

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Swithun's Church of England Primary Academy	
Address	Grove Street, Retford, DN22 6LD
School vision	
At St Swithun's, we are inspired by Jesus' character and message of love and forgiveness. Love bears all things - regardless of what we need to face. Love believes all things - looks for the best in every individual. Love hopes all things - stays strong in belief during difficult times. Love endures all things - through every circumstance. (1 Corinthians 13: 7). 'Valuing individuals, aspiring and achieving, together in faith'.	
School strengths	
• The Christian vision at St Swithun's clearly serves the needs of its community. Leaders and staff create a culture of love and care that includes everyone. This enables pupils to flourish. • Relationships across the school are strengthened by a deep understanding of the school vision. It creates a culture in which the wellbeing of pupils and adults is enhanced. • The curriculum is designed effectively so that individuals thrive from their own start points. Adults work tirelessly to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils aspire to succeed. • Collective worship develops spiritual growth for pupils and adults through reflection and discussion. Partnerships with local church communities enrich this provision. • Religious education (RE) is well managed and delivered enthusiastically by teachers. Pupils demonstrate a strong knowledge of Christian concepts and are motivated to share their own beliefs.	
Areas for development	
• Embed opportunities in curriculum plans for pupils to deepen their spiritual growth. • Develop the RE curriculum to increase a clearer knowledge of diverse cultures, both locally and internationally.	
Inspection findings	
The Christian vision of St Swithun's Academy is designed to meet the needs of all members of its community. It recognises the importance of hope for the pupils it serves. Rooted in biblical theology, it is centred on the importance of loving relationships, which are clearly seen. Pupils and adults are proud of their school and flourish in its culture of care and support. A bespoke 'character curriculum' runs through many aspects of daily life. This enables pupils to live out a collection of Christian values and character traits that support their learning and development. Leaders and staff know pupils well and carefully meet the needs of each individual. Their visibility before and after school strengthens relationships with families, widening a community based on love. The Christian vision works in harmony with the Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust. This empowers leaders to make ambitious decisions that move the school forward. Through the Trust, adults access motivational	

professional development as well as support for their own wellbeing. A team of dedicated governors monitors the effectiveness of the vision. This ensures leaders have a collective understanding of strengths and areas for growth.

Positive relationships are well established across the school. They flourish as there is a deep understanding of the Christian vision amongst pupils and adults. The value of forgiveness is deeply understood as incidents are efficiently resolved. Older pupils train as 'breathing buddies', leading exercises for classes after breaktimes so that everyone is ready to learn effectively. Certificates for 'gospel values' are awarded for those who model exemplary behaviour. Parents rightly praise the warm response they get from adults when dealing with difficulties. Leaders, including members of the Trust, ensure that mental health is a priority in their plans. Funding for a specialist wellbeing mentor demonstrates the commitment made to enabling everyone to live well together. They have a visible presence on site each day which supports families through genuine care and compassion. Investment in therapies such as emotional literacy support, encourages those with social and emotional needs. A united staff team values how well leaders respectfully listen and collaborate. An open-door policy demonstrates empathy for their mental health and wellbeing.

Leaders and staff work closely to create an inspiring and challenging curriculum. Collaboration within the Trust provides high quality training and support. Linked to the vision, endurance and resilience are promoted as learning skills. Motivational trips provide enlightening experiences, such as an opportunity to visit the seaside. Special 'curriculum days' promote a love of learning. 'Number day' is celebrated by pupils, keen to share their maths skills with parents, who are invited to attend as guests. However, planned moments for reflection are limited. This means that spiritual growth is restricted. Strong partnerships with a local museum create opportunities to learn outdoors and develop art skills in a motivational environment. Reward ceremonies and celebrations fulfil a vision to 'achieve together in faith'. In meeting the needs of every pupil, adults use nurture and care in ensuring they are ready to learn each day. Leaders ensure resources are directed to support those with SEND. Specialist staff make learning accessible, allowing them to flourish despite their challenges. A special nurture room provides a place of sanctuary to promote positive mental health. A rich provision of extra-curricular activities expands skills in sport and music. This demonstrates the effectiveness of an inclusive and far-reaching curriculum.

Collective worship is valued by pupils and adults as a special time each day. Uplifting and joyful experiences are planned carefully by leaders. Guidance from the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham enriches worship times. Adults and pupils contribute to planning and leadership as responsibility is shared. This unites the school community as they are invited to worship together. Moments of stillness and calm promotes spiritual growth. The use of imaginative images at the start sparks discussions about Christian values and what they mean for pupils. Powerful music and singing expresses joy and appreciation for God's love as part of the school vision. Reactions and thoughts are recorded in worship journals in classrooms. This enables further reflection that leads to a deep understanding of the teachings of Jesus. Partnerships with three local Churches enriches the provision of worship. Frequent visitors use role play and drama to bring Bible stories to life. Pupils also recognise the value of spiritual moments as they celebrate festivals together at Church.

Pupils at St Swithun's confidently demonstrate a clear knowledge of injustice. Through pupil voice teams, they develop leadership skills in running activities to tackle local issues. A project to support poverty in the local area generates food and essential items for those most in need. Pupils learn about sustainability as they grow plants as gifts for nursing homes in the community. A wider appreciation of global injustice grows through links with schools in Ghana. This promotes a desire for them to be agents of change in raising awareness of the lifestyles of vulnerable families. These actions are underpinned by the vision to love one another.

An effective curriculum for RE is designed and implemented by enthusiastic leaders. Plans are tailored to meet the needs of individuals as well as appreciating the school's local context. The subject has high priority in the curriculum and pupils respect its value. Across the school, lessons are sequenced and by revisiting topics, pupils gain confidence in sharing their expanding knowledge. Challenging lessons equip them to explore concepts such as reincarnation and explore meaning in festivals. For example, learning how Apostles spoke new languages at Pentecost builds links to other curriculum subjects. Where lessons begin with a 'big question', debates and discussion empower pupils to investigate a variety of answers. This means that they grow spiritually as they evaluate their own beliefs. A range of religions and worldviews are explored throughout the curriculum. This enables pupils to make comparisons and understand the differences between themselves and others. However, there are insufficient opportunities to explore diverse cultures in the local community. This limits growth in learning from first hand experiences. Governors and Trust leaders monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the RE curriculum and work with the Diocese to secure creative changes. This also includes the provision of creative professional development for staff. This means that teachers make improvements to further support growth in RE.

The inspection findings indicate that St Swithun's Church of England Primary Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	3 July 2024	URN	145447
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	101
Diocese	Southwell & Nottingham		
MAT/Federation	Southwell and Nottingham Multi Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Paul Charly		
Chair	Philip Gawthorpe		
Inspector	Keith Farquhar	No.	2143