



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

St Aidan's Church of England Memorial Primary School	
Address	Loyalty Road, Harltepool, TS25 5BA

### School vision

‘Growing together with love’  
We aim to encourage every unique member of our school family to flourish and grow together through the unconditional love of God. To feel rooted, loved, peaceful and protected in our school family and in God’s strong arms.  
‘We love because He first loved us’ (1 John 4:19)

### School strengths

- Driven by the school's vision of unconditional love, relentless support for pupils and families gives hope and enables lives to be changed in the most difficult of circumstances.
- Impactful and inclusive collective worship provides a bedrock of support for pupils' and adults' everyday lives.
- School is a peaceful family where pupils treat each other with respect and value one another's differences.
- In line with the school’s Christian vision, strong partnerships, including with the Trust and Diocese, provide a culture of continuous growth that enable all to flourish.
- Pupils are passionate about making a positive difference. School has fostered a culture in which pupils' voices matter. As a result, they are empowered to make a real difference to their community.

### Areas for development

- Refine key knowledge, including vocabulary to be taught at each stage in religious education (RE) so that all learning is broken down into small, sequential steps.
- Improve the systematic monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the Academy Council so that it is assured that the school’s vision is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.
- Ensure a shared understanding of the school's approach to spiritual development so that all are supported to communicate their ideas.

### Inspection findings

St Aidan’s is a school built on love. This love is not just for pupils as unique individuals made in the image of God but also for their families. The school’s work to support families in some of the most difficult of circumstances is enabling lives to be changed. This work, driven by the school’s Christian vision, enables positive change that flows beyond the school gates into the community.

Leaders at all levels are passionate about the school’s role within the community. Their cohesive and consistent work creates an environment in which pupils and adults feel rooted within a ‘safe haven’. School support wraps around pupils and their families so that they are empowered and ambitious.



Breakfast at St Aidan's is a nurturing experience where, through effective relationships, pupils are prepared well for learning.

Skilled adults are excellent role models and their influence can be seen in how pupils behave towards one another. As one pupil aptly put it, 'adults show respect by loving us for who we are.' In times of need, the school community is a steadfast support for one another.

The recent work to refine the vision has resulted in a shared understanding within the school community. This has ensured that it lies at the heart of decision making. Pupils proudly share the 'St Aidan's Tree of Life' and can explain how it reflects the meaningful relationships within school. New leaders are well supported by the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust and by the Diocese. The school is proactive in sourcing training and likewise shares expertise with other schools. There are some effective systems in place to monitor the impact of the school's vision. These systems are not fully in place for the Academy Council. As a result, they are not assured that the school's work as a Church school is enabling all to flourish. This is particularly true for the evaluation of RE and collective worship.

The school's curriculum provides rich opportunities. These include a wide range of intentionally planned experiences to support pupils' spiritual development. Class-based reflection areas are designed with the needs of each class in mind and are used well by pupils. In Early Years, these areas ignite curiosity and inspire awe and wonder. This is also true of St Aidan's forest school where pupils relish the opportunity to explore the wonders of God's creation. As pupils grow, these areas support them when facing challenge, including preparation for the transition to secondary school. Currently, the language for spiritual development has not been shared widely. Consequently, the school's approach to spiritual development identified by leaders is not known and understood by all.

Collective worship is highly inclusive and is an important time for the whole school to gather as a family. The school's worship council is supported by members of the local church to share Bible stories with peers. As a result of effective monitoring, changes have been made to the structure of worship which has enhanced its impact on pupils. Collective worship is led well with effective support from the Trust and Diocese to develop teacher skills and confidence. Pupils are clear that collective worship impacts on the decisions they make on the playground and their desire to help others. Opportunities to reflect are highly valued as moments of calm in an otherwise busy day.

Pupils, including the most vulnerable, make good progress in RE. Lessons are engaging and teachers plan opportunities to recall and make links to prior knowledge. This starts in the Early Years where children are offered opportunities to explore religious beliefs through adult-led sessions. They consolidate this learning through rich opportunities within the environment. Having recently learned about Diwali, children were keen to make cards for a child in their class. Pupils in Year 6 debate answers to life's 'big questions' respectfully, drawing on concepts that they had been taught previously. Pupils make accurate use of key religious vocabulary in their responses. The curriculum does not outline the key knowledge and vocabulary to be taught in sufficient detail. As a result, leaders are not monitoring the impact of the curriculum with precision. They are not assured that prior learning is built upon in small, sequential steps across units.

At St Aidan's Church of England Memorial Primary School, pupils are taught that they can be a force for good. The school curriculum makes explicit links between learning and using new skills to support others. For example, pupils apply their knowledge of healthy eating and cookery to make soup for the local community kitchen. Pupils are clear that each and every person is unique and that everyone deserves a chance to be successful. They also recognise that some may need more help to achieve this than others. Pupils are keen to share their ideas to help those in need of a little extra support. Their contributions to school leadership groups and their handwritten prayers show a real

desire for change for those less fortunate. They are confident that their proposed plans to clean up the streets surrounding their school will be listened to as their ‘voices are important.’

School leaders, including the Academy Council and Trust Board ensure that pupil and staff wellbeing is at the heart of decision making. Staff are invested in and benefit from shared expertise and development opportunities. Pupils behave well towards one another, underpinned by tolerance and mutual respect. This inclusive school is a welcoming and peaceful place where pupils and adults feel secure to be who they are. St Aidan’s is a school where all are accepted without judgement and challenged to be the best they can be.

The inspection findings indicate that St Aidan’s Church of England Memorial Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	21 November 2023	URN	144902
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	346
Diocese	Durham;Newcastle		
MAT/Federation	Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust		
Headteacher	Gillian Hood		
Chair	John Taylor		
Inspector	Vikki Wilson	No.	2249