

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

<b>Foston Church of England VC Primary School</b>	
Address	Foston, York, YO60 7QB
School vision	
<p>Love, Learn and Grow Together</p> <p>Our commitment to exploring sustainability, affirming diversity, embracing community and inspiring creativity. Our core Fruit of the Spirit values of love, joy, patience and self-control are rooted in the words of St Paul (Galatians 5 v 22-23). These Christian values are fostered in the pupils and staff, building an ethos where all can flourish.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foston’s Christian vision and values are understood and cherished. They drive daily life in school, enabling pupils and staff to love, learn and grow together.</li> <li>• There is a relentless commitment to include and nurture everyone. Support for pupils who may need extra help is exceptional, enabling pupils to flourish together within a loving school environment.</li> <li>• Partnerships with the federation, the wider community and the diocese are strong. These relationships, championed by leaders, enhance the well-being of pupils and adults alike.</li> <li>• Rich and varied collective worship unites the school. It joyfully inspires pupils and staff to live out their Christian vision and put their school values into practice.</li> <li>• Extensive enrichment opportunities celebrate pupils’ unique gifts and interests, enabling them to question, learn and flourish with confidence.</li> </ul>	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the recent development of spirituality across the curriculum and in worship. This is to maximise planned opportunities for pupils and adults to be curious, ask questions and flourish spiritually.</li> <li>• Develop pupils’ awareness of justice and inequality. This is to support them in understanding how their actions can make a positive and sustainable impact on the world.</li> <li>• Refine the key knowledge taught in religious education (RE). This is to deepen pupils' understanding of diversity within religious belief and practice, including Christianity as a worldwide faith.</li> </ul>	
Inspection findings	
<p>Deeply rooted in its rural context, Foston is a welcoming and joyful school. The Christian vision to ‘love, learn and grow together’ is known and celebrated. Core values of love, joy, patience and self-control, reflecting the biblical Fruits of the Spirit, permeate relationships. They drive the decisions leaders take. Staff and families love the school and share inspirational experiences of belonging. For example, pupils who have found a fresh start and new hope at the school. Pupils understand the</p>	

vision because they see it lived out day to day. As a result, there is a tangible culture of inclusion and care, in which everyone can flourish.

Leaders, including governors, share a vision led determination to improve the life chances of pupils. It is at the heart of the decisions they make. They know the school well and conscientiously guide its strategic development. They have taken some brave, ethical decisions to create a sustainable future for the school. These include extending the federation, supporting other schools and the successful deployment of new leadership and pastoral roles. In doing so, they have ensured that staff and pupils, in and beyond their own community, continue to flourish. While leaders reflect the vision in their work, robust systems to capture its impact are still developing.

Pupils and families are loved at Foston. We are 'one big family' is a frequent and accurate refrain. Teachers know pupils very well and making the most of every opportunity is constantly to the fore. It is seen in their determination to see everyone as an individual, with unique gifts and talents. Pupils value this approach, knowing 'if you don't have encouragement, you won't be able to grow'. A culture of kindness, openness and honesty has created a positive partnership between home and school. A recent pastoral support role has further strengthened relationships with families. This is reflected in improved attendance. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported exceptionally well. A number of pupils who did not flourish in other settings are succeeding at Foston alongside their peers.

The curriculum nurtures pupils, fostering curiosity and creativity. This is because the vision, values and commitment to sustainability, diversity, community and creativity are woven throughout. Combined, these create a breadth of learning opportunities. Leaders know the curriculum is more than subjects. The wide range of enrichment activities are impressive. Whether at clubs, theme days, on visits or talking with visitors, pupils develop socially and emotionally, alongside their academic learning. Work on developing spirituality across school is underway. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on the vision and values, ask questions and enjoy the natural world. These approaches are making a difference. One pupil shared how self-control enabled her 'not to give up on faith and dreams, but always keep going'. A school wide approach to spiritual development across the whole curriculum and through collective worship is not yet in place. Some opportunities are missed and planning to support pupils' spiritual development is not as effective as it could be.

Staff value the opportunities they have for professional development across the federation, which equips them in their roles effectively. They are a cohesive team, modelling the school's values in their support both professionally and personally. Wellbeing is high because of their care and dedication to each other. New staff, like pupils, are quickly welcomed into this loving family. Leaders have made informed decisions to reduce staff workload and to support their mental health, such as taking planning time out of school. As a result, staff feel valued and cared for. Foston's vision of embracing community is more than words. It is lived through many mutually beneficial partnerships. Links with other schools, the parish and support agencies are intentional and extensive. They enhance ongoing learning and growing. The school vision shapes how adults and pupils understand justice and personal responsibility. Many staff work across schools and are strong role models. Pupils engage with opportunities to care for their school and the natural world. Older pupils support younger ones and develop personal responsibility. They know how to be a good friend and the ways their actions in school affect each other. For example, pupils were inspired by welcoming refugees and voting on a range of school charities. These activities allow pupils to respond compassionately to issues. They have very limited understanding of injustice in the wider world. Therefore, opportunities to understand how their words and actions can bring about sustainable change, whether locally and globally, are lost.

Collective worship is joyful and inclusive. It binds the school family together. It reminds them how

their vision and values help every individual to grow and to thrive. Pupils understand that worship is for everybody, whether they have a religious faith or not. Foston is a school that loves to sing. Pupils and adults join in together with enthusiasm. Stories make connections with the vision, values and their everyday lives. For example, how Jesus calming the storm helps them to trust. Pupils are actively involved in the leading of worship. They are passionate about doing so, carefully planning their contributions and leading prayers independently. As the vision and values are so well known, discussion from worship impacts on school life beyond worship itself. Staff and pupils recognise how times of stillness and calm 'can make you question and look at things in a new way'. They describe beautifully how this daily gathering uplifts them and provides meaningful moments of reflection, which enrich their own spirituality. Close partnerships with the local Anglican and Methodist churches strengthen worship further. As the school does not have a hall, these opportunities to come together and celebrate as a whole school community are precious.

Leaders are improving the impact of RE. Most pupils say they enjoy lessons. They are confident that the classroom is a safe place for them to express their own ideas and thoughts. They listen to the opinions of others, knowing 'we can believe different things but still have to respect each other'. Working alongside the RE lead and the diocese, staff are well supported. Units of work have been carefully sequenced to balance a range of faiths and world views. There are many opportunities to encounter living faith. These include visitors from faith communities into school and regularly visit places of worship. These enrich pupils' understanding of religious practice and festivals. The refining of the key knowledge pupils need and how this builds over time, is at an early stage. This limits some pupils' recall of learning. As a result, pupils do not have an understanding of diversity within religions, including of Christianity as a worldwide faith.

Foston's vision led, shared determination that everyone will flourish makes loving, learning and growing together a daily opportunity for all.

The inspection findings indicate that the school is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	23 January 2024	URN	121492
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	66
Diocese	York		
MAT/Federation			
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Moore		
Chair	Corinne Cross		
Inspector	Simone Bennett	No.	949