Support staff thoroughly assist in delivering the school's vision, both in and out of the classroom, treating all pupils with dignity and respect.

One teacher has responsibility for Christian distinctiveness, working closely with a governor and a team of staff to ensure Christian values are referred to at every opportunity. The programme for collective worship is broad and draws in an impressive number of providers, all linked to a clear programme based on the school's Christian values. The worship committee, run by pupils, is formally involved in evaluating worship, and their ideas are presented to leaders and the governors in reports which directly enhance future provision. Most pupils can describe a worship session which affected them and explain how it altered perspectives or attitudes for the better. Traditional Christian themes are covered such as Easter and Pentecost, with St Michael's Church most effectively used both for worship and learning activities. Parents admitted to being moved by the pupils leading worship and several explained this is awakening in them a quest for a deeper spiritual life. Reflection areas in each class successfully allow pupil response to issues covered in worship. These feature as requests for prayer or personal thoughts concerning pupils' own wellbeing. The special educational needs coordinator and her team are proactive in counselling pupils, so that bereavement, worry and wellbeing anxieties are all effectively treated as priorities.

RE enables all pupils to explore the school values and their own ideas critically and with maturity. Deep theological terminology such as the fall and salvation are understood by all pupils, so that they are equipped to debate showing high order understanding. All staff teach RE, with 'Understanding Christianity' as a useful resource to bring the subject to life. Hence pupils regard their RE as a learning priority, giving a background to the values they hold. Pupils describe how visits to places of worship of other faiths have increased their global awareness. All Year 5 pupils, for example, visit the St Philip's Centre in Leicester to discuss Judaism, Islam and the similarities and contrasts in multi-faith workshops. This is a school where lives are transformed because its vision and values enable pupils and adults to flourish. Strategies used to minister to its community are innovative and highly effective so that its vision is a springboard and model for excellent practice across the diocese.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

RE teaching and learning in the school is highly effective in all years. RE attainment is good or better for all pupils. The RE leader is exceptional, with relevant experience and a deep commitment to the subject. She is actively involved in leading innovation at school, diocesan and county levels. Pupils can identify strengths and areas they must improve and how to go about it. Teaching is therefore highly effective.

Headteacher	Louise Carpenter
Inspector's name and number	David Shannon 617

