



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

## Staindrop Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Swan Wynd, Staindrop, Darlington, DL2 3NL

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**

**Excellent**

**The impact of collective worship**

**Excellent**

### School's vision

Our vision is founded on St Luke's Parable of the Sower. We are the rich soil that enables our children to develop deep roots and flourish. We aim to ensure that everyone grows to fulfil their potential. Our school provides an environment rooted in Christian values where learning, laughter and friendship are at the heart of everything we do.

Through God's love, we are the rich soil where roots grow and seeds flourish. Luke 8:4-15

### Key findings

- The distinctively Christian vision is understood, authentically articulated and lived out by all in the school community. It is so deeply embedded that it is the ordinary, everyday language for pupils, staff, leaders and governors. The impact of this on the flourishing of adults and pupils is extraordinary.
- Exceptional relationships are fostered and built up through a culture of warm acceptance, which transcends tolerance, thus enabling all to flourish.
- Governors and leaders are inspired by the vision and are ambitious for all members of the school community. Pupils and adults are known, understood, nurtured and cherished as unique individuals, so that all thrive.
- Invitational opportunities for deeply reflective and inclusive worship are provided. These afford rich moments of spiritual reflection whose impact is seen throughout and beyond school. These times are highly valued by adults and pupils and yield profound moments of personal development for all.
- Through exceptional leadership, high quality and inspirational religious education (RE) is provided. Pupils are empowered to explore and talk articulately and unapologetically about their own and others' beliefs.

### Areas for development

- Create strong, mutually enriching relationships with the new minister at St Mary's Church. This is to further develop the already excellent partnership so that school and church continue to serve each other deeply and meaningfully.
- Inspired by the vision, enhance opportunities to serve others as courageous advocates of change so flourishing occurs beyond the school.

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

Vision-led collaborative leadership has a transformative impact on the whole school community and beyond. The distinctively Christian vision is promoted by leaders at all levels and is understood and articulated by all. It is based on the Bible story of the parable of the sower. This provides an authentic link with the school's original context and principles to provide education for labourers in a farming community. Whilst the school now serves a more diverse population, the vision acknowledges this foundation. Leaders make bold decisions to ensure the deeply embedded vision has a remarkable impact on the flourishing of all. The impact of the vision is outstandingly powerful as it is naturally woven into the aspirational language of everyone. 'The rich soil is the school and we are the seed,' one pupil commented, and an adult stated 'We're all about flourishing here.'

The living out of the vision inspires pupils to grow and improve and prepares older pupils for transition to their next school. There is a rich weaving of the vision throughout every aspect of school. The resulting impact is on the whole child, in mind, in body and in spirit. The exceptionally strong headteacher and deputy headteacher model the vision by inspiring, nurturing and enabling all to flourish. Staff relish, and thrive on, the rich variety of opportunities for their development invested in by aspirational leaders. Within the image of the rich soil of the vision, future Church school leaders are grown. As an outliving of this, the headteacher and staff not only serve other schools but humbly learn from them too. This bold use of school resources provides rich and meaningful opportunities for the vision to enhance lives within and beyond the school. The practical and deeply embedded nature of the vision is life-enhancing and life-changing. The rich intermingling of learning, laughter and friendship infuses and enhances all relationships and school life.

Despite a vacancy at the local parish church, an unwavering and mutually beneficial relationship has continued. There are also well-established links with other Anglican and Methodist churches and Durham Cathedral. There are an astounding number of examples of school and churches serving each other. These result in an exceptional variety of rich experiences, one example being the green spaces project. A very well developed and mutually supportive relationship exists with the Diocese. Bold, strategic decisions about supporting vulnerable pupils exemplify governors' exceptionally assiduous commitment and actions. Robust evaluation of the impact of the vision ensures the school maintains its original foundation.

The breadth of richly meaningful opportunities for all pupils demonstrates the exceptional ambition that leaders have. The impact of the school's Christian vision is seen in the way that all gain a deep understanding and consummately fulfill their potential. Middle leaders are contagiously passionate about their subjects. This spills over to enthuse staff and ultimately to inspire all pupils through broad and creative experiences. Pupils are successful because they know it is safe to make mistakes in lessons. A strong mutually beneficial relationship with the secondary school and with other partners, supports the quality of education. There is an innovative approach to planning that supports teachers. In the language of the vision, especially fertile soil and supplementary nutrients are provided by a skilled special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) team. Pupils who have additional needs, and their families, are happily surrounded by love, feel emotionally and physically safe and flourish. As one parent said 'the support from the school was like having big arms wrapped around you.'

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They coherently describe how the school's Christian vision creates nurturing relationships which generate a joy filled atmosphere. As a governor said, 'children know if they stray onto the rocky path there is a way back.' Through a powerful outliving of the vision, every pupil and adult is known and loved equally, with unswerving respect and acceptance. Everyone is cherished and nurtured and an exceptionally strong sense of wellbeing permeates the school. Individually and collectively there is a remarkably positive impact on the world. Even during difficult times, the school's Christian vision inspires everyone to be rich soil, serving and enabling others to flourish. There are a stunning number of social action projects which have life changing impact locally, nationally and internationally. One pupil was so inspired they went on to instigate a children's waiting room at a local hospital. Leaders promote aspiration in all, so that everyone is the best they can be both now and in the future. When pupils leave Staindrop School they are infused with the vision and associated values which are a guiding and life-lasting influence.

As an outliving of the school's Christian vision, collective worship has a transformational impact on all. Worship is a highly valued and deeply meaningful sacred time for all to come together in a busy day. The impact of sharing profound moments of reflection and silence promotes a potent sense of belonging. Families treasured the virtual worships during lockdowns, as these created an intense feeling of coming together. Pupils can identify tangible

opportunities where they can follow Jesus' teachings and notably described a sense that God is everywhere. This drives their sense of doing God's work to serve the school and community. Worship helps people along their own faith journey. This includes some who chose to be confirmed as a direct result of their experience at Staindrop. As one adult said, 'Since I've been here my faith has grown.' Worship inspires even the very youngest children to compassionate and practical acts of kindness which enhance relationships. Pupils regularly plan and lead worship and the impact of their natural language has a profound effect on their peers. There are abundant resources and rich opportunities for prayer and reflection. A highly sophisticated understanding of spirituality exists. Many talk of the very special individual and shared moments of spirituality experienced in school.

Pupils leave school with a highly developed knowledge of religion and belief. The impact of the rich soil in the schools Christian vision is evident in the blossoming of pupils. They learn to discuss challenging and searching big questions in a safe environment. RE stimulates pupils to reflect deeply about how religion and belief can impact on their own moral framework now and in the future. A culture of learning means that pupils' developing interests are admirably catered for by teachers' skillful adaptation of learning sequences. The deeply embedded assessment, moderation and tracking systems ensure that teachers expertly enable pupils to flourish.

The transformative impact of the distinctively Christian vision is evident to all who attend or visit Staindrop.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	23 June 2022	URN	114226
Date of previous inspection	23 June 2015		
School status	voluntary controlled	NOR	172
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese	Durham		
Headteacher	Steven Whelerton		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with 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)	A significant number of pupils come from out of catchment.		
Inspector's name	Janet Tringham	No.	C1816