



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address Dawson Lane, Bierley, Bradford, BD4 6JF

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

School's vision

Life in all its fullness at its heart. (John 10:10)
Working within the context of Christian beliefs and practice: At St John's our children and their families always come first. We value our children's feelings, creativeness and success in their learning equally, helping each child's love of learning grow, whilst also developing their interior posture.

Key findings

- This school is an oasis of hope. The depth, breadth, and aspiration of the Christian vision of the school enables the whole school community to flourish. This vision is firmly rooted in John 10:10. Pupils and staff routinely rely on this as a guiding principle.
- Transformation is an everyday occurrence at St John's. Inclusivity is paramount here; everyone articulates and lives this out. Disagreeing well is explicitly and compellingly modelled.
- Positive, trusting and mutually challenging relationships between the school, the Diocese of Leeds and Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT), leads to an atmosphere where leadership at all levels is exceptionally effective.
- Collective worship is innovative and deeply inclusive. Pupils are rightly proud of their extensive collective worship leadership roles, and they have clear plans for future developments.
- Religious education (RE) is cherished by pupils as a safe place to express their feelings and explore beliefs. The precisely balanced curriculum results in exceptionally engaged learners.

Areas for development

- To build on the already well-developed spiritual self-awareness of pupils. This is so that pupils can confidently articulate the rich culture of deep reflection that exists across the school.
- To further develop collective worship links with neighbouring schools for mutual benefit. This is so that pupils can both lead and experience a greater breadth in collective worship.

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 biblical principle of John 10:10 is truly at the heart of everything at St John's. The vibrant Christian vision infuses all aspects of school life and is treasured, loved and lived by all members of the school community. The vision is underpinned by the school's identified Christian values of compassion, interior posture, wisdom, courage and endurance. Pupils understand and explain interior posture as 'doing the right things because it is the right thing'. Members of the school community eagerly share examples of the vision and values in action. The use of a 'Christian values in action' tree creates a focal point for profound reflection. All members of the school community are enabled to thrive. This is due to the holistic nature of the Christian vision and the way it weaves through all aspects of school life and beyond. Staff and families are keen to share inspirational examples of flourishing. For example, pupils and staff who have found a fresh start, new hope and a future at St John's. The impact of the vision is regularly and transparently monitored resulting in its continued relevance to all. Fullness of life both inspires existing strategic partnerships and drives new ones, such as the collective worship school link.

Collective worship is a joyous golden thread running through and beyond the school day. Worship has a highly significant impact and all are passionate when talking about it. Pupils love to sing worship songs at home, discuss what they have learned and act upon it. Pupil leadership is inextricably woven through every aspect of worship and they are rightly proud of their extensive leadership roles. They have plans to develop their leadership roles further, including even more independently devised and led worship. Visits to collective worship in other schools, in person and virtually are highly effective in sharing good practice. Monitoring of collective worship is comprehensive and deeply meaningful. During recent challenging times the school acted on parental feedback with rapidity so that all continued to flourish in virtual worship. Staff treasure regular prayers before staff meetings and value opportunities to reflect in the school sanctuary. Regular pupil prayer with clergy means that everyone readily talks about how prayer and collective worship make a difference. An extensive range of local clergy contribute to a dynamic diet of worship.

Planned and spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development for all abound within and beyond the curriculum. Careful thought has been given to structuring learning experiences to include spiritual development. For example, knowledge organisers for school trips contain a section on spirituality and reflection. Reflective spaces, including the prayer shed, are highly valued and well-used by pupils. Reflection and silence have a high priority within worship. 'I wonder' questions, together with spiritual curiosity, are explicitly nurtured by staff. As a result, pupils have a highly attuned sense of personal spirituality. However, some pupils would benefit from more support to describe their own spiritual self-awareness.

An intentional approach to inclusion and diversity blossoms from the vision. This ensures that pupils say with confidence 'everyone is special and equal'. Staff are unafraid to challenge barriers to inclusion firmly and effectively. They champion every pupil as if their own. All members of the school community are viewed as made in the image of God and therefore personalisation is a way of life. This is evidenced in a multitude of ways including a staff life coach, gender neutral toilets, transporting pupils to medical appointments and the site manager helping with community needs. Through thankfulness week and work on protected characteristics across all aspects of school, everyone demonstrates their intrinsic connection and value.

The Christian vision relentlessly drives curriculum developments, from which books to read to staff appointments. All aspects of the curriculum have been analysed and contribute to pupils' character development. The huge range of extra-curricular activities and trips are specifically designed to facilitate a full life. Leaders have not shied away from making difficult decisions so that pupils and families can succeed in all areas of their lives. The inclusion team are unobtrusive and exceptional in supporting their community. This was described as, 'help is available, without asking'. Pupils who receive support from the inclusion team are confident to share the impact of this support with other pupils. Behaviour

is exemplary and thinking of others first is as natural as breathing for pupils. Disagreeing well, underpinned by the Christian vision, weaves through all policies and is intentionally modelled to all.

RE is the 'jewel in the crown' of the curriculum. It is meticulously planned yet has scope for flexibility and is always personalised to suit learning needs and context. Pupils and parents prize the space that RE offers to explore a range of beliefs and for pupils to express themselves deeply. Curriculum content is carefully balanced between local context, such as support for refugees via 'Pete's Place', and a broad experience of Christianity as a global world faith. Highly effective monitoring of the impact of RE means that pupils see their feedback is valued and acted upon. Pupils demonstrate extremely high standards of biblical literacy. Partnerships with the diocese and BDAT are highly advantageous in ensuring the highest standards of teaching and learning.

Courageous advocacy is understood as 'standing with' others so that all may experience 'fullness of life'. Examples of social action seen were too numerous to mention. Especially striking was the amount of pupil generated activities. For example, studying climate change within the curriculum resulted in school action, which then inspired out of school individual and family responses. There is a thriving tradition of independent letter writing to politicians and businesses following up individual pupil concerns. The Christian vision at St John's has created an environment where all pupils have the skills and confidence to make a difference.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	27 May 2022	URN	145220
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2015		
School status	Academy – former voluntary controlled primary school	NOR	461
Name of MAT	Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust		
Diocese	Leeds		
Headteacher	Andrew Knight		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information	Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed (January 2018) and the school has joined BDAT Multi Academy Trust (November 2017).		
Inspector's name	Ruth Houston	No.	947