

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Barnabas Church of England Primary Academy

Vision

Achieving great things through Learning and growing together in a love-filled Christian family.

'That they shall have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10

St Barnabas Church of England Primary Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The well-established and embedded Christian vision is clearly articulated and understood by the whole school community. Lived out daily, it allows pupils and adults to flourish and experience life in all its fullness.
- Wellbeing is at the heart of relationships throughout this school. All are known and valued as unique and cherished individuals. The individualised support is greatly appreciated. This enhances the mental health and wellbeing of adults and pupils.
- Through high-quality enrichment and varied opportunities to take on responsibility in school, pupils are ambitious for themselves and their community. They know their views are valued and that their actions make a positive difference.
- Collective worship is fundamental to the spiritual life of the school. It incorporates opportunities for participation and reflection on the school's Christian vision and values. It provides inspirational and engaging experiences that are accessible to all, enabling spiritual growth.
- The strong vision has shaped the Religious Education (RE) curriculum. It is well planned, relevant and purposeful. Consequently, pupils flourish in RE.

Development Points

- Enable pupils to gain a deeper understanding of what justice means in a global context. This is to empower them to take ownership in challenging injustice.



Inspection Findings

Achieving great things through learning and growing together in a love-filled Christian family is fully realised at St Barnabas Church of England Primary Academy. Rooted in theology, this vision permeates all aspects of school life and is a lived reality. This guiding principle is inspired by St Barnabas, the encourager. This shapes a nurturing, supportive culture where pupils understand that 'we don't just grow ourselves, we grow with one another.' The vision is actively shaped by staff, pupils, governors and parents. These voices are heard and valued. Strategic and financial decisions are explicitly guided by the vision. It is a central driver of improvement, not just a statement. As a result, the school is an inclusive, encouraging and loving community. Professional development is prioritised with staff accessing high-quality training. They feel valued and supported personally, professionally and spiritually. This allows them to thrive as confident, capable practitioners proud to be part of a strong team. Partnerships with the diocese, local authority, and Cidari Multi Academy Trust bring mutual support and challenge. These partnerships enrich the school's provision and help express the vision in policy and practice.

Spiritual development is intentionally planned across the curriculum with a shared understanding of spirituality between adults and pupils. Teachers create meaningful opportunities for pupils to explore their relationship with themselves, others, the world, and God. Spontaneous 'wow' moments are valued alongside planned experiences, supporting each individual's spiritual journey. Forest school and Createability club provide rich ways for pupils, including those with additional needs, to engage with God's creation. These experiences embody the vision of living life in all its fullness. Pupil voice is encouraged and acted upon, such as in the creation of the spiritual garden - a space for quiet reflection and prayer. Pupils are rightly proud of this and know they 'have a place to talk to God in our own time.' Teachers embed strategies such as 'three good things' to encourage gratitude and mindfulness, supporting emotional health and spiritual flourishing in adults and pupils.

Worship is inclusive, joyful and central to school life. Pupils and adults lead, participate in, and evaluate worship that is rooted in Anglican traditions. It is enriched by Makaton signing and inspiring songs. It provides space for reflection and personal response, for example through paired turn and talk reflections. The use of prayers that incorporate physical expressions fosters a safe and nurturing space where children can explore and express their individual spirituality. Initiatives such as the "Year of Prayer" include ribbon prayers, prayer bunting, bubble prayers, and more. Pupils appreciate that they can pray anytime, anywhere. The local vicar, and close links with the church, play a key role in worship. The Friday celebration highlights how the vision has been lived out during the week. Worship is valued as a space 'where pupils and adults gather as one, connect with God, and each other.'

The Christian vision creates a culture in which all are treated with dignity, respect, love and compassion. Leaders model this by prioritising wellbeing and mental health. The appointment of Mental Health First Aiders, alongside initiatives such as wellbeing walks and dress-to-express days, support emotional and spiritual flourishing. Staff know they are valued and appreciate their working environment as one filled with care and support. Regular wellbeing surveys shape leadership decisions. There is open communication with leaders in which feedback is welcomed and acted upon. Governors take their duty of care seriously and ensure that the wellbeing of leaders is also monitored. There is a tangible culture of trust and teamwork. The vision fosters a close-knit, supportive environment where pupils and adults alike, feel valued and included.

The school community is committed to justice, diversity, and equality. Pupils participate in projects such as Fairtrade campaigns, refugee support, and environmental actions like litter picking. They take pride in their peer mediation roles, helping others resolve conflict fairly and kindly. This reflects a practical commitment to social equity in which fairness prevails and relationships are restored. While pupils show strong understanding of local and school-based justice, global awareness is not as strongly developed. Diversity is respected, and a linking project with a school in a different context deepens pupils' appreciation of cultural differences. Pupils recognise and



respect differing opinions and identities. Leadership groups like RotaKids, Worship Our Way, and the School Council give pupils meaningful roles in shaping school life and living out the Christian vision. These roles nurture democratic values and responsibility. Everyone has a voice at St Barnabas. There are links with churches of various denominations—United Reformed, Catholic, and Methodist. Visits to places of worship from a wide range of faiths helps pupils understand and celebrate the diversity within Christianity and beyond.

Religious Education (RE) is a core subject at St Barnabas. It has a dedicated place in the timetable and is taught across all key stages. The curriculum meets the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement fully and is well led and resourced. Staff are supported in RE through team teaching and coaching. CPD is frequent and targeted, building teacher confidence and theological understanding. Books and scrapbooks show strong progression in knowledge, questioning, and personal response. The curriculum includes a wide range of worldviews. Pupils learn about Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, and non-religious perspectives. They explore how faith shapes identity, belonging, and ethical choices. Creative and comparative tasks, such as exploring naming ceremonies and belonging across religions, encourage empathy and deeper understanding. RE is enriched through Christian festival celebrations, Inter Faith Week, and workshops led by faith visitors. Pupil input helps shape the RE curriculum with tools like Lego Serious Play supporting creative enquiry. Learning is question-led and sequenced, supported by RE dashboards with 'I know' and 'I can' statements. Cross-curricular links, such as exploring the parable of the Mustard Seed through art, make theology tangible. Visits to local places of worship, learning about Gandhi's visit to Darwen, and the use of digital resources broaden pupils' awareness of faith in context. These experiences make RE authentic, relevant, and rooted in lived experience.

Assessment is both formative and summative. Pupils' progress is evaluated, and support is given where needed. This ensures RE is rigorous and inclusive. Pupils speak confidently about what they learn. They engage with big questions such as 'Why did Jesus tell this story?' and 'How does this affect believers today?' The Christian vision is the heartbeat of St Barnabas, ensuring that children and adults are nurtured to grow, learn and flourish together.

Information

Address	Knowlesly Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2JA		
Date	24 June 2025	URN	141483
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	207
Diocese	Blackburn		
MAT	Cidari Multi Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Becky Ham		
Chair of Governors	Jennifer Frankish		
Inspector	Yvette Sullivan		