

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Marwood Church of England Infant School

Vision

Happy friends, learning together.

Everyone in school is greatly valued as unique with different gifts and skills. Guided by our core Christian values, we support each other as we strive to achieve our best in all we do. Seeking to transform lives, we develop a lifelong love for learning, for each other and for our neighbours locally and globally.

Jesus said, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Matthew 22:39

Our Core Christian Values: Love, Friendship, Forgiveness

Marwood Church of England Infant 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.

Notable Strengths

- The life of the school is deeply rooted in a strong Christian vision which is fully understood by the school community. The vision is palpable, permeates school life and is transforming lives.
- The holistic development of the young learners at Marwood is paramount. The environment is used in thought-provoking ways to allow pupils and adults to experience a sense of awe and wonder. Opportunities to develop spiritually are rich and support spiritual flourishing.
- 'Love thy neighbour' is at the forefront of pupils' understanding of justice. They care passionately for others and the world around them. This results in a firm belief that their small acts can make a real difference.
- A culture of love, friendship and forgiveness, modelled effectively by staff, is at the centre of this nurturing school community. This means that pupils, adults and families feel safe, happy and cared for.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is thoughtfully designed to promote rich, meaningful learning. 'Big questions' and high-quality resources enable these young learners to think critically about a range of religions.

Development Points

- Extend opportunities to deepen pupils' skills of investigating, interpreting and reflecting in RE. This is to heighten their 'ways of knowing' about religion through infant eyes.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Marwood is a joyous and welcoming place. Inspirational leadership ensures that the Christian vision of this small rural infant school is a lived reality for the school community. The vision, carefully chosen for their context, is opening the eyes of these young learners at the start of their educational life. Pupils understand that ‘loving their neighbour’ goes well beyond their own locality. They are keen to make a difference to the world in which they live. Leaders, including governors are determined in their drive to ensure that the vision is the golden thread running through policies and strategic decisions. Consequently, the school really does focus on the learning needs of these infant pupils. Governors know their school extremely well through a wide range of monitoring activities. This ensures that they are well-informed of the impact the vision is having on its success as a Church school. In addition, many governors help out in practical ways, bringing their ‘different skills and gifts’ to further enrich life at Marwood. The result is a school where pupils and adults are enabled to flourish.

Vision and Curriculum

The vision is at the forefront of the curriculum and weaves through all areas of learning. Leaders and staff are fervent in supporting pupils in understanding about the diverse world in which they live. Carefully chosen texts, images and resources enable them to explore life beyond Great Ayton. The holistic development of pupils is at the forefront of learning. A calm and inspirational environment enhances the learning experience for pupils, including those with additional needs. Bespoke nurturing support enables them to thrive alongside their peers. Spiritual development is well-embedded and is planned for across the curriculum. The scope to develop spiritually is rich and varied. The school environment offers many stimulating opportunities for both pupils and adults to experience a sense of wonder and consider their place in God’s world. This was particularly evident as a group of pupils watched with intent as birds in a nearby tree worked to build a nest. Driven by the vision there is a careful and distinct focus on early years learning. This is having a transformational impact on the lives of these young people.

Worship and Spirituality

The school community rightly refers to worship as the ‘heartbeat’ of their school. It is a much welcomed coming together at the end of the day to think deeply, celebrate and reflect. Pupils and adults leave school recharged and calm with key messages to ponder. The Bible stories pupils hear have a positive impact on how they live their lives. For example, they talk animatedly about the story of David and Goliath. ‘It helps us to remember God is here and helps us to be strong even though we are only small’. Invitational prayer is an important aspect of their time together. Pupils are keen to lead spontaneous prayer and join in reverently with singing the Lord’s Prayer. They value their outdoor ‘Sacred Space’ as a place of peace and reflection on the playground. In addition, the ‘Prayer Chair’ and reflection areas in classrooms contribute to rich spiritual development. School life is intertwined with Christ Church, and this strong collaboration enriches the worship lives of the school community. Families value the opportunity to share in worship at Church each half-term and for special celebrations.

Vision and School Culture

Guided by their vision, Marwood is a nurturing and loving school community, built on caring and positive relationships. Leaders, including governors, act with compassion, ensuring staff feel valued through simple kind deeds and regular check-ins. Staff appreciate the support and training they are given for their roles and value the trust that is placed in them. Mental health and wellbeing are given a high priority. Adults model the school values of love, friendship and forgiveness, enabling pupils to build trusting and respectful relationships. Thus, pupils understand the importance of respecting difference and how to promote fairness across the school. They



feel safe and cared for. Staff make them feel valued for every small step of success. In turn pupils support each other and play and learn together harmoniously as 'happy friends, learning together'. Parents and carers appreciate the care shown to their children and the way staff work proactively with families, especially through difficult times.

Religious Education

Intuitive leadership of RE ensures a curriculum and an approach to learning that is well-planned and matches the needs of the school community. The vision is at the forefront in selecting the range of religions and worldviews studied. This is to widen pupils' appreciation of the global world in which they live. Pupils talk with confidence about what they have learnt. They have a clear awareness of different religions and how they impact on people's lives. This is evident in their understanding of the weekly celebration of Shabbat in the Jewish faith. Learning is enhanced with high quality texts and virtual visits to places of worship. Pupils appreciate Christianity as a global faith and talk with age-appropriate insight about the significance of Jesus on the lives of believers. Their knowledge of Bible stories and what they mean is commendable. Pupils are inspired by a wide range of tasks and challenges to extend their learning. 'Big questions' are used to deepen thinking and encourage debate. Leaders draw on diocesan training and networks to support staff who teach the subject. They constantly explore ways to improve the learning experience for pupils and broaden age-appropriate ways of knowing about religion. Opportunities for deeper investigation, interpretation and reflection that are meaningful for such young learners, are in the early stages of development.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

'Love your neighbour as yourself' is pivotal to the school's approach to justice and responsibility. Pupils are determined in their belief that their small actions can make a big impact on the world. They talk with passion about how they can care for God's world and the people and animals that live in it. They are supported in their understanding of justice and consequently injustice through the curriculum and worship. Pupils in Year 2 are proud of the pledges they are making to help prevent climate change. The pupil led Trinity group encourages others to take action, both in their local community and beyond. Examples of their impact are plentiful. Pupils were instrumental in developing a community garden in the village to benefit local people. They organise litter picks and have placed 'peace stones' on the war memorial to remind people of the impact of war. They talk with insight about people not being treated fairly and why it is important to support Fairtrade. As a result, these little members of 'Mighty Marwood' are making a big difference.

Information

Address	Low Green, Great Ayton, TS9 6NN		
Date	05 March 2026	URN	121495
Type of school	Voluntary controlled	No. of pupils	53
Diocese	York		
Headteacher	Dorothy Walton		
Chair of Governors	Victoria Bradley		
Inspector	Sue Thackray		