

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Canon Popham Church of England Academy

Vision

Let Your Light Shine (Matthew 5:16)

Canon Popham Church of England Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The school's Christian vision, 'Let Your Light Shine', is deeply embedded. It drives decision making, shapes the curriculum, and is confidently articulated by staff, pupils, and leaders across all aspects of school life.
- A strong culture of inclusion and dignity is lived out through intentional provision, emotional support, and staff relationships. Pupils, families and staff are supported well.
- Collective worship is inclusive and rich in content. Pupils participate with confidence and are provided with space for reflection to help them grow spiritually and think deeply.
- Religious education (RE) is well led, valued and taught with consistency and clarity. Pupils recall ideas with confidence, staff are well supported, and progression is evident across year groups.
- School leaders draw effectively on a respectful relationship with the trust and the diocese. They use the guidance offered to lead with confidence, clarity and integrity.

Development Points

- Extend the work on spirituality so that there is a shared and consistent understanding across the school. This is to ensure that both planned and spontaneous opportunities for spiritual flourishing are fully realised.
- Deepen opportunities for pupils to lead and initiate action in response to issues of justice, fairness and responsibility. This is to ensure that pupils grow as compassionate ambassadors who can recognise injustice and respond with compassion and empathy.



Inspection Findings

Canon Popham's vision, 'Let Your Light Shine', is clearly understood and consistently lived out by leaders and staff. It is visible in curriculum priorities, behaviour systems, relationships, and strategic planning. Leaders, staff and pupils articulate how the vision shapes their actions and encourages them to flourish. The school's values are not only well known but also actively shape daily life. They underpin routines, guide relationships and give pupils a moral compass for their choices and actions. The school's inclusive ethos ensures that pupils and adults are known and valued. Regular 'Let Your Light Shine' awards celebrate unique achievements and help pupils connect values with action. Parents say the vision is constantly referenced at home, demonstrating its impact beyond school. They rightly describe the school as welcoming and caring. Adults model calm leadership and act with integrity and compassion. This ensures that pupils and adults are welcomed and enabled to grow. Adults and pupils share the common language of the vision. As a result, it is not simply words but an embedded purpose that shapes identity, expectations and hope.

Inspired by the vision, the curriculum meets the needs of pupils through careful adaptations. It promotes academic success and personal development. Targeted support is carefully matched to need, ensuring that barriers are reduced and pupils are supported to develop confidence. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve alongside their peers. Pupils encounter a curriculum that invites awe, wonder and moral questioning. This supports them to articulate values, explore diverse perspectives and think critically. Classroom environments promote curiosity and independence. Clubs, visits and enrichment deepen engagement and support character development. Dedicated prayer corners and quiet spaces provide regular opportunities for stillness. They enable pupils to encounter moments of meaning, peace and personal connection. Pupils describe spirituality as, 'like the wind – you can't see it, but you know it's there.' Staff have begun to use approaches which encourage pupils to reflect and look outwards. However, there is no shared understanding of spirituality across all areas of school life.

Collective worship provides a daily rhythm that builds belonging and supports spiritual flourishing. It is inclusive, invitational and inspirational, enabling both pupils and adults to explore the rich variety of Christian traditions. Well-planned worship, with space for stillness, helps pupils and adults grow spiritually and think deeply. They sing, pray and reflect with deep respect and visible joy. Pupil worship ambassadors confidently contribute to planning, lead aspects of worship and offer feedback. This adds to the rich variety of experiences and enhances the spiritual life of the school. Worship draws creatively on biblical stories, Christian festivals and global themes. This broadens pupils' understanding and deepens their spiritual reflection. Clergy and lay leaders regularly contribute and lead worship. These valued relationships enhance the experience for pupils and adults. They enable an appreciation of the different ways people can worship and celebrate together. Themes, such as community service, regularly inspire action. They connect worship with wider life and learning. Classroom worship provides further time for stillness, gratitude and wonder. Pupils speak of worship as a time when they can 'feel close to God' or 'think deeply about others.' Adults value the time to pause and reflect. As a result, worship strengthens faith, nourishes hope and enables the school community to grow spiritually together.

Inspired by the vision, a culture of dignity, respect and compassion is lived out daily. Staff treat pupils and each other with warmth, fairness and high expectations. Professional networks and wellbeing initiatives support workload and morale. Staff are therefore valued and supported, allowing them to flourish and grow personally and professionally. Leaders prioritise wellbeing and act with empathy. As a result, the vision is expressed through daily



acts of love and care. Pupils respond with kindness and courtesy. The behaviour policy is restorative and based on Christian values such as forgiveness and reconciliation. Pupils understand the reasons behind rules and how their choices affect others. Pastoral support is provided to pupils and families where required. The needs of those who are vulnerable are identified early and responded to quickly, ensuring that families feel supported, included and secure. Teachers plan support thoughtfully, ensuring that strategies designed for vulnerable pupils also strengthen learning and inclusion for others.

Well-established partnerships enhance the school's commitment to justice, fairness and compassionate service. The trust's focus on inclusion and dignity complements the school's inclusive vision. Governance is well informed and offers effective challenge, contributing to improvements in collective worship, inclusion and strategic clarity. Diocesan and trust training develops staff understanding of RE, spirituality and courageous advocacy. Pupils explain that justice means 'giving people what they need', and responsibility means 'helping others even if it's not your job'. Acts of service, often linked to school partnerships, include fundraising, foodbank support and awareness campaigns. A recent Year 5 speed awareness project involved police collaboration and public presentations. The Santa Dash combined physical activity with charity, supporting local and global needs. Pupils are proud of these opportunities and their impact and speak confidently about fairness and kindness. At present, many initiatives are planned by adults. This limits pupils' opportunities to contribute their thoughts and to lead. As a result, their ability to act independently on issues of justice and responsibility is not fully developed.

RE has a high priority at Canon Popham. It has been carefully sequenced and developed as a core subject through a strong partnership with the trust and the local diocese. Lessons support pupils in building a secure understanding and deepening their thinking over time. They are positive about RE and enjoy engaging with the big questions it encourages. They talk about what they believe and listen respectfully to others. The curriculum is sequenced to allow pupils to learn about a range of faiths and worldviews, including Islam and Judaism. They recognise that RE can help them to respect and celebrate different viewpoints. Younger pupils explore ideas through storytelling, drama and creative tasks, including investigative activities such as becoming Bible detectives. Older pupils engage with ethical issues and challenging questions, using vocabulary and reasoning with growing confidence. Lessons include space for personal response, enabling pupils to reflect deeply on belief and meaning. Through studying Christianity as a global faith, pupils gain a broader worldview and recognise how faith is practised across cultures. This curriculum approach supports pupils in becoming reflective learners who can explore diversity with confidence.

Pupils progress well in RE because lessons are engaging, accurate and carefully sequenced. Teachers consistently revisit core concepts and vocabulary, enabling pupils to securely build knowledge over time. Clear learning intentions help them understand their progress and next steps. Regular monitoring ensures teaching remains purposeful and effective. Leaders respond to monitoring outcomes, refining curriculum plans to enhance progression. Pupils confidently explain key religious beliefs, demonstrating depth of understanding and thoughtful reflection and apply their learning meaningfully in varied contexts. Consequently, they grow into knowledgeable, reflective learners who understand and articulate complex religious ideas with maturity and confidence.

Information

Address	Church Balk, Edenthorpe, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN3 2PP		
Date	7 July 2025	URN	145771
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	239
Diocese	Sheffield		
MAT/Federation	The Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust		
Headteacher	Sharon Patton – Executive Headteacher Jackie Shelton – Head of School		
Chair of Trustees	Huw Thomas		
Inspector	Lee Talbot		