

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

### The Deanery Church of England High School and Sixth Form College, Wigan

Address Frog Lane, Wigan. WN1 1HQ

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

**Overall grade** **Excellent**

**The impact of collective worship** **Excellent**

**The effectiveness of religious education (RE)** **Excellent**

#### School's vision

As a Church of England school, we aim to provide an education for life, enabling all of our school community to flourish and live life to the full.

#### Key findings

- The Deanery's effective Christian vision and all its work is firmly rooted in the Bible. This creates an excellent, inclusive, aspirational learning community where pupils and adults are known, nurtured and inspired.
- The headteacher, driven by his personal Christian commitment, is inspirational in his leadership and relentless determination. Supported by his dedicated staff, this creates and sustains a school in which pupils and adults flourish.
- The school vision is powerfully lived out through exceptional support for the wellbeing and mental health of all members of the school community. This ensures that no one who may be experiencing difficulties is left unnoticed or unsupported.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the life of The Deanery. Pupils and staff highly value the rich and varied opportunities which it brings for reflection, focus and inspiration.
- Religious Education (RE) is very effectively led. Teachers provide interesting and challenging lessons which are enjoyed by pupils. This enables them to make very strong progress and gives them a clear understanding of Christianity and other faiths. It gives them the ability to respond effectively to big questions.

#### Areas for development

- Explore ways in which the school can share its excellent practice in being transformational in the lives of its pupils and wider community.
- Strengthen and broaden pupils' role as courageous advocates. This will further increase their ability to challenge social injustice and inequalities at local, national and global levels.
- Develop the provision of sixth form RE to enable pupils to further explore and critically reflect upon religious, spiritual and philosophical convictions.

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 Deanery's Christian vision is the lens through which every relationship, action and plan in the school is viewed. It is excellently woven into every area of school life and reaches far into its local community. Through it, a wonderful, inclusive, nurturing community is created in which every individual is deeply valued and cherished. Everybody is enabled to flourish richly and live life to the full. Leaders, staff and governors speak passionately about God's love and care for all. Because of this, they are outstanding in ensuring that the school enables each person to know, understand and use their God-given gifts and talents. Through robust monitoring, governors ensure that the school's Christian vision remains high profile. The school vision, and the scripture which underpins it, is clearly understood and embraced by the whole community. Along with inspiring images, a range of verses from the Bible feature in large displays throughout the school. These boldly proclaim the gospel message, reinforcing the vision and values. They challenge and motivate all who frequent the school.

The excellent curriculum is devised through staff working with the values of the gospel at the heart of their planning. This results in relevant, rich, motivating courses that meet the needs of pupils of all abilities who enjoy their studies. In turn this leads to them having good attendance, behaving excellently and making progress. Character, moral and spiritual development are deeply and specifically embedded into all subjects of the curriculum. This contributes to an outstanding environment where pupils naturally live out the school mantra 'work hard, be kind, make a difference'. Big questions are a significant feature of lessons and enable pupils to develop a deep understanding of major issues and inequalities in the world. An exceptionally wide ranging and varied offer of extra-curricular and leadership opportunities have a high take up amongst pupils. These are effective in further developing pupils' resilience, confidence, new skills, aspirations and wellbeing. Inspired by the vision, leaders and governors have made bold decisions to invest in extremely dedicated and skilful pastoral, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and inclusion teams. The school's Gatehouse is an excellently led facility dedicated for those who require specialist nurturing. This provision results in highly effective care for those with specific additional and personal needs and ensures that no one is left unsupported.

The headteacher, staff, governors and clergy are fervent in ensuring that everyone in the school thrives and lives life to the full. A major emphasis is nurturing all the community in every area of their mental health and wellbeing. Significant resources and excellent teams are highly effective in the prevention, early identification and support of issues that may create problems. Outstanding, well-targeted provision exists for every concern or issue which a member of the school community may encounter. In addition to prayer, various groups and buddying systems are in place for those who may need them. These include for example, bereavement, crises, eating disorders and issues of gender and identity. Pupils, staff and families welcome the many generous ways in which they are valued, nurtured and cared for.

The school vision inspires work to champion and support charities at international, national and local levels. The impact of the school's desire to follow gospel principles through partnership with a local homeless charity is particularly impressive. Through this, pupils are becoming increasingly effective in understanding and challenging social injustice and inequality.

The atmosphere and environment of the school is calm and purposeful with a powerful hallmark of respect and excellent relationships at all levels. If pupils fall short of the school's high expectations, forgiveness and reconciliation are quickly used to re-establish good relationships. A strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the school is highly evident and all are welcomed and included. This creates an outstanding environment of safety and inclusion where difference is positively embraced. All are treated with respect and dignity as valued children of God.

The school has exceptional, highly beneficial partnerships with the Diocese, the benefice of Wigan and other local churches. Their clergy, leaders and many members are very actively involved in supporting the life of the school community in a plethora of ways. Individual clergy have meaningful links to year groups. The inspiring chaplain also works as the local churches' Head of Youth. All this results in exemplary, positive work and relationships which are highly successful in supporting the flourishing of pupils and adults. Working together, through their vision, shared love and concern for the school and people of the town, many initiatives are thriving. They bring confidence, hope, changed lives and an understanding that each person is known and loved as a child of God. The school community is excellent in responding generously to the concerns or issues faced by pupils and families. During the pandemic, the school has been

the bedrock for many. Parents speak of the school's significant support and impact before, during and since COVID lockdowns.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school with themes skilfully woven around its Christian vision and values. This results in a shared unity of Christian focus and purpose which permeates the daily life of the school. The highly effective chaplain is proactive in her role ensuring that worship is relevant, rich and engaging. Active and enthusiastic pupil ambassadors support the leadership, planning and evaluation of worship. As a result, it is varied and includes effective opportunities for spiritual development, reflection, prayer and life-application. In addition to liturgical responses, form worship is frequently interactive, and pupils are often moved to respond practically to themes which they encounter. Worship focuses around the church calendar and at key times, year groups attend services at church for festivals and eucharist. Through this, pupils gain an understanding of a breadth of Christian expression which they describe as meaningful and challenging. Pupils develop a strong sense of spiritual awareness through varied experiences. These include, prayer space, guided reflection, and at key times, acts of commissioning. Many speak of the deeply moving experience and peace which worship activities bring.

At The Deanery, RE is a subject in which pupils are motivated and which is given a very high status. In addition to Christianity, pupils study major world faiths. Using big questions and inspiring lessons, pupils are very ambitious and skilled in the exploration and critical analysis of theological and philosophical ideas. Pupils recognise that RE lessons are a safe place to respectfully debate and reflect upon matters of faith and its impact upon contemporary issues. This enables them to be highly proficient in articulating relevant views and perspectives. At present, timetabled opportunities for all sixth form pupils to build on their earlier studies are limited. The head of department ensures that she and her team are clear about and share best practice in RE through involvement with local and diocesan groups.



**The effectiveness of RE is**

Excellent

RE is very well taught by a team of highly motivated and well-qualified specialists. Planning is excellent, teaching is rigorous, and the engaging lessons are enjoyed by pupils in all year groups. The development of religious literacy is keenly emphasised and highly effective in equipping pupils for strong academic achievement. It allows pupils to gain a deep understanding of the rich and challenging curriculum. Progress throughout the school is very strong and improving year-by-year.

**Contextual information about the school**

Date of inspection	8 and 9 December 2021	URN	106534
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 January 2015		
School status	Voluntary Aided High School and Sixth Form College	NOR	1436
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese	Liverpool		
Headteacher	Martin Wood		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged in line with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information	The headteacher was appointed in April 2019.		
Inspector's name	Peter Coates	No.	937