

Notes to share from 'Learning the Language of SIAMS' session

SIAMS framework has changed to involve one question with multiple 'strands'.

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

The emphasis should then be for us **1) making sure we have a clear, and clearly available, statement of our distinctive Christian vision, and 2) that we can show evidence of its application and difference made through the seven strands. I.e. that we hold EVERYTHING we do to its account.**

These are the seven strands:

1. Vision and Leadership
2. Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
3. Character Development: Hope, aspiration and courageous advocacy
4. Community and Living Well Together
5. Dignity and Respect
6. The impact of collective worship
7. The effectiveness of religious education

It's especially notable that this should include in the leadership (i.e. not just at pupil level) and in terms of how it impacts on the children's acquisition of knowledge and their learning—curriculum etc should all be relatable to our distinctive Christian vision. Also the new emphasis on character development and courageous advocacy—this points to a school that is consciously making active moral citizens who are taking on the big moral problems of this world.

St Michael's vision statement is found here, on the website under 'Parental Info' then rather far down the list: 'School Values'.

https://www.st-michaels.lincs.sch.uk/parental_info/school_values/school_values.html

This is a bit hidden, and it should probably have greater prominence. However the core of the statement, the school motto/slogan 'Caring, Learning, Excelling' is a prominent and visible element of the school's self-presentation.

Revisiting the vision statement is something we might want to do collectively as a school. This is partly because it is somewhat eccentrically (or originally!) presented when compared to how other schools frame their mission or vision statements. A survey which is now ?how old which has then been used to generate a word cloud of values. Then the vision statement itself is framed as a covenant to parents:

[word cloud] compassion Creation Endurance
forgiveness friendship Hope Humility
fairness Koinonia (Community) Peace
Reverence Service Thankfulness trust Wisdom

Caring-Learning-Excelling

This is our promise to you as parents. First and foremost we will Care for all here, children, parents, governors and staff. We will then make sure we all move along our lifelong journey of Learning. Our final goal is to try to Excel at all we do, but it all starts with caring.

In Gillian's presentation on vision statements she suggested they should be 'future-focused' rather than a statement of achievements. This is pretty well served by what we have at the moment, since it is couched as a 'promise' and has a clear sense of 'goal'. She then said it was distinctively

Christian for it to be inclusive of all, and rooted in hope. Again, this seems to be present in its strong presentation of 'care for all' and 'we all move along our lifelong journey'. The fact that it is a mission statement rooted in the primacy of love and compassion, which includes all and respects the dignity of all, and that it acknowledges learning is lifelong and a journey (rather than fulfilled in particular academic or worldly achievements) work together to express a strongly distinctively Christian vision. However you will note that despite some lovely theological words in the word cloud the statement does allow the Christianity to be quite 'latent'. We might want to think about this.

We need to have a 'Self-Evaluation Framework' to hold ourselves accountable to our vision and the journey towards achieving it. **An essential step will be to include on every governor visit form a question referring the area monitored back to our vision: e.g. 'How does the area of the school's life you monitored today contribute towards our vision statement of 'Caring, Learning, Excelling'?'**

Below are the questions Gilian suggested we consider in framing as Self-Evaluation Framework to hold ourselves accountable to the SIAMS schedule:

1. Does our SEF place our vision front and centre?
2. Have we used the strands to help us identify how far along the journey we are to realising our vision?
3. Have we used our SEF to really ag up our strengths and the things we want to celebrate?
4. Have we used our SEF to indicate areas we know need a little more work?

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