

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Porter Croft Church of England Primary Academy

Address	Pomona St, Sharrow, Sheffield S11 8JN		
Date of inspection	11 March 2020	Status of school	Academy inspected as voluntary aided
Diocese	Sheffield	URN	139986

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	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Porter Croft is a primary school with 211 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above national averages. The school, as the Koinonia Academies Trust, gained academy status in June 2013.

The school's Christian vision

To be a truly inclusive Academy community where the needs of all learners are met within a stimulating and challenging learning environment which is underpinned by Christian values.

- 'Together we are Porter Croft': Koinonia affirms individuality and togetherness
- The love of God, and given by God, is translated into compassion and justice
- Diversity is celebrated, building a culture of tolerance and respect
- We strive to ensure each child achieves their full potential
- An enriched and thankful curriculum leads us into depth and wisdom

Key findings

- The distinctively Christian vision and values create a cohesive community in which pupils and adults flourish. They bring unity within a highly diverse context. Attitudes to learning are positive and pupils are spiritually aware. Leaders are innovative and deep-thinking in their approach.
- The vision for a stimulating and challenging learning environment, where pupils learn Christian ideas about koinonia and compassion, results in an exceptionally broad and creative curriculum. This is supported by a wide range of visits and visitors and enables pupils to make good academic progress. The way in which the school nurtures vulnerable pupils results in exceptional progress for pupils with additional needs. The valuing of pupils' views is a hallmark of the school.
- Collective worship is inclusive and inspirational. It affirms the school's vision and values. Pupils are regularly involved in planning and leading, though usually with the support of teachers. Leaders recognise its central importance and have some idea of its strengths, though self-evaluation does not at present consider a wider range of views.
- Pupils benefit greatly from RE lessons that promote discussion and consideration of deeper questions. Progress is excellent and subject knowledge is strong. This adds significantly to their spiritual development.

Areas for development

- Further extend the monitoring of the impact of collective worship so that a greater range of views, including those of pupils, is taken into account to inform planning.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop and increase their role in planning and leading collective worship, so that they become leaders in promoting the Christian vision. Extend these opportunities to a wider range of pupils.
- Seek ways to widen pupil engagement in social action, both locally and further afield, so they have greater opportunities to become advocates for change.

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

The most striking feature of this school is how the distinctive Christian vision, rooted in the biblical principle of *koinonia* and expressed in togetherness, results in a deeply inclusive community. This central idea permeates its daily life and gives purpose to its actions. Pupils and adults not only understand this principle but live it out in a way that successfully brings cohesion to a significantly diverse community. Pupils explain that the vision is based on Jesus' fellowship with his disciples, and that it is about working together and not judging others. Teachers consistently ask pupils to reflect on this with the result that teamwork, discussion and the sharing and valuing of each other's opinions are noticeable characteristics of lessons and activities. The impact of the vision is seen in excellent pupil attitudes. They speak of the need to 'forgive each other and learn from our mistakes' and explain that the school family has no discrimination on any grounds. These attitudes are encouraged and reinforced by a policy of restorative practice and by events such as 'Black History month' during which pupils learn about tolerance and respect. The vision is worked out through a range of Christian values, such as compassion, thankfulness and humility. Pupils learn to reflect on these values using the 'door, mirror, candle, window' strategy, helping them to make positive choices and to recognise qualities in themselves and in others. They also associate these values with Bible passages. They speak of the thankfulness demonstrated by the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with perfume and identify humility in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Pupils' consideration for others leads them to support a range of charitable activities. They sometimes act independently in response to their concerns for ecological issues and are active in promoting good practice within school. However, taking independent action as agents for change is an area for further development.

Leaders and governors have succeeded in creating a school community where adults and pupils are flourishing both academically and spiritually. It is founded on Christian principles whilst reflecting the diverse local context. As a single-school trust, the academy values mirror those of the school. The working relationship with the parish churches is highly supportive and creative. The clarity with which senior leaders, governors and church representatives express the shared vision enables them to make key decisions and to be innovative in their practice. For example, the frequency with which pupils visit a wide range of places of worship of different faiths, and interact with faith leaders, brings an added dimension to their understanding. The choices that governors make are driven by the vision, such as in prioritising spending on teaching assistants to support pupils who are disadvantaged or vulnerable. These actions demonstrate a commitment to valuing everyone. The impact is clearly shown in the good academic results. Despite a range of challenging factors, pupils' progress is largely in line with national averages and there is little difference between those who are disadvantaged and those who are not. Where leaders have any concern, for instance in some aspects of early phonics, they take prompt and appropriate action such as visiting other schools for advice on resources and best practice. Staff benefit from professional development and training, despite financial constraints, including opportunities to develop their understanding of church school education. Teachers have progressed to leadership roles in other church schools and recently qualified teachers are encouraged to move into roles of responsibility. The deputy headteacher has been observed by colleagues from other schools through the Teacher Research Groups scheme. Governors are diligent in monitoring the impact of the school vision and measures they have taken. This includes discussions with pupils.

Collective worship is an integral part of the school day and affirms the vision and values. While being fundamentally Christian in its format and content, it is also inclusive and invitational. It is supported by a range of visitors, including innovative shared presentations by the vicar and a leader from the local mosque. Open the Book sessions, led by a team from the parish, help pupils to grow in their biblical knowledge. Worship provides a space for both pupils and adults to reflect and consider important questions, including those drawn from Bible stories. For instance, an updated version of the Good Samaritan parable prompted pupils to comment that 'he showed compassion and respect' and to consider how they would respond in similar circumstances. Members of the school council lead acts of worship with enthusiasm, although they are not given autonomy in planning and leading, and there are few opportunities for other pupils to be involved. Pupils gain an understanding of prayer through its use in worship, including saying the school prayer and those they have written themselves. Pupils and adults also benefit from worship in church, especially for festivals, and the partnership between the church and school extends to events such as the Easter Experience. Leaders gather feedback from pupils in informal ways, but more formal monitoring of the impact of collective worship is less well developed both in its scope and in the range of people involved. School leaders and governors have successfully encouraged a parent-led initiative to develop a monthly church meeting in the school.

Through a well-structured programme for RE, pupils develop confidence in their subject knowledge and have a wealth of opportunities to engage with matters of belief and practice linked to Christianity and other faiths. A key feature is the ability of teachers to present material at different levels, ensuring that pupils grow in their understanding and develop maturity in their responses. As an example, in studying the Easter story, younger children can recall the main events and discuss the emotions of those involved, while older pupils discuss the deeper implications of events and relate them to their own experience. This approach leads to pupils being able to offer more profound thoughts, such as suggesting that without the resurrection, the rest of the events leading up to Easter might have less meaning. Lessons are well-paced and teachers are skilled at drawing out pupils' opinions. It is noticeable that pupils give each other credit for their contributions, even when they might disagree. This attitude is encouraged by Godly Play sessions in which pupils are confident in sharing their views. The subject leader has successfully introduced the Understanding Christianity materials, which complement the units of work on other faiths based on the agreed syllabus. This has involved staff training, team teaching and regular monitoring of progress, both in terms of lesson delivery and impact on learning. The strong focus on knowledge and vocabulary has led to pupils confidently sharing their understanding, as demonstrated for instance by their ability to explain key features of Sikhism.



The effectiveness of RE is excellent

Effective teaching consistently challenges pupils' thinking and encourages them to respond to key questions of faith and belief. It also results in strong subject knowledge. The progress of individual pupils is assessed regularly using key concepts. This shows that progress in RE is excellent. This is supported by evidence from lessons which indicates that pupils have excellent knowledge, understanding and attitudes to their learning.

Headteacher	Cath Thomas
Inspector's name and number	Malcolm Price 627