

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

### **Simonstone St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Address School Lane, Simonstone, Burnley, BB12 7HR

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**

'The Lord is my rock.' Psalm 18:2

Building a firm foundation based on faith and knowledge to enrich life's journey. We learn to connect with God through valuing the world we share and nurturing our friendships. Working together as a Christian family to achieve our best, learning with confidence to fulfil our dreams.

#### **Key findings**

- Inspirational leadership at all levels driven by a clear shared vision expressed through shared Christian values. It includes the extremely proactive involvement of the clergy and parish who ensure the school's church foundation is recognised and valued in the community.
- The exciting and inspiring creative curriculum meets the needs of the whole child, socially, morally, spiritually and academically. This secures excellent outcomes for pupils, including the most vulnerable. It supports and develops extremely firm foundations, which prepares pupils well for their next steps in life.
- Exemplary behaviour and an explicitly caring ethos are transformational in supporting the physical and emotional wellbeing of all. It radiates from exceptionally strong relationships between staff, pupils and the wider school community, which are clearly rooted in school's Christian values.
- The exceptional contribution of highly inclusive collective worship promotes the vision and underpins school life. It inspires pupils to be their best, whilst living out the Christian vision in the daily lives of the whole school community.
- Pupils value and enjoy religious education (RE) which is creative, engaging and challenging. It provides excellent opportunities to explore life's 'big questions'.

#### **Areas for development**

- To live out the school's Christian vision of enriching life's journey by sharing the excellent practice of this school as a church school, with other schools.
- To implement plans, already in place, to deepen pupils' understanding of a wider range of world faiths.

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

Psalm 18:2 'The Lord is my rock', underpins the work of this distinctively Christian school. The aspirational, fully inclusive vision, which is built upon firm foundations, is the driving force for the entire learning community. A parent recalled their child being encouraged by a teacher saying 'It doesn't matter how small you are, this is what you can achieve.' The overarching Christian values including love and care weave through all aspects of school life. The vision is kept vibrant and effective by regular reviews and is constantly referred to by pupils and adults. Parents are proud to identify themselves as also being members of the school family. The tireless work of all members of staff ensures all pupils can access the full curriculum. Highly effective teaching and learning, maintained during the pandemic, ensures pupils are making excellent progress. Progress is tracked rigorously and appropriate interventions are employed as needed. Highly skilled school leaders and governors ensure the targeted funding within the school budget supports as many pupils as possible.

Pupils love school and care about each other. The effectiveness of the buddy scheme radiates out into the village community. A parent spoke about their child talking to older children in the supermarket, the friendships made in school last a lifetime. Adults remain part of this loving family. Leaders have created a harmonious staff team where morale is extremely high. Many speak of how being part of the amazing team had restored their faith in God, been transformative, and supported and upheld them during challenging times. Attendance is exceptional and figures for this academic year are above the national figure. There have been no exclusions.

Leadership at all levels is a strength of the school. Governors know the school well. They are extremely proactive. Rigorous monitoring ensures that the needs of all pupils are being met, and that the Christian vision remains a priority within school development planning. Their consistent focus on the health and wellbeing of staff demonstrates Christian love in action. During lockdown, when the school was working remotely, the chair of governors ensured staff were well by having regular contact with them.

Pupils work hard in a calm and purposeful environment. They behave extremely well and feel safe. The way pupils support each other is exemplary. The older pupils thrive on the many opportunities they have to take responsibilities, and be proactive in the development of the schools' Christian ethos. The work of the highly effective 'Positive Pals' and the wellbeing ambassadors are appreciated by all. Pupils clearly articulate connections between their work and the Christian values of the school. Their outstanding engagement in social action projects reflect their mature sense of justice and tangible care for others. Pupils are self-motivated, working on projects both in and out of school. They confidently initiate projects, many of which really challenge them. Pupils are striving to make God's world 'a better place'.

The curriculum closely supports the individual needs of all the pupils and reflects the Christian vision in action. Although the number of children in school who are vulnerable or are identified as having special educational needs and disabilities is below national averages, the figure is increasing. Governors make strategic financial decisions to support this growing cohort, enabling leaders to ensure all have targeted, highly effective support. This results in pupils making very good progress. The highly creative curriculum is enhanced by the extension of the classroom into the beautiful, well-resourced grounds. Close curriculum links to collective worship ensures both have an excellent impact on spiritual development. There are many well accessed areas where pupils and adults go for reflection, tranquillity and prayer. Parents are extremely positive about school. They appreciate and support the close links with church. They know their children are loved, valued and cherished.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership for RE and collective worship. There is a wide variety of worship, including celebration of the Eucharist and opportunities both in school and at the local church. All teachers take part in leading and new members of staff are supported by more experienced colleagues. The school proactively supports the

mission of the church within the wider village community. Strong established links are being enhanced by the new incumbent, who is already well known and proactive in school. A group of pupils helped the Bishop of Burnley during the interviewing process building on the close relationship school has with the Diocese. Pupils enjoy worship, with prayer and reflection as key areas, and all actively participate. Themes are clearly rooted in Christian teaching, inclusive and often reflect current world events. As a result of careful and age-appropriate planning for class worship, pupils learn to reflect, think deeply about big issues and readily relate their thinking to the Bible. They have many opportunities to consider 'big' questions from a global perspective and respond thoughtfully, empathically and with maturity. Pupils play a significant part in the planning and evaluation. As a result, worship continues to evolve. They ensure the extremely popular display area in the foyer is relevant. Pupils value prayer as an essential part of their lives and regularly write them to share with each other. Festival services held throughout the year are well attended by the whole school community. The pupils can make extremely mature connections between themselves and the worship themes. This results in its impact being evident in every aspect of the life of the school.

RE makes a very significant contribution to the school's distinctiveness and pupils' spiritual growth. Teachers enjoy delivering the RE curriculum in an extremely creative way. They use the outdoor space regularly. RE lessons are exciting and stimulate discussion. The depth of responses and extent of challenge is reflected in the high quality of the work they produce. Resources from Questful RE and the Understanding Christianity project underpin the curriculum. Pupils have the maturity, confidence and knowledge to challenge ideas and are respectful of other views and opinions. Themes are skilfully planned and weighted to reflect the needs of the school's unique population. Pupils study several world faiths, but evidence shows opportunities to deepen understanding of concepts covered is sometimes limited. Careful questioning and deep thinking helps pupils to explore and reflect on their own beliefs. The depth of responses and extent of challenge is reflected in the high quality of work they produce, which effectively builds on their prior learning. Links to the Diocese are strong and the leaders and staff access regular training.



**The effectiveness of RE is Excellent**

Monitoring and assessment are robust and show that all pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), make excellent progress. RE makes a significant contribution to the pupils' social, moral and spiritual development.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	24 March 2022	URN	119428
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2015		
School status	Voluntary aided primary school	NOR	131
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese	Blackburn		
Headteacher	Christine Smith		
Pupil profile	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 is below national averages.		
Inspector's name	Angela Knowles	No.	497