

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Middleton Parish Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Springfield Road, Middleton, Manchester, M24 5DL

School vision
Excellence, Truth & Grace
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision is at the heart of the school. It connects to all aspects of school life and inspires rich experiences that enable pupils and adults to flourish. • The passion of the leadership motivates the whole staff team to work together to develop the school. Directed by the vision and careful evaluation, they build on strengths and energetically address identified areas for development. • There is a genuine sense of community in which both pupils and adults feel valued. They recognise their responsibility in caring for each other and love to celebrate the successes of everyone. • Pupils and adults value collective worship, which plays a key role in school life. It is a time of togetherness that provides opportunities for thinking and reflection, supporting the spiritual development of all. • A strong and deepening relationship between the school and the local church is to the benefit of both. It supports the spiritual development of pupils and further extends the positive impact the school has on its community.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden the curriculum offer in religious education (RE) to deepen pupils' knowledge of faiths other than Christianity and non-religious worldviews. • Develop more systematic monitoring and evaluation by governors of the school's effectiveness as a church school. This is to enable them to provide supportive challenge to leadership. • Empower all pupils to recognise they can make a difference, widening opportunities for pupils to take positive action to achieve this.
Inspection findings
<p>The vision, with its summary statement, 'Excellence, Truth & Grace', is a powerful force within the school. It motivates and supports the school's journey of development and its everyday life. The result is an aspirational school culture in which pupils and adults can, and do, flourish.</p> <p>Across the varied aspects of school life, the vision inspires and guides practice. There is a shared sense of the excellence that is being sought. This begins with honesty and openness about starting points and what is required to move forward. Equally important is the care and compassion shown to everyone. This approach is evident in many different situations, from whole school development planning to dealing with individual instances of negative behaviour. Pupils and adults can give examples of how the vision guides and supports them. The biblical quotation, Philippians 4:8-9, is</p>

used to articulate the theological roots of the vision. For example, pupils are encouraged ‘to fill their minds with what is best’ and look for things ‘to praise’ in others. These biblical roots are also reflected upon at other times, such as in collective worship. This helps pupils to apply the vision in their daily lives.

The leadership of the school, inspired by the vision, have a clear sense of the strategic direction of the school. They have led this development in a determined and focused manner. Governors are very supportive of the leadership and the school. Some monitoring of aspects of the school’s effectiveness as a church school has taken place. However, this is not systematic and is limited in scope, thus restricting its impact.

Pupils are positive about their learning and proud of their school. There is an aspiration that all pupils are supported to succeed academically and develop personally. The curriculum, from nursery right through the school, is designed to broaden pupils’ experience and understanding of the world. Pupils are taught to reflect on their learning experiences. In addition, the HeartSmart program builds character and resilience. The range of extra-curricular opportunities have been increased, utilising the interests of staff and fostering wider engagement by pupils. A variety of approaches are in place to support those with additional needs or other barriers to learning. As a result, they have full access to all that the school provides.

Collective worship is valued by all members of the school community and supports the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults. It is regarded as an important time of togetherness, helping to deepen the sense of community within the school. Both pupils and adults appreciate it as a time for thinking and reflection. This is stimulated by consideration of Christian stories, values and ideas. Worship is invitational in nature, allowing each person to engage as they choose. Discussion, prayer, singing and personal reflection are all part of worship. This enables all to respond in their own way, regardless of individual belief. Beyond collective worship, there are occasions, within the curriculum and at other times, to consider and discuss big spiritual, ethical and philosophical ideas. There are also regular opportunities to engage in prayer during the school day, creating moments of peace and reflection. In these ways, pupils are supported in developing spiritually. Pupils are eager to be junior faith leaders, planning and leading worship as part of this role. The school has a strong relationship with the local parish church and its worshipping community. This has been further deepened by new initiatives, such as school involvement in some Sunday church worship. The closeness of this relationship supports both organisations in their care for, and support of, the community.

Within the culture of aspiration, there is a strong sense of teamwork and mutual support among the staff. Staff across all roles feel valued by leadership and hold leaders in high regard. They are confident that their wellbeing is a priority and are grateful for the opportunities available to them to develop professionally. Staff are also highly motivated to work for the good of the school and the local community. As one member of staff expressed it, ‘It makes you want to bring your best every day.’ Pupils value the support given to them by adults in the school to help them to achieve. They feel that behaviour in school is good and relationships with each other are generally positive. As a result, pupils are inclusive in their attitudes and are accepting of those who are different from them. Parents are also very positive about the school and the opportunities it provides. They particularly value the culture of care their children experience. As one parent put it, ‘The school radiates kindness.’

Pupils understand their responsibility for their actions and the impact that these have on others. They eagerly notice when their peers and staff live out the school vision. They are proud that this can result in public recognition and rewards for those who are identified in this way. Pupils learn about issues and injustices in the world through the curriculum. Some acts of collective worship also focus

on current affairs. The school models how to respond to these, supporting a range of charitable causes. Some pupils, particularly the school council, have followed this example. They are beginning to feel empowered to take action to address needs in their environment. They have successfully raised money for a local hospice and begun a campaign to improve road safety near the school. However, many pupils do not yet respond independently to the needs they have identified in the world.

Pupils enjoy RE lessons and have a well-developed understanding of Christian beliefs and practices as a result. They have some knowledge of religions other than Christianity and non-religious worldviews, but this is notably less secure than for Christianity. Leaders have identified that this is because the current RE curriculum focuses predominantly on learning about Christianity. As a result, the school is in the process of introducing a new RE curriculum to address this issue. The Diocese is supporting the school in this. RE teaching is engaging, with creative approaches bringing the learning to life. There are opportunities to discuss, reflect upon and respond to what is being learnt. Visitors, including faith leaders from different religions, help pupils gain a first-hand experience of beliefs and practices. There is a focus on recall of key information and vocabulary. Regular assessment within lessons is used to identify what has been learnt and to support subsequent teaching.

Middleton Parish is a school where grace for each other abounds within a culture of encouragement and care. It aspires to excellence for everyone and so supports pupils and adults in their journey towards this end. In this way, it makes a positive and significant impact on the lives of all within the school community.

The inspection findings indicate that Middleton Parish Church of England VA Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	25 March 2024	URN	105821
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	438
Diocese	Manchester		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	John Shelton		
Chair	Helen Majerski		
Inspector	Rupert Madeley	No.	2120