

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Earl Sterndale Church of England Primary School

Vision

Making Good Decisions Together.

‘So you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous...’ Proverbs 2:20

Earl Sterndale Church of England Primary School 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 Christian vision is at the heart of this small school, guiding its daily life and work. It shapes strategic decisions and is actively embodied in everyday practice. Leaders and governors are determined that pupils and adults flourish in an environment of love and care.
- As an outworking of the vision, the curriculum is designed to meet the individual needs of pupils. The rich programme of outdoor learning and visits fosters pupils’ appreciation of creation and nurtures their spiritual development. These experiences help pupils to understand themselves and others better, respecting their differences, as they make good decisions together.
- Inclusive collective worship fosters a deep sense of belonging. It provides daily opportunities for both pupils and adults to grow spiritually through music, Bible teaching and moments of reflection. Prayer is central to the school’s worship life, building strength and hope in both joyful and difficult times.
- Positive and affirming relationships are an expression of the vision. Staff, pupils, governors and parents work together and support one another because they feel valued and respected.
- The school's strong ethos of pastoral care is driven by the vision. There is an unwavering commitment that everyone is included and supported, regardless of their individual needs. The nurturing approach plays a vital role in developing positive wellbeing so that pupils and staff grow and flourish.

Development Points

- Ensure there is a shared understanding of spirituality and proactively identify opportunities for spiritual development in curriculum and worship planning. This is so that pupils can explore and express their experiences and reflect on their significance.
- Embed existing partnerships and explore opportunities to collaborate more widely beyond the school. This is so that supportive relationships provide the foundation for continued growth, building strength and hope for the future.
- Review the religious education (RE) curriculum, ensuring that it is well-balanced, challenging and builds on what pupils already know. This is so that pupils systematically develop a deeper understanding of the breadth and diversity of religions and worldviews.



Inspection Findings

Earl Sterndale Church of England Primary School radiates warmth, belonging and love. At its heart is its Christian vision that inspires and shapes every aspect of school life. Though small in size, this school has a profound and lasting impact on the lives it touches. Here, people are empowered to make good decisions to help them live life to the full. Leaders and governors foster an environment where every individual is known and celebrated. They live out the school's vision through collective decisions that are both strategic and principled. Governors are passionate about strengthening the school's identity as a Church school and are proactive in driving this forward. This is reflected in their discussions and in their active involvement in the daily life of the school. A planned programme of monitoring helps them to know the school well, recognising both its strengths and development areas. When challenges arise, governors respond with integrity, committed to making decisions that support the flourishing of pupils and adults. In doing so, they seek constructive solutions that reflect and uphold the school's vision. As the school prepares to welcome a new headteacher, governors are determined to ensure a smooth transition. Their steady leadership is offering stability and reassurance to staff, pupils and parents during this season of change.

The bespoke curriculum reflects the school's commitment to inclusion. Personalised support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) enables them to progress and thrive. This inclusive ethos draws a growing number of families to the school. The curriculum is enriched through meaningful hands-on experiences, including outdoor learning, residential and educational visits and visitors. These opportunities harness the rich resources and beauty of the local environment, including farms, woodlands and the quarry. They foster pupils' appreciation of creation and nurture their spiritual growth. Some recall the impact of the profound silence felt during a visit to the quarry. Music and the arts hold a special place in the curriculum, offering powerful moments for reflection. For example, an art project, created with a local potter, gives thanks for the life of a treasured community member.

Daily collective worship is an inclusive and joyful part of school life, rooted in the school's vision and Christian values. It fosters a strong sense of togetherness. Worship nourishes participants spiritually through music, Bible readings, thoughtful discussion and reflection. Prayer is central to the daily rhythm of school life. Regular moments of prayer, including the Lord's Prayer and school prayer, create spaces to pause, reflect and connect with God. A well-used prayer box invites contributions from pupils and staff. The sharing of these in worship promotes empathy and mutual understanding. Collective worship and the wider curriculum offer many incidental opportunities for spiritual development, an area leaders have rightly prioritised. However, staff lack a shared understanding of spirituality, limiting the consistency and intentionality of this provision. Pupils are confident worship leaders who contribute thoughtfully and enthusiastically through themes and causes that inspire and resonate with them. Worship evaluation has led to changes in its structure. The implementation of a predictable format has been beneficial for SEND pupils, increasing their inclusion. In the absence of a vicar, other local clergy and church members actively contribute to collective worship. This ensures that worship remains vibrant and diverse, representative of the global Anglican tradition and central to school life.

The school's Christian vision shapes the development of strong, respectful relationships at every level. Leaders and governors are excellent role models, creating a culture where the inherent worth of individuals is recognised. Parents and pupils have trust in school staff because they know their needs and concerns will be sympathetically heard. When pupils become emotionally dysregulated, the gentle, nurturing support they receive helps them to feel safe and understood. This means that pupils settle quickly, in the knowledge that forgiveness and second



chances are freely offered. The 'calm den' and other self-regulation strategies help pupils manage their emotions more effectively so that they develop positive relationships. Transitions are carefully planned, especially for vulnerable pupils, who are sensitively supported by staff members with expertise in this area. The quality of this pastoral care fills both pupils and parents with confidence, building hope and aspiration for their future. The collaborative and inclusive ethos means that staff feel respected, listened to and supported in their professional growth. Leaders' open-door policy and investment in staff wellbeing and training create a positive working environment where they flourish.

The vision inspires pupils' commitment to justice and shapes both their thinking and actions. Through the curriculum and collective worship, they learn about global injustice and its impact on others. This fuels their desire to make a difference. Members of the school parliament embrace their roles as change-makers. Speaking on behalf of their peers, they make and influence decisions that benefit both the school and the wider community. For example, after learning about the harmful effects of plastic pollution, pupils initiated litter picking in the local community. This act of service had a tangible environmental impact. As an outworking of the vision, leaders are committed to building mutually supportive partnerships that nourish and sustain the school. Sharing good practice with local Church schools provides valuable support for teaching staff. However, this work is in its early stages. As a result, the school is missing opportunities to strengthen and secure its Christian identity and purpose through wider collaboration.

The priority afforded to RE is a recognition of its essential contribution to pupils' holistic development and understanding. The curriculum covers core topics at each key stage, so that pupils learn about major religions and worldviews, including Christianity. Opportunities to explore important concepts about God and philosophical questions are designed to deepen pupils' thinking and spiritual growth. The curriculum clearly specifies the knowledge and skills pupils should develop each year. However, a lack of coherent planning limits progression and challenge. As a result, the curriculum does not consistently secure a balanced or ambitious approach to the development of pupils' understanding in RE. Diocesan links, engaging visual resources and visits to places of worship further enrich pupils' learning. For example, trips to a local multi-faith centre to explore sacred places broaden pupils' horizons beyond their own experience. These inspire pupils to engage with faith and belief in a thoughtful and informed way.

Information

Address	Earl Sterndale, Buxton, Derbyshire. SK17 OBS		
Date	26 June 2025	URN	112821
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	30
Diocese	Derby		
Headteacher	Daniel Holden		
Chair of Governors	Paul Swindell		
Inspector	Joanna Redfern		