

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John's Church of England Primary School

Address	Burnley Road, Cliviger, Burnley, Lancashire B10 4SU		
Date of inspection	07 February 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	Blackburn	URN	119432

Overall Judgement	Grade	Excellent
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

St John's Church of England School is a primary with 201 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities is slightly above national averages. The school was judged to be good by OFSTED in January 2018. The parish is currently without a vicar. Significant staff changes since the last inspection include the appointment of two new senior staff.

The school's Christian vision

"Our church school, through its love of God and its Christian values, seeks to promote responsibility and respect for others, whilst encouraging the growth of each individual within the school community"
"Love one another as Jesus loved us" (John 3 v 34-35)

Key findings

- Exemplary leadership ensures a deeply Christian learning community in which every member flourishes. The Christian vision is thoroughly embedded by dedicated staff and committed governors who are passionate in driving school improvement.
- Exceptionally inclusive, nurturing relationships, based on Christian love, have a significant impact on all members of the school community. These are highly effective in sustaining pupils and adults at times of personal need, supporting their mental health and emotional wellbeing extremely well.
- The spiritual life of the school is greatly enhanced by sustained, mutually beneficial partnerships across several local churches. This has a significant impact on the wider Christian life of the school.
- Inspiring collective worship is highly inclusive and greatly valued and enjoyed by all members of the school community. As a result, pupils have an excellent appreciation of prayer and reflection.
- There is a bold approach to key concepts and big questions through particularly engaging religious education (RE). This has a considerable impact on pupils' spiritual development.

Areas for development

- Deepen pupils' spiritual development through a greater number of pupils, across the age groups, planning and leading collective worship.
- Develop pupils' skills to engage in social change in order to gain a deeper global perspective.

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

Inspection findings

The strength of the school's Christian vision is evident in its great relevance to the daily life of the school. Leaders actively ensure that the vision's biblical roots are lived out through Christian values such as respect and forgiveness. The staff is keenly focused in enabling pupils to use Jesus as their role model. Therefore, pupils are eager to show Jesus' love for others whilst flourishing as cherished members of the school community. Shared Christian love permeates school life. One pupil commented, 'The vision helped me through hard times and made me the person I am today.' The school's vision has a significant impact on the wider school community. The school's Christian values are lived out beyond school. For instance, to exemplify their good behaviour, a younger pupil listed the values in a letter to Santa. One parent described the school's love and support as 'overwhelming' in a time of need. Highly effective partnerships with several local churches, enrich the Christian life of the school and provide valuable support for worship. This is clear in the exceptional way different denominations have come to the school's aid in the absence of a vicar. Staff skills and knowledge have been effectively nurtured through well targeted professional development, including a church school focus. A culture of trust is extremely supportive of staff in growing their leadership skills. A new member of staff commented that they had been empowered by the 'faith people show in you'.

Leaders and governors know their school extremely well and are fully involved in the life of the school. Governors are driven by the vision to 'nurture every pupil's potential'. The school's Christian vision and values are at the heart of all decision making. Rigorous self-evaluation and thorough monitoring activities have ensured that robust systems lead to school improvement. As a result, strategic planning is highly effective in addressing recent challenges faced by the school. Book scrutiny, undertaken by governors, is one example of the leadership's rigor in sustained monitoring activities. Therefore, key decisions impact on positive outcomes for pupils. This includes focused intervention in raising standards so that they consistently exceed national average scores. The Christian vision also underpins the curriculum design with links across subjects, ensuring broad and balanced provision for all pupils. Pupils enjoy a variety of thoughtfully planned, rich experiences. Outdoor education is specifically chosen because it is delivered by a Christian adventure centre. Consequently, pupils are keen to embrace new experiences and their deep curiosity is evident in lessons. Debate is a key feature of lessons. Parents were animated in describing how much their children relished sharing their ideas in this way. The school is exceptionally inclusive. The school has made bold decisions regarding staffing to ensure all pupils' needs are fully met. Innovative and collaborative practices support the most vulnerable of pupils. Activities with local schools provide enriching curriculum experiences, tailored for individual pupils. The staff then celebrate their contributions ensuring they have a voice.

Pupils are exceedingly compassionate, regularly showing God's love in action across the community. There is great support for the individual charities chosen by each class. Likewise, pupils are quick to be charitable in response to a need. The use of different resources ensures that pupils are kept abreast of world events in an age appropriate manner. RE is also used to deepen pupils' understanding of current issues. A Year 5 lesson drew comparisons between modern day refugees and the Jewish festival of Sukkot, remembering the Jews' flight from Egypt. A few pupils are beginning to take initiative in challenging injustice. For example, one pupil has taken it upon herself to write to the council expressing her opinion regarding a local issue. However, as yet this is not fully embedded across the school.

Provision for pupils' spiritual development and emotional wellbeing is considerable. There is a keen focus on forgiveness and reconciliation, resulting in a loving environment and exceptionally high levels of behaviour. One pupil commented that 'Bullying isn't right, Jesus wouldn't bully people.' A member staff gave an example of a pupil living out the school's Christian values when supporting a new child. The pupil helped them make right choices at playtime by saying, 'God and Jesus are in our hearts.' The school has embraced a variety of innovative strategies to support good mental health in staff and pupils. The 'Rainbows' scheme is one example of the school's success in promoting positive pupil well-being. Focused links have a very positive impact on pupils' understanding of different cultures and beliefs, for example, through collaborations with other schools and a faith centre. One pupil simply stated, 'We're all the same in God's eyes.' The school is extremely hospitable and extends a most courteous welcome to visitors. This is demonstrated in the regular 'elders' teas that provide meaningful opportunities to share time and talents with older members of the community.

The school's vision is at the heart of collective worship. It brings the community together to be nurtured by God's love. Thorough planning, based on the church year, is underpinned by the life and teaching of Jesus. Worship

frequently explores the school's Christian values ensuring pupils gain a deeper understanding of the different concepts. Worship is a joyous, interactive occasion which pupils relish because they feel included and involved. Pupils' participation in drama, quizzes, readings and imaginative activities all ensure that worship is a highly engaging and meaningful experience. Worship Club are exemplary role models in their regular contributions to worship. At home, pupils often share the hymns and praise songs they have enjoyed in school. Through the effective use of candles and prayer, pupils gain an awareness of the Holy Trinity. Frequent visitors from local churches provide support for worship following the planned themes. This long established collaboration has built positive relationships with the school. Pupils look forward to their visits and enjoy the variety they bring. Prayer in the school was described as a 'time of calmness, a moment to be closer to God'. Pupils are reassured by prayer. An older child explained that when times are tough they are comforted and feel at ease, 'knowing that God is there for them'. Pupils write prayers and they are used at different times during the school day. Pupils are also familiar with traditional greetings, graces and prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer. Evaluation of worship is routine and undertaken across the school. Pupils also have time to reflect after worship in designated journals. Pupils give examples of how worship has developed following their feedback.

St John's is exceptional in how it lives the Christian vision, nurturing its community through God's love. It has a lasting impact and makes a transformational difference to the lives of pupils and adults. Former pupils regularly return on Friday after school to check in on the younger pupils they buddied. An older pupil explained, 'It's a school you want to come to. You can trust the people because they live out the word of God.'



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

An inspiring and creative approach to RE enables pupils to explore key concepts in considerable depth. Pupils are eager and confident learners, working in a well-established secure and respectful environment. As a result, pupils embrace challenge using a wide range of enquiry skills. The RE curriculum is keenly focused in ensuring that pupils gain a respectful understanding of world religions. Teachers are resourceful in using RE to deepen pupils' knowledge of Christianity as a diverse faith. Rigorous leadership of the subject is highly supportive of staff in the delivery of RE. Likewise, effective assessment ensures that progress for all pupils is rapid. Attainment is high enabling all pupils to flourish in the subject. The school meets its statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship.

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