

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

William Farr Church of England Comprehensive School

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| Address | Lincoln Road, Welton, Lincoln LN2 3JB | | |
| Date of inspection | 26&27 March 2019 | Status of school | Academy inspected as voluntary controlled |
| Diocese | Lincoln | URN | 136415 |

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| Overall Judgement | Grade | Excellent |
| How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? | | |
| Additional Judgement | | |
| The impact of collective worship | Grade | Excellent |

School context

William Farr is an oversubscribed secondary school with 1500 pupils on roll, including 280 in the Sixth Form. The majority of pupils in this rural location are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school was founded by Revd William Farr on the site of RAF Dunholme, a WW2 bomber station. 84 pupils currently receive the service premium. The headteacher is leaving in July 2019.

The school's Christian vision

To provide all members of the school community with the opportunities to engage with life in all its fullness (John 10:10) through the highest quality of education, encouragement and endeavour. We are committed to striving for excellence and ensuring that all students are known, valued and can achieve.
Our core values are: RESPECT FRIENDSHIP PERSEVERANCE RESPONSIBILITY COMPASSION WISDOM

Key findings

- The school has a proven track record of creative and sustainable projects, borne out of the Christian ethos, that equip young people with the skills to transform their lives.
- Leaders including governors consistently make bold and ethical decisions, shaped by the vision, to offer students a rich curriculum tailored to their aspirations and interests.
- Operational structures demonstrate a compassionate concern for the mental wellbeing of staff and students whilst developing leaders of the highest calibre in Church school education.
- Partnerships forged with the local church, the diocese and organisations such as Stonewall provide an invaluable platform for the school's innovative work in developing a truly inclusive culture.
- Religious education (RE) and collective worship form the bedrock from which students and adults become familiar with the Christian faith and draw on Christian values to shape their work as courageous advocates for social justice.

Areas for development

- Ensure that students and staff experience the richness of Anglican traditions in worship as part of the school's vision to broaden their horizons.
- Widen the school's influence on the provision for mental health in Church schools by extending the work currently undertaken.
- Utilise the school's track record in innovation to develop an efficient system for monitoring impact as a Church school. In this way, secure high-level evidence to inform strategic planning.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Pupils and adults flourish exceptionally well at William Farr and are proud to live out the vision of its founder. The headteacher and deputy headteacher motivate and inspire all staff with their unswerving conviction that the fundamental purpose of this school is to serve this rural community as a Church school for all. The adoption of John 10:10 and the retention of 'Comprehensive' in the school's name, despite becoming an academy, are expressions of the long-standing vision.

'Life in all its fullness' is at the forefront of leaders' thinking and infuses every aspect of their work. They remain steadfast in making bold and brave decisions, sometimes out of step with government policy, in order that the curriculum meets the aspirations and interests of students. Consequently, students enjoy an impressive number of options for academic subjects at GCSE. The impact is profound, spiritual as well as academic. Students are confident and interested to explore the moral and ethical dimension of all the subjects they study. Art and photography courses are typical, prompting students to delve deeply into their own thinking on themes less acknowledged in everyday life such as 'Flaws and human imperfections'.

All students take RE through to GCSE and fully support its compulsory status. The GCSE course begins in Year 9, enabling topics to be progressively covered in greater depth and revisited as students grow in maturity. Personal, social and moral education (PSME) is a subject unique to the school and specifically planned with this community in mind. Both subjects retain their own identity but complement each other in developing students' skills of enquiry and debate. Lessons are a safe space to explore differing opinions. One student summed this up as, 'RE opens your mind by sharing ideas with others, you learn by seeing and hearing, debate helps you understand how others see the world.'

True to the school's vision, students are deeply 'valued as individuals and known in depth'. Typical of this is the chaplain's regular presence in the entrance and social areas of the school, offering unconditional regard for any student needing to be heard. The school has a forensic knowledge of student needs because the impressive staffing structure ensures no student slips through the net. The exceptional work of the closely-knit teams for care and guidance and for each year group act as ties that bind the school together. As a result, achievement is above the national average at GCSE and disadvantaged students are catching up with their peers. At A Level, students do slightly better than schools nationally. The school is consistently one of the highest performing, non-selective schools in the country.

Aspirations are high for staff as well as students. The school successfully 'grows its own' leaders through the emphasis it places on teamwork and on leading as well as accessing training. Leadership is learned from the inspiring model of others within the school, so the Christian vision of aspiration for all remains authentic and sustainable. Leaders at all levels support other schools, often brokered by the Diocese. The RE department, a team of 5 specialist, highly qualified teachers, shares its expertise in other schools. Timetabling is planned with impressive attention to the mental wellbeing of staff. Compassion and support, therefore, are not just shown in the generosity of relationships but in very practical matters.

The daily organisation of the school is shaped by the vision for every student to access 'life in all its fullness'. The long lunchtime is packed with high quality extra-curricular activities. This overcomes difficulties students might otherwise face in travelling after school in a rural area. The take-up of activities is extremely high, including by those students who are disadvantaged. This level of engagement is reflected in high overall attendance, with significantly low levels of persistent absenteeism.

Governors sustain the Christian foundation of the school and the depth of this is clear in the immense detail of the school's self-evaluation. Although it provides a valuable audit for the incoming headteacher, it loses sight of the overriding impact of the Christian vision and so lacks clarity in setting priorities for sustained improvement as a Church school.

Leaders continue to forge partnerships with different organisations as a platform for the school's pioneering work in transforming the lives of students in this school and further afield. A learning mentor devised a questionnaire on mental health as part of a diocesan working party. An impressive number of student groups exist to promote and

celebrate diversity within the community. Some, such as Fusion and the Alpha group, have evolved with the use of the chapel, but they all reflect the seriousness with which leaders take student voice. A student challenged how Black people are represented in the curriculum and subsequently a member of staff took up the role of championing related perceptions in the school. Students are confident and articulate in challenging injustice especially where any form of prejudice prevents an individual feeling accepted for who they are. A prime example is the school's innovative practice in promoting acceptance of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender in a Church school setting. This has been recognised as excellent by Stonewall, the organisation which champions equality, and feeds into the work of local primary schools.

The school has maintained its established international links. Staff exchanges and practical projects for students across continents are promoted by different departments. The links are mutually beneficial. They open the eyes of the whole community to the richness of each culture as well as how deprivation and exploitation are global realities.

Students behave well, and lessons are calm and purposeful. Instances where conduct falls short of expectations are rapidly decreasing. Students take and make best use of second chances offered so there are hardly any repeat offences. Governors undertake an innovative role in restorative, face-to-face conversations with students and their families where there is a risk of exclusion.

The school's Christian values are championed by each House and play a central role in shaping character. Students gain a deeper understanding of them from biblical teaching in RE and collective worship. This clarifies their thinking and motivates them in their relationships and learning. Worship upholds the school's vision of commitment to excellence. It has a deeply felt impact on the lives of many adults and pupils. The pattern of Christian worship is securely established through the long partnership with the church, although students do not experience the full breadth of Anglican traditions. Students have a prominent role in leading worship in Houses, tutor groups and in regular services that mark the school and church years. In line with their excellent knowledge of Christianity, they speak with great maturity about how everyone in this inclusive community is able to make use of opportunities for prayer. The weekly Eucharist takes a variety of styles and, like prayer, is fully inclusive but this is not understood widely enough to encourage more to attend. However, student involvement in worship is entering a new phase as a more strategic view is developed by the chaplain and vicar. They have been proactive in engaging the Bishop's support for initiatives to extend the rich experience of worship to all young people in the local community.

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| Headteacher | Andrew Stones |
| Inspector's name and number | Lyn Field 151 |