



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

Houghton on the Hill Church of England Primary School	
Address	Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, LE7 9GD

### School vision

'My command is this: Love one another, as I have loved you'.  
John 15 v 12

Our school community believes a connection to God as the vine ensures our spiritual growth. Our vision as a school community is to strive to follow the example of Jesus to 'Love one another as I have loved you'.

As we learn to be more like Jesus, we hope to flourish spiritually, socially and academically.

In doing this, we will build positive and fruitful relationships, and strive to be the best we can be as individuals and an organisation, whilst developing the values of kindness, forgiveness, self-control, respect, courage and gratitude.

### School strengths

- Houghton's Christian vision of 'loving one another' is wholeheartedly lived out at every level. The school community is flourishing because they are embraced in a rich culture of compassion and great empathy.
- There is an exceptionally strong relationship between church and school. This seamless partnership enriches spiritual awareness and supports the school in many practical ways.
- Leaders epitomise the vision as they offer loving and valuable support through a wide range of mental health and wellbeing provision. This empowers many to reflect the same reciprocal love in how others are treated.
- Changemaker and ambassador roles contribute to a deep knowledge of the wider world and responsibility towards others. Loving others as you are loved is entrenched in school culture, prompting pupils to act and be agents of change.
- Religious education (RE) is well led. Pupils readily articulate its importance with maturity and a high level of religious literacy.

### Areas for development

- Strengthen carefully planned opportunities within the wider curriculum to embed the shared understanding and common language of spirituality. This will enhance and enrich spiritual flourishing.
- Create and develop physical areas to offer spaces for moments of reflection. This will contribute to a deepening spiritual awareness in the lives of individuals.

## Inspection findings

There is a poignant atmosphere of Christian love as you enter Houghton school. Reflecting the example of Jesus, this community embraces the vision of 'loving each other as themselves'. It is intrinsic to everything. Underpinned by the values of kindness, forgiveness, self-respect, courage and gratitude, it is wholeheartedly lived out at every level. Families of many faiths choose to learn here because they are lovingly welcomed and their children are prepared to be good citizens of the world. This community is flourishing as they are enfolded in a rich and long established culture of compassion and great empathy.

Leaders are resolute in ensuring that the vision is central to every decision made. They live and breathe it with a compelling sense of shared purpose as they consider the words found in John 15:12. Consequently, their chosen trust partnership has complementary values rooted in the spirit of fellowship. Whilst the collaboration is relatively new, systems within the trust's structure already greatly enhance and enrich the Christian character at Houghton. For example, staff knowledge contributes to mutually beneficial partnerships with other schools and through the maths hub. There is a determination to continually strive to uphold the school's original foundation. Governors endeavour to ensure to deepen impact as they monitor the vision across varied aspects of school life. As a result, actions reflect astute evaluations which enable many to thrive.

Pupils are empowered to do their best. This is because they are lovingly nurtured by adults who are grounded in a culture of being loved themselves. Shaped by the vision, the curriculum allows a perceptive comprehension of place, purpose and stewardship of the planet. Themes are relevant and inspirational. Tailored and appropriate support for those with additional needs ensures they access the education they deserve. Parents, justifiably, share how Houghton has transformed the lives of their children in assisting them to work alongside their peers. In depth discussion and staff meeting time facilitates a clearer understanding of spirituality. The language of 'ow, wow and now' is beginning to be used. However, this is still in its infancy and therefore learning opportunities for spiritual flourishing are limited. Leaders have rightly identified spirituality as an area of development within the wider curriculum. After school clubs contribute to the richness of provision.

Regular participation by clergy deepens awareness of spirituality in collective worship. This is enhanced by the exceptionally strong partnership and seamless relationship with St Catherine's. The church building next door is fittingly described as an extension of the school. It is at the heart of the response to the school community living out their deeply embedded vision. The congregation lead by example, reflecting the love of Jesus in their own lives. This is exemplified by members having an almost constant presence in school. Themes for worship are planned around the vision and Christian values. For example, in one act of worship pupil leaders shared the story of Queen Esther, highlighting how she courageously stood up for what is right. All were invited to participate in a time of quiet to reflect and ask God to help them mirror her actions. Adults described a palpable sense of calm and enrichment during this time. Grounded in Anglican tradition, responses and blessings are recited with great familiarity. The introduction of words to describe spiritual moments creates a language of expression, deepening understanding. Praying spontaneously is fostered with the implementation of a clear structure for use in prayers. Although, opportunities to use this in reflective moments beyond collective worship are limited.

Nowhere is the vision embodied at its deepest level than in how mental health and wellbeing needs are addressed. Parents, quite rightly, describe how they experience a feeling of all encompassing love from their first interaction with the school. Staff know individuals' unique personalities. Targeted funding is used to train adults providing a very comprehensive and effective range of care. These personalised, vision focused methods are having a huge impact on many lives. Pupils are polite and behave well. This is because they are given very clear strategies to deal with conflict and

treat others with respect. An adult presence on the school gate each morning makes sure that any issues are dealt with promptly. Leaders epitomise the vision, empowering many to reflect the same reciprocal love in how others are treated. Describing themselves as ‘Team Houghton’, staff work in a rich culture of being valued and surrounded by caring colleagues. The trust provides a wellbeing chaplain as well as quick and easy access to required services, complementing provision in school.

Being a member of the community at Houghton helps to transform lives both locally and wider afield. The changemaker initiative and ambassador roles empower pupils to be agents of change. Dedicated time and thorough planning contribute to their effectiveness. This ensures they are given the skills to take action themselves. Consequently, there is an innate sense of purpose to foster a better world. For example, they lead a project recycling crisp packets and instigate collections in other local schools. A partnership with the Rainforest Alliance challenges them to speak out about deforestation. Pupil leaders are passionate about their various roles as they confront issues with great eloquence. They raised concerns about school parking and are meeting with village organisations to seek a resolution. Partnerships with local food banks challenge pupils to support through ongoing food collections. The impact is becoming even more powerful as the common language of spirituality is introduced to articulate thoughts and emotions. The outworking of the vision in such a meaningful way is preparing many to be courageous advocates in an ever changing world.

RE contributes greatly to an awareness of living in a multi-cultural society and respect for others. There is an overwhelming appreciation of the importance of learning about each other’s beliefs. Pupils explain why they do this with maturity and a high level of religious literacy. The subject is well led and rigorously monitored. As a result, any gaps in the curriculum are quickly addressed. Staff receive ongoing training and support, developing their own expertise and confidence. Knowledge organisers, used at the beginning of units, identify key words and facts providing a point of reference during lessons. Reciprocal visits to celebrate festivals at partner schools in Leicester strengthen friendships and awareness of living in a diverse society. A vast knowledge of Bible stories is helping pupils articulate the teachings of Jesus and core Christian beliefs.

The inspection findings indicate that Houghton Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	9 May 2024	URN	145974
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	207
Diocese	Leicester		
MAT/Federation	Learn Academies Trust		
Headteacher	Ali Woollerson		
Chair	Mark Newman		
Inspector	Joy Hardy	No.	944