

Church School Distinctiveness Statement of Intent for The White Horse Federation

The White Horse Federation (TWHF) are committed to ensuring that the Christian foundations of the church schools within our trust are maintained and promoted. As part of this we will ensure that each of our schools has a distinctively Christian vision, which is theologically underpinned, and drives decision making at all levels within the school in order to enable all to flourish. All those working and volunteering within the school are expected to be sympathetic to the Christian ethos and vision and to uphold the Christian values associated with these. The pandemic resulted in a turbulent time in education and schools have needed to make adjustments as a result of this. In light of this, SIAMS revised their evaluation schedule to include reflection on how church schools have retained their distinctiveness during the pandemic and how they have supported children and adults to flourish throughout.

The Church of England vision for education clarifies what we aim to achieve in all our church schools: *'Life in all its fullness' John 10:10*. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four elements: wisdom, hope, community and dignity. These elements all form part of the SIAMS inspection process. This vision is amplified through the Church of England document *Valuing all God's Children*: 'Church of England schools must ensure that their pupils are secure and able to make excellent progress whatever their background. They are invited into a school that aims to provide an education which leads to an abundant life. Every person in the school community is a child of God. At the head of Christian distinctiveness in schools is an upholding of the worth of each person: all are *Imago Dei* – made in the image of God – and are loved unconditionally by God. ... each person in all their unique difference should be able to thrive, irrespective of physical appearance, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.'

The Trust will work closely with Salisbury and Oxfordshire Dioceses. Schools will be expected to sign up for the Diocesan PSA to ensure bespoke diocesan support throughout the year. From September 2022, this support will be carried out by the nominated and trained (by Salisbury Diocese) Leader for Church School Flourishing (LCSF) within the Trust, in ongoing close liaison with the Diocese.

It is the responsibility of each school's local governing body (LGB) to ensure that the Christian foundations of the school are maintained and that the vision is distinctively Christian and influences decision making at all levels. Each school's LGB should have key members with a foundation background who take a lead for this responsibility and lead on routine monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Church school distinctiveness should be a standing item on all LGB meetings to ensure that all governors have regular updates on progress and that high quality monitoring and evaluation brings about required improvements. The Church School distinctiveness champion meets regularly with the school's RE and collective worship leads as part of their systems for monitoring and evaluation.

All church schools will be inspected under the Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework every three to five years. The SIAMS agenda centres around a single question: *How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?* All church schools are required to complete self-evaluation around the SIAMS framework and to keep this up to date. Governors should have a clear understanding of how the school evaluates itself in line with the SIAMS framework.

Trustees have a responsibility to support and uphold the Christian distinctiveness of our church schools as co-leaders. Within the SIAMS framework school leaders are defined as *'Leaders - all those involved in the strategic development and implementation of the school's progress as a Church school including the headteacher, the senior leaders of the school, the middle leaders, school governors/academy directors/ federation executives and MAT leaders including CEOs.'*

The Trustee with responsibility for church school distinctiveness is Jilly Norton.

The strategic lead for church school distinctiveness and the LCSF within the federation is Anna Willcox, Primary Consultant Principal, who is also a practising SIAMS inspector.