

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Address	Bolton Road, Hawkshaw, Bury BL8 4JL		
Date of inspection	17 October 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Manchester	URN	105340

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

School context

St Mary's is a primary school with 101 pupils on roll. School has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity. One pupil speaks 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 and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages with no pupils being supported with an EHC plan.

The school's Christian vision

Believe and Achieve Together. At St Mary's, we are building a loving, caring, inclusive community, working together to provide every child with a high quality learning experience. We support all, as we celebrate achievements and provide our children with a foundation of faith, hope and aspiration in an ever-changing world. "I pray that you would be rooted and established in love.....Filled to the measure of the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3 17-19)

Key findings

- The deeply embedded Christian vision, which is promoted and lived by leaders, shapes and informs all aspects of school life and provides motivation for the whole school community.
- Underpinned by the Christian vision and values, the school delivers a bespoke curriculum, through which highly effective religious education(RE) teaching permeates, leading to a deepening of pupil's spiritual lives.
- Christian love, care and support is lived out by the whole school community in the way in which they tirelessly support each other and strive to achieve.
- Christian values including trust and friendship have an extremely strong impact on pupils' exemplary behaviour and their valuable contribution to the leadership and development of the school.
- The parents and wider community endorse the school as an exemplary centre of compassion and care where Christian values are at its core.

Areas for development

- Increase the opportunities for personal reflection and prayer so as to encourage further deepening of the pupils' spiritual lives.
- To build on the core of adopted Christian values to better reflect the evolving nature and development of the school.

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

Living out their adopted theological foundation from Ephesians, St Mary's is passionately committed to building a loving, caring and inclusive community where the school family work together to give every child learning experiences of the highest possible quality. This is clearly and effectively underpinned by a well-embedded Christian vision with its foundation rooted in Christian love, hope and aspirations. The distinctively Christian vision is well-embedded and rooted explicitly in theology. Governors and school leaders clearly articulate and demonstrate how all key decisions, processes and policies radiate from their shared Christian vision. Leaders speak with passion about this vision. Inspirational school leaders effectively ensure that it shapes policy and drives strategic direction. Inclusiveness, Christian love, respect, care and compassion for the school and the community it serves, ensures its overtly Christian mission is highly effective, appreciated and makes a difference to people's lives. All members of the school community know each other really well and speak fondly of events in life where they have felt truly supported. The school family speak proudly of the 'St Mary's Way'. This is a loving and extremely well-coordinated approach to meeting the needs of all pupils. The Christian values and inclusive practices in school ensure diversity is understood and embraced by all. Families of pupils who join the school appreciate its supportive, caring qualities during their transition into the school. They experience Christian love in action and one parent summed this up by describing the school as a 'hidden gem'.

School leaders have developed a bespoke curriculum through which the adopted Christian values and RE themes weave. It is crafted around the interests and needs of the school community and is reflective of the school's focused Christian vision stating that each child will be encouraged to 'believe and achieve'. The curriculum's distinctive personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), worship and religious education are linked to other subjects and support the school's clear Christian vision. The adoption of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource alongside the Diocese of Blackburn's agreed syllabus for RE has ensured prior learning is systematically built upon. Planning for RE is extremely effective and ensures that pupils are challenged to think profoundly and consider other viewpoints. Theological discussion is encouraged. Pupils and the curriculum leader are passionate about RE. High quality training has been delivered which has resulted in teachers being confident. Pupils are regularly challenged during lessons to answer life's 'big' questions. Pupils show maturity in their fearless questioning and profound responses.

Published performance data shows the significant impact the curriculum is having on the pupils. Test results are well above national averages and pupils make very good progress in all areas. Vulnerable pupils are given exceptional support and careful tracking ensures they achieve their full potential. In RE pupils' Bible knowledge and understanding is impressive. They readily make links during discussion to the stories shared during worship. They also make mature comparison to texts from other religions and cultures. Spiritual growth naturally develops across the entire school through conversation, debate and prayer, but there are insufficient opportunities for personal reflection.

School enjoys strong partnerships. The RE curriculum leader has a significant impact on the Christian distinctiveness and quality of RE in other schools. She delivers training and shares her extensive knowledge by enthusiastically leading the local diocesan church schools hub. Well established schools partnerships support pupils' knowledge of and respect for different cultures and faiths. As a result of this, pupils show Christian love and care through their mature response to the social action activities. They speak passionately about things they have done that have made a significant difference to the lives of other people.

The carefully planned collective worship shows the school's vision in action. Leaders plan meticulously ensuring that worship provides a rich range of opportunities for all. Christian values are at the core of collective worship with global themes featuring regularly. This ensures that the area to improve from the last inspection has been fully addressed. Pupils play an active role in delivering, planning and evaluating the impact of collective worship through the well-established, proactive faith group. Everyone in the worshipping community has the opportunity to reflect on half termly themes. This reflection leads to discussions that demonstrate the pupils' mature understanding. Collective worship is both invitational and inclusive. It is seen as pivotal in maintaining the close bond between school and church. Clergy lead school worship regularly and in church at key times in the Christian calendar. Prayer is valued with prayer boxes being available in all classrooms. A new school prayer has recently been introduced and its spiritual impact reflects the core themes of the school family.

School has well established and close links with St Mary's church and the village community. School and its proactive parents' group organise and engage with regular exciting events and activities. This outstanding engagement ensures the Christian mission and values of the school have a significant and celebrated impact

throughout the village. Many people value working in the community garden with the school family and find it beneficial for personal wellbeing and building relationships. School regularly worships in church and families value these opportunities to join together to pray and praise God. A tangible sense of love and care for each other runs throughout the school and spills out into the community around it. There is a real sense of everyone being part of a family. Parents speak of the differences they have seen in their children, and are amazed at how quickly significant progress has been made both academically and socially. The buddy scheme where a younger or new pupil is supported by an older pupil is extremely effective resulting in friendships which span years. Pupils behave exceptionally well in this nurturing environment. The few who struggle are nurtured and loved by staff and peers reflecting their shared Christian values. Attendance is sympathetically managed. Staff rigorously, but sensitively, track and follow up absences resulting in overall attendance being well above the national average.

The school community is inclusive and is like a family where no-one is isolated and everyone belongs. All pupils have access to areas where they can find support. They know that they will be given space and strategies to help them to work through their feelings with someone they trust, resulting in them feeling more resilient. Christian values form the foundation of the school from which lifelong relationships with God and each other are cultivated.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

Evidence shows that challenging themes are addressed extremely thoroughly including such themes as the triune nature of God. Pupil responses show considerable maturity in thinking and include higher order questioning. The highly effective curriculum ensures themes are built upon as pupils move through school. Clear cross curricular links reinforce thinking and learning in RE. Leaders ensure that the teaching of RE is of high quality and impacts on learning. Assessment of each unit shows a significant development in pupils understanding and, with progress at least as good as in other academic areas and often outstanding.

Headteacher	Geraldine Woodward
Inspector's name and number	Angela Knowles 497