

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Banks St Stephens' Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Greaves Hall Avenue, Banks, PR9 8BL
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Excellent
The impact of collective worship	Good

School's vision
<p>Belonging, Serving, Succeeding</p> <p>We actively promote a sense of pride in belonging to this community. Leading by example, we seek opportunities to serve God by serving others. We are ambitious for each individual and determined to enable every member of the school community to flourish and succeed.</p> <p>"I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Philippians Ch4 v13</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptionally committed leaders and governors live out the Christian vision with integrity. Bold decision making ensures the vision powerfully infuses every aspect of school life. Impressively deep community connections help bring the vision to fruition. This results in an extraordinarily inclusive community where success and service unite. • The empowering, vision-driven wider curriculum enables pupils to celebrate the innovation and diversity of their local heritage. Pupils gain a phenomenal sense of local citizenship. Rich, cross-curricular opportunities to explore justice and equality help pupils to think globally about life. • A range of innovative approaches to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and adults results in transformative practice. All pupils, including those considered vulnerable, are well supported to ensure they overcome barriers to success. • Collective worship is central to school life and contributes significantly to the spiritual development of pupils and adults. Pupils are at the heart of planning, leading and evaluating worship. Many value opportunities for prayer and reflection but pupils are not yet able to talk about how this supports them to flourish spiritually. • Religious education (RE) is exceedingly well led and resourced. A balanced, creative and highly engaging curriculum enables pupils to relish learning about a range of world religions including Christianity. This makes a profound contribution to pupils' character development.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure a shared way to talk about spirituality. This is to enrich existing opportunities for spiritual development by supporting all to identify and express their own spiritual flourishing. • Further extend global links and partnerships in order to deepen pupils' understanding of 'serving' as global citizens.



Inspection findings

The exceptionally inclusive Christian vision is embodied by leaders and governors. Every decision and action taken is shaped by the vision. Leaders draw strength from the theological underpinning of the vision which they demonstrate as they lead and serve like Jesus. Dedicated governors serve with joy, making bold and ethical decisions which uphold the school's vision and secure its strategic direction. Governors regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the vision using systems for Church school improvement. Consequently, leaders and governors know the school well and self-evaluation leads to highly effective practice.

Life-giving school partnerships and impressive community connections make an exceedingly positive contribution to school life. Leaders fully engage with training and pastoral support from Liverpool Diocese, which inspires and sustains staff, including during difficult times. Strong Church school links are mutually beneficial and are highly valued by many. Local businesses and community groups generously support the school with expertise and resources, enabling innovative initiatives which enrich pupils' lives.

At the heart of the ambitious wider curriculum is the vision to belong, succeed and serve. A strong sense of belonging and pride in the village's heritage ripples out to enable pupils to make local, national and global connections. Pupils explore diverse agricultural techniques through farm visits, gardening and the use of innovative ecological technology to grow fruit. This leads pupils to develop a sense of excitement, aspiration, and hope through the achievements of their local area. Units of work on Fairtrade help pupils to view farming on a global scale. As a result of the dynamic and purposeful curriculum pupils learn about energy, climate change and the exploitation of the natural world. Care is taken to introduce pupils to inspiring advocates who speak out about injustice. Global equality and justice are key cross-curricular themes. In music, for example, pupils use a song by the Beatles to consider civil rights. Consequently, pupils develop a deep love of God's creation, a strong sense of compassion and a sincere concern for justice. Opportunities to develop awe, wonder and curiosity are evident throughout the curriculum. Regular debates enable pupils to think deeply and equip pupils to speak out about issues close to their heart. Consequently, the wider curriculum motivates and empowers pupils to become courageous advocates for change. This is demonstrated powerfully through pupils' commitment to the local foodbank and annual opportunities to address local Members of Parliament. Pupils' strong sense of compassion leads to ongoing, life-enhancing connections with local care homes and the support of global charities. Further opportunities for pupils to deepen their connections as global agents of change are in the early stages of development. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those identified as vulnerable, are effectively supported to overcome barriers to success. As a result, this vibrant and varied curriculum secures a sense of belonging, inspires service and enables all pupils to flourish.

Creative and engaging RE inspires pupils who relish the opportunity to learn about a range of world faiths including Christianity. It supports pupils' understanding of difference, diversity and equality which results in respectful and curious learners. A highly effective, broad and balanced RE curriculum is exceptionally well resourced. Training and monitoring support its implementation resulting in high levels of staff confidence and lessons which are stimulating and reflective. The RE subject leader shares this effective practice with other schools in the local area. Pupils develop a strong understanding of the Christian faith and are able to talk, in an age-appropriate way, about Christian beliefs. Pupils learn about diversity within Christian practices, for example, in Baptism. Opportunities to search for personal meaning within RE lessons results in poignant reflection and spiritual flourishing. For some pupils RE

makes a transformational difference to their mindset resulting in changes to their actions and wellbeing. The exploration of 'big questions' and Christian values make a profound contribution to pupils' character and moral development.

Collective worship beautifully expresses the school's vision and makes a significant impact on the spiritual development of pupils and adults. Invitational and inspirational, it creates a joyful culture of belonging. Pupils on the worship council and class worship leaders treasure the opportunity to lead worship. High-quality resources support pupils and adults to plan, deliver and evaluate worship. Music, drama, stillness and dance help pupils to appreciate how Christians worship in different ways. Worship helps pupils to recognise Christianity as a living world faith. Many value opportunities for prayer and reflection but pupils do not yet have a shared language to express spiritual flourishing. The school Bible verse raises pupils' aspirations and encourages endurance in difficult times. Christian values are explored through Bible stories which support pupils' understanding of how Christians serve God. Worship helps pupils to reflect on their attitudes and behaviours. This is exemplified in relationships throughout school where love and kindness are the natural rhythm of school life.

An excellent commitment to enabling flourishing for all leads the school to offer a range of thoughtful approaches to enhance wellbeing. The development of an outdoor forest, pond and wildlife meadow is integral to the school's innovative strategy to support mental health. Dedicated pastoral staff employ a host of targeted initiatives to support pupils' social and emotional health. Work with outside agencies is timely and targeted so pupils and their families receive the right help at the right time. As a result of the school's highly effective actions, pupils flourish. For some pupils this is exemplified through improved behaviour, transformed mindsets, dramatically increased attendance and accelerated academic progress. A staff wellbeing group demonstrates the high-priority the vision places on enabling success for all. A wealth of actions taken by this group lead to extraordinarily high staff morale. Strategic decisions about workload, and exemplary Christian leadership demonstrated by the headteacher, intentionally support staff wellbeing. This results in a staff culture where adults feel valued, inspired to serve, and flourish professionally.

The vision 'to belong' results in exceptional welcome for those new to the community. Parents attest to the transformative impact this has on the lives of their families. A strong sense of inclusion emanates from leaders and is displayed by staff and pupils in their behaviour towards one another. This is the vision in action, enabling all within this community to belong, serve and succeed.

Information			
School	Banks St Stephens' Church of England VC Primary School	Inspection date	25 April 2023
URN	119384	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Liverpool	Pupils on roll	184
Headteacher	Joanne Owen		
Chair of Governors	Richard Sharples		
Inspector	Ali Rice	No.	2103