Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Denby Free Church of England VA Primary School

Vision

Imagine. Believe. Achieve. Shine. “Let your light shine” Matthew 5:16

Strengths

- The Christian vision is deeply integrated into both learning and extracurricular activities, promoting well-rounded development and flourishing.
- A compassionate culture ensures that the emotional, spiritual, and mental health needs of the school community are consistently addressed. This creates a supportive environment reflecting the biblical call to ‘carry each other's burdens’.
- Strong partnerships with local church and faith communities enrich pupils' understanding of diverse beliefs.
- Collective worship drives spiritual growth and builds community. This is a priority for the school.
- A well-structured religious education (RE) curriculum fosters understanding and respect for Christianity alongside other faiths.

Development Points

- Develop a more secure understanding of the nature, language and tools of spirituality across the school. This enables people to express spiritual ideas with confidence and enriches the life journeys of everyone in the school community.
- Create clearer systems and more regular opportunities for leaders and governors to evaluate Denby’s church school life.

Inspection Findings

Denby Free Church of England Primary School is in a new season of growth as a Church school. Led with deeply held commitment to its Christian foundations, the school community has energy and positivity about its future. A recent refresh of the school's Christian values, alongside changes to leadership, means the vision is more confidently articulated by all. Respectful and trusting relationships are at the heart of the school. The vision and accompanying Bible verse create a strong sense of unity. All ages express a powerful sense of belonging. Families trust the school. Staff, in turn, honour parents and pupils, giving time and support with generosity and grace. Pupils cherish each other and their teachers. Support staff work in close partnership with teachers. All roles are equally valued.

The Christian vision, 'Let your light shine', guides spiritual, academic, and personal growth throughout the school's curriculum. Based on biblical teachings, the vision shapes a curriculum that emphasises both faith and the natural world. Teachers expertly weave opportunities for spiritual development into rich and varied learning experiences, ensuring that academic success is a core focus. With a can-do attitude fostered by staff, pupils are motivated to achieve and know that their efforts are recognised. For example, the school celebrates with 'Flourish and Shine' merits in the church every Friday. The school prioritises support for vulnerable pupils, tailoring assistance to individual needs. Access to counselling services and mentorship programs creates a nurturing environment where every pupil can thrive. Staff are trained in areas such as autism advocacy to better recognise and address the challenges faced by specific learning needs. As a result, pupils with special educational needs (SEND) are encouraged to develop their talents through a wider curriculum offer. This enables them to flourish academically and believe in themselves.

The RE curriculum is challenging, diverse, and well-organised for mixed-age classes. It helps pupils grow spiritually and academically, while encouraging them to explore big questions and different worldviews. This approach helps pupils build a strong understanding of biblical and religious ideas over time. High quality resources make lessons more engaging, and teachers receive training to improve their skills. The Derby Diocese provides training for the RE subject leader and teachers. This results in strong teaching and learning, as shown in lessons and pupil workbooks. Teachers use various methods to engage pupils in deep thinking about religion. For example, Year 6 pupils were challenged in their work comparing creation and evolution theories. Visits to places of worship help pupils learn about different faiths. Assessment is well-embedded in the curriculum, and there are systems in place for monitoring RE. However, there are few opportunities to evaluate assessment practices for continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

Collective worship at Denby Free is deeply influenced by its Christian vision and its Anglican foundation. The vision shapes worship with a structure that focuses on gathering, engaging, responding, and sending. This empowers pupils to live out their faith and make a positive impact in the world. Partnerships with the local parish church greatly enhance worship by offering support and connections with the larger Christian community. Pupils are empowered as they act as worship leaders alongside clergy or teachers. Watching their peers, younger pupils are inspired to engage more meaningfully in their spiritual journey. Opportunities to join in music, prayer, and Makaton signing are a strength. They directly support the vision by creating an inclusive and engaging worship experience. Spirituality is understood as a connection with the divine, and as a result, the spiritual life of both pupils and staff is enriched. Whilst staff and leaders recognise that spirituality shapes life at school, there is no common language to express this. This limits the extent that pupils' spiritual growth can be planned, and its impact across the curriculum evaluated.

The school's Christian vision actively promotes a culture of justice and responsibility through its emphasis on respect for creation and community involvement. Pupils gain a sense of responsibility and stewardship as they

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join in with environmental initiatives and sustainability projects. This cultivates a sense of responsibility that equips them to make ethical decisions Community cohesion is a strength, with both pupil and staff voices actively sought. The school embeds the vision through a motto, 'Our light shines even brighter if we are helping others to shine too'. This fosters a culture of empathy and compassion. Strong ties with the local church help the school support the wellbeing of pupils, staff, and families. Projects like litter picking and food bank support during harvest celebrations show this commitment. The parent volunteer group plays a crucial role in fundraising. This creates additional opportunities to reinforce a spirit of justice and responsibility within the school. `

The vision fosters a culture where adults and pupils are treated with dignity, creating an environment in which everyone can thrive. Wellbeing is central to the school's ethos. Initiatives such as protective behaviour training enhance emotional resilience among pupils and staff. School leaders target resources directly to vulnerable pupils and their families. This targeted approach enhances access to educational opportunities but also strengthens family engagement. A mentoring system pairs older pupils with younger ones, providing guidance and companionship. Staff value the support available for their wellbeing and the encouragement for their professional development. This enhances their effectiveness and promotes a just environment. Through these efforts, the school ensures that every member of the community feels valued. This reinforces a culture of care and dignity.

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National Society for Education
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Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Church Street, Denby Village, Derby, Derbyshire, DE5 8PH		
Date	02/10/2024	URN	112881
Type of school	Maintained	No. of pupils	114
Diocese	Derby		
MAT/Federation	N/A		
Headteacher	Jen Clarke		
Chair of Governors	Lyndsay Reast		
Inspector	Paulette Osborne		

