

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## Great Marsden St John's Church of England Primary Academy

### Vision

We are anchored by scripture. We ask that Christ will live in our hearts through faith, making us rooted and grounded in LOVE. Ephesians 3:17

Empowered by God's love, we uphold a culture where everyone is encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. Our Mission Rooted in God's love, inspiring all to aim high.

Our Christian Value is LOVE, Loving God, Loving Others, Loving Ourselves, Loving Learning, Loving Life.

### Strengths

- The school's distinctly Christian vision enables its community to flourish with love. It is carefully crafted to reflect the needs of the community it serves. Empowered by collaboration within the multi academy trust (MAT), leaders ensure that the vision is a lived reality. Adults and pupils are 'living life in all its fullness.'
- Relationships are rooted in a transformational Christian love which is impacting the lives of pupils and adults. There is a relentless commitment to wellbeing. As such, adults and pupils feel valued.
- Leaders have used the vision as a corner stone of curriculum design. Considerable thought is given to ways in which they can best meet the needs of individual pupils. The inclusive focus on using the arts to support learning encourages enthusiastic pupil engagement.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the school day. Through this, pupils are inspired to embrace the school vision and values and put them into action in their own lives. The relationship between church and school is highly valued.
- The school's approach to religious education (RE) provides pupils with valuable opportunities to explore questions about the world. Consequently, pupils experience thought-provoking, interesting and challenging learning experiences.

### Development Points

- Extend opportunities to embed pupils' understanding of injustice in the world. This is so they can appreciate how they might take action to make a difference.



## Inspection Findings

Great Marsden St John's lives out a Christian vision that requires a love of God, of each child and each other. This stems from the biblical instruction to be 'rooted and grounded in love.' By doing all things in love, and through their Christian values, the school is enabling the development of each child's unique gifts. School leaders have created a close-knit team to support the nurturing of adults and pupils. They can rely upon support from the MAT and the diocese. This is facilitating growth alongside other Church schools. Governors have a clear and evaluative understanding of how the vision is driving action across the school. This vision-focused approach fosters confidence and creativity in both pupils and adults.

The culture of the school is one of inclusion and welcome. Staff build a firm foundation for trusting and positive relationships by visiting families before their child starts school. Specific needs are identified quickly, and rapid support is put into place. For parents and carers, being rooted and grounded in love means that their children 'are allowed to be themselves'. The support provided gives parents who come into school an understanding of some subjects. In this way they are learning and growing together with their own children.

Learning is well supported. Pupils say that 'teachers are brilliant at helping' and 'there is always someone to talk to if needed.' As pupils live out their school values, they demonstrate very positive behaviour and attitudes. The value of loving others is shown through the buddying system and in the discussions between groups of different ages. For example, gardeners who are Year 6 pupils, look after the seedlings, the youngest children in the school. This relationship begins even before the youngest child starts school when the gardeners <sup>send</sup> a card to their seedling. It provides the newest children in school with positive role models to guide and nurture them in their first year. Parents and carers feel confident to approach staff and school leaders, knowing that they will be heard and helped. Governors and the MAT have a clear and evaluative understanding of how the vision is driving action across the school. The views of staff, parents and pupils are listened to and acted upon where appropriate. In this way the school is continually moving forward. Governors and the MAT fulfil their role by providing wellbeing care, confirming staff are well supported professionally and personally.

Inspired by the Christian vision, leaders are determined that the curriculum develops not just the academic, but the whole child. Interventions and well-matched resourcing enable pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve their best. Pupils receive a broad and vibrant curriculum that is enriched by visits, visitors and resources. As a result, their viewpoint is widened. They gain a secure foundation for life in modern Britain and a diverse world. A well-planned and accessible extracurricular programme further expands pupils' experiences. Consequently, individual talents and interests are nurtured. The Jesus and me club, known in the school as the JAM club, is very popular and supports spirituality in the school. The school has a shared understanding of spirituality. This gives pupils the vocabulary to explore and articulate what it is to them. The spiritual development of pupils is fostered in a number of ways. Opportunities for exploring the wonders of the natural world are evident, along with periods of stillness and reflection. For example, through music, reflection areas and reflective storytelling. The rich artwork includes the rooted and grounded vine painted on the walls. This vine weaves its way through the whole school. Pupils, staff and adults say this brings awe and wonder throughout the school. Spiritual development is explicit and consistent across the life of the school.

Through the Christian vision, leaders create a culture of fairness and responsibility. The school focuses on 'doing everything with love.' A range of resources to keep abreast of global events encourage pupils to make changes together where they can. Pupils visit a local home for the elderly where they are welcomed. Pupils grow plants and then deliver them to people in the community to show their love and care. Donations of clothes they have outgrown, and food for the foodbank, are gratefully received by the community. These actions demonstrate that



pupils are driven to make a positive change in their local area. However, pupils' understanding of how they can challenge poverty and injustice globally is less developed.

Collective worship provides a time of togetherness. There is a daily pattern which gives pupils a sense of security and familiarity. They talk about the importance of being able to just 'have God in my head' in this time. Time is provided each day to invite everyone into moments for quiet reflection. This means that those present can choose to apply what they hear to their own lives. Pupils particularly enjoy those acts of worship in which class learning, achievements and their loving actions are celebrated. This underlines the importance of each child fulfilling their full potential. Local clergy and church members support the worshipping life of the school on a weekly basis. The church building is used for worship throughout the year and to enrich the curriculum. Pupils, staff and families, value the local church for working alongside them. This gives an extra dimension and further enriches pupils and adults' spiritual flourishing.

RE is well led. The subject leader is supported effectively through diocesan and MAT training. The design of the RE curriculum has resulted in a broad and balanced offer for pupils, which teachers enthusiastically implement. They are confident in their subject knowledge, which means that teaching and learning is secure. They are encouraged by school leaders to provide a variety of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. This means that staff can assess progress effectively, based on a range of evidence. Pupils particularly enjoy creative approaches to RE, when they can present their learning in the form that they choose. They can speak about why RE is important, saying it helps them 'to think about beliefs' and 'to respect differences'. Interfaith week enriches and deepens learning, with a focus on answering the big questions about different faiths. Personal reflection within RE lessons helps pupils to develop their own ideas about their place in the world. They can share these opinions with others and know that they do not always need to agree with each other. One pupil said that 'no-one judges you for your opinion, even when it is not the same as others think.

## Information

Address	Trent Road, Nelson, BB9 0NX		
Date	14 October 2024	URN	141981
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	209
Diocese/District	Blackburn		
MAT	Cidari		
Headteacher	Michaela Underwood		
Chair of Governors	Daphne Durham		
Inspector	Elaine Bowers		