

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy, Lancaster

Vision

We aim for all members of our Christian community to flourish spiritually, academically and personally so that they can live life in all its fullness.

'I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness' John 10:10

At Ripley, we realise our vision through our Christian values of faith, hope, love and service. Our commitment to the Christian faith and these values helps create our harmonious, kind and considerate school.

'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.' 1 Corinthians 13:13

Strengths

- Ripley's deeply known and loved Christian vision is driving the actions of members of the school community at all levels. The vision was recently effectively refined to be even more pertinent. Pupils and staff recognise the deep value that it adds to their lives and draw from it in challenging times.
- Collective worship is fundamental to school life. The carefully considered themes bind together all aspects of the school day. Inclusive and thought-provoking worship has a profound impact on the lives of pupils and adults. It gives them support and space to reflect and nurture their inner selves. The work of the chaplaincy is inspiring in terms of both spiritual and pastoral support for all.
- The exceptional religious education (RE) curriculum is deep, rich and challenging. Sixth Form core RE is a particular strength. The ability to provide a safe space for pupils to explore and grapple with challenging religious and philosophical issues is notable.
- There is a tangible culture of care and support at Ripley. The priority given to inclusion and tailored support and interventions are a direct outworking of the Christian vision.
- The underpinning value of service enriches pupils' lives with meaningful opportunities for social action throughout their time at school. The Ripley Pledge and the graduated approach to Values Awards help to nurture pupils who ensure that others can also 'live life in all its fullness'.

Development Point

- Extend opportunities to share vision infused practice with wider partnerships. This is so that the impact of the Christian vision and the school's Christian distinctiveness extends beyond the immediate Ripley community.



Inspection Findings

The well-established and recently refined Christian vision and values are highly relevant to all members of the Ripley community. Staff and pupils understand them and their associated biblical roots, and it drives their actions. Pupils know that the vision is there for every part of their lives not just their academic studies. They recognise that 'who' they are becoming is as important as 'what' they are becoming. As leaders respond to their changing context, the vision has become even more focussed on the breadth of pupils' needs. The shared vision of Ripley and The Bay Learning Trust ensures that together the impact is compelling, one enhances the other. The deep commitment of the trust to the school is evident in the sharing of staff and resources. The work of the school and trust is profoundly vision driven, for the benefit of pupils and families of the area. Governors are well informed with regular reports from staff and pupils. This secures a culture of welcoming scrutiny both amongst governors and school leaders.

The breadth of the curriculum and co-curricular offer is rooted in the vision of flourishing. Consequently, pupils succeed in a wide range of qualifications, built on a rich Key Stage 3 education including both agriculture and horticulture. The supporting co-curricular offer is breathtaking. Clubs and activities change regularly and are monitored to ensure the widest possible range of pupils are taking part. They recognise this as a further opportunity to be the best versions of themselves and flourish. This is part of Ripley's commitment to 'life in all its fullness' for its community. There is an expansive understanding of spirituality in place. This allows those with a strong personal faith or none, to explore and understand their own spirituality with integrity. Pupils speak with confidence about spirituality as developing 'you on the inside'. They link their understanding of spirituality to the school's vision and recognise it across a broad range of curriculum areas. The school has considered each aspect of the curriculum and how pupils can demonstrate their spirituality both individually and collectively. Therefore, pupils confidently articulate where they experience spirituality across the curriculum and recognise spirituality as integral to all aspects of life.

Collective worship is at the centre of school life. Members of the school community experience a rich variety of prayer and reflection. Pupils and adults appreciate the range and depth of opportunities available to meet their individual spiritual needs. The diversity of inclusive worship from formal chapel services to form reflections ensures that members of the community can engage with integrity. Chapel services are a highlight for pupils and staff alike. Planning for worship is meticulous. Staff and pupils are exceptionally well-resourced to lead in a variety of contexts. The range of people contributing to this planning, including individual staff, departments and students is part of its strength. This all means that worship is extremely high quality and has a profound effect on pupils and adults alike. The inspiring work of the chaplaincy ensures that spirituality flows through all aspects of the school day. The chaplaincy is highly popular with students at social times and hosts a well-attended student-initiated prayer meeting. Worship is carefully monitored, and changes are made to respond to feedback. The spiritual life of Ripley is supported by strong links with local clergy, who host regular school services in their churches. This ensures that relationships between pupils and local churches are nurtured and enriches pupils' and adults' experience.

The values of faith, hope, love and service encourage pupils to live well, to serve others and make a difference. These are encapsulated in the Ripley Pledge and the Values Awards, which engage pupils of all ages. The theme of collective responsibility is deliberately taught through personal, social and health education, RE and collective worship. Responsibility along with justice is embedded throughout through the rest of the curriculum. There are numerous intentional opportunities for leadership experiences and pupil initiated social action. These include the Duke of Edinburgh Award, cadets, school council, a pupil-led Amnesty International club and the inspiring Eco Club. Therefore, pupils leave Ripley as active citizens with the confidence and skills to continue to make a difference in the wider world.



The RE curriculum is meticulously crafted to the Ripley context. It is continuously reviewed and improved. This means that pupils are inspired, challenged and curious. The range of faiths and worldviews studied have been carefully selected following consideration of the make-up of the locality. The approach to diversity within different religions is very effective. Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a global faith is deep and considered. The Key Stage 5 core RE programme is exemplary and highly engaging. The teaching method of lecture style input followed up by form tutor discussion is fruitful. The impact of this progressive and challenging RE curriculum means that pupils are well-informed, deeply engaged and profoundly thoughtful students of RE. Ripley leaders and the Bay Learning Trust have committed significant resources to ensure that the subject is prioritised and thrives. For example, they ensure that mock exams occur in the same venue as other core subjects to underline its status. Expert subject support and quality assurance is sourced from the diocese. This deep and significant partnership of trust and challenge has been instrumental in the culture of ongoing curriculum and departmental improvement.

As a result of the exceptional RE curriculum pupils make substantial and meaningful progress in their learning. The quality of teaching as seen at inspection and evidenced by significant internal and external quality assurance is consistently high. Consequently, academic standards are very strong, with pupils rightly being proud of their progress in RE. Assessment is a particular strength with precise and effective tools, that really prepare students for the writing stamina required in external exams. The highly pertinent assessment information gained is used to further target and develop teaching and learning. Teaching at all key stages is creative and stimulating, and therefore highly effective.

Flourishing personally is a core principle of the Christian vision and directs the actions of the school. Strategic appointments have been made to increase the capacity within the inclusion and support team. Mental health first aiders are available for pupils and adults. Consequently, pupils feel safe and that they have adults who can advocate for them. Families feel valued and therefore there are trusting relationships at all levels to work together. With calm classrooms and corridors, behaviour and attendance are of the highest standards. The vision flows through the pastoral work of Ripley including the involvement of clergy, the inspirational work of the chaplain and The Bridge. Staff wellbeing and personalised professional development is correctly described as transformational at Ripley. The Ripley Society ensures that staff have a voice, their feedback is acted upon, this has included reducing the number of meetings. The Ripley approach leads to a tangible culture of care and support for all, staff and pupils. It can be summarised as high expectations alongside high support. At Ripley pupils and adults are flourishing spiritually, academically and personally.

Information

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| Address | Ashton Road, Lancaster, LA1 4RS | | |
| Date | 17&18 October 2024 | URN | 136731 |
| Type of school | Academy Voluntary Aided | No. of pupils | 1741 |
| Diocese | Blackburn | | |
| MAT | The Bay Learning Trust | | |
| Executive Headteacher | Sally Kenyon | | |
| Acting Heads of School | Katie Benter Helen Best | | |
| Chair of Governors | Julie Hodgson | | |
| Chair of Trust | John Crewdson | | |
| Inspector | Ruth Houston | | |