



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

## Wheatley Lane Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address Fence, Burnley, Lancashire, BB12 9ED

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** **Good**

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

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

### School's vision

We provide quality first TEACHING in a LOVING Christian environment where everyone is RESPECTED and VALUED as a unique child of GOD.

*With God's help we do all we can to be the best we can be. Philippians 4:13*

### Key findings

- Faith and worship are at the heart of this school. There is a deep sense of a shared spirituality. The school's values are based on the fruit of the spirit, Galatians 5:22-23. These, the Christian vision and school policies are all firmly rooted in New Testament teaching and shared and understood by all. As a result of consistent and comprehensive application of the vision and values over time, leaders have created an environment where all are empowered to be the best that they can be.
- All members of the school community feel valued as unique children of God. Pupils and staff love coming to school. All feel included and a sense of belonging to a deeply Christian community in which all truly watch over one another in love. As a result, relationships in school are exemplary.
- The school's response to the pandemic has strengthened and deepened relationships between school and the local community, bringing hope and spiritual support at a difficult time.
- Although pupils are involved in local charitable work, their knowledge and understanding of global issues and of disadvantage and deprivation is too limited for them to be effective independent advocates for change.
- Religious Education (RE) is given a high priority and is well led by the very experienced headteacher. Inspirational and challenging teaching promotes reflection and significantly enhances pupils' spiritual development.

### Areas for development

- Further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the 'world as my parish' in order to empower them to better challenge injustice and prepare them to engage in active local and global citizenship.
- Continue to strengthen pupils' knowledge of other major world religions and worldviews, so that the pupils can better understand the impact that they have on their society and culture.

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 presence of God can be felt in this school. The strong personal faith of the headteacher underpins all that the school does. Teaching from across the New Testament has inspired the vision of a deeply Christian community where all feel equally loved and valued. For example, pupils and adults readily refer to the fruits of the spirit, and the school's love charter, based on Matthew 22:36-40 when discussing behaviour and relationships. The committed governing board, with strong representation from the Methodist church, know the school well and are fully involved in reviewing and monitoring the impact of the vision.

Worship is central to the life of the school. All members of the school community testify to the spiritual support they receive through opportunities for celebration, reflection, stillness and prayer. Pupils speak of worship making them feel calmer, happier and joyful. They speak with particular enthusiasm of 'Singing the Faith' and spontaneously burst into song. As John Wesley wished, singing is used to learn the faith and bring the community together. During the pandemic most worship has been class-based but meeting in smaller groups has enabled more personal questioning and a deeper level of spiritual reflection. Pupils talk confidently about planning and leading class worship. Links with the Methodist church, next door, have been maintained with ministers providing weekly virtual worship. This has ensured that the Methodist tradition of worship has been sustained. The increased use of technology has also enabled worship to be shared more widely, promoting the spiritual growth of the whole community.

Outstanding pastoral care involves not only school staff but also input from the Methodist pastoral team and school chaplain, strengthening church and community links. Parents know that if they need help they will be supported; practically, emotionally and spiritually. They speak movingly of how the school has helped them through difficult times such as family bereavement. Engagement with the school has empowered at least two parents to train as support staff in school, improving their life chances. During the pandemic the school has successfully brought the community closer together through the growth of a virtual community, linking school, families and the local Methodist church. Pupils also deliver cards and small gifts to local residents, which enhances this relationship. The creation of a real sense of belonging amongst staff, pupils and the local community makes a vital contribution to the mental health and wellbeing of all.

Staff welcome the loving support of senior leaders and each other. Their wellbeing and professional development have been prioritised within the budget and they feel respected and valued, in keeping with the school's vision. Regular supervision to support their mental health is available. As a consequence, staff absence and turnover is low, allowing consistent high-quality provision. Since the outbreak of the pandemic the school has taken the bold decision to place personal, social and emotional learning at the heart of a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes questioning and creativity. The school has invested in the appointment of emotional learning support assistants and additional training for other staff. Good links with external services, and in-school support, ensure that individual needs are effectively met, including for the increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the support their children receive. Disadvantaged pupils can access free, before- and after-school care and help is provided to ensure they take part in the wider curriculum. During the pandemic the school has ensured that all pupils have access to learning. In this way the school addresses any barriers to learning that pupils may face. As a result, pupils enjoy school, want to do well and work hard. They readily quote Philippians 4:13 and are positive and ambitious about the future. They are curious, reflective and confident learners.

Love is at the heart of the behaviour code that is written by the pupils. By loving God and their neighbour, pupils and adults learn to live well together, showing respect for each other's needs and differences. Pictures of inspirational people such as Greta Thunberg, Marcus Rashford and Alan Turing promote aspiration and respect for diversity and difference. Respect for others is also effectively developed through participation in local projects that enable pupils to meet children from different faiths, ethnic and social backgrounds. Incidents of bullying, prejudicial language or harassment are very rare. Pupils and adults explicitly agree to disagree well and practise forgiveness and reconciliation. For example, pupils refer to solving issues on the playground through agreeing to differ and renew friendships.

Pupils are developing their understanding of 'the world as their parish'. They enthusiastically support local charity

initiatives and sometimes initiate fundraising. A pupil diagnosed with leukaemia recently received a 'Pride of Britain' award for raising a large amount of money for a local hospital. Links with an orphanage in Tanzania give them some understanding of global issues. Their general knowledge and understanding of the wider world and global matters, of disadvantage, deprivation and the exploitation of the natural world is, however, somewhat limited. This affects their confidence and ability to challenge injustice and be independent courageous advocates for change.

As a result of well-planned and engaging lessons pupils enjoy and are challenged by RE. Staff, including those recently appointed, are given appropriate professional development to confidently deliver the rich RE curriculum. This curriculum very effectively enables pupils to develop an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Bible and Christian teaching. Their understanding of other major world faiths is not as good. However, they are able to make links and comment on similarities and differences. Pupils demonstrate a reflective and thoughtful response to RE teaching, applying it to their own lives. As a result, RE teaching makes a significant contribution to their spiritual development. Assessment systems are well embedded, including moderation within school and across the cluster. The headteacher, as RE lead, is part of local clusters that enable her to share good practice, discuss new ideas and moderate work. She is able to support other schools and disseminate best practice more widely.

Over time, leaders have deeply embedded the school's Christian vision. All aspects of the school's provision reflect their determination that all shall be valued, included and allowed to shine. As a result, adults and pupils strive to be the best that they can be, living out John Wesley's vision that all should be empowered to aspire, flourish and achieve. This is a school where people are equipped to live life in all its fullness as God intends.



**The effectiveness of RE is**

Good

Developmental monitoring of RE teaching by the headteacher and by other staff show a consistently high quality of teaching, as verified during the inspection. As a result, pupils of all abilities make progress that is at least good, enabling them to achieve very well overall.

**Contextual information about the school**

Date of inspection	8 December 2021	URN	119702
Date of previous inspection	21 October 2014		
School status	Voluntary aided primary	NOR	208
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Methodist District	Lancashire		
Headteacher	Tracy Hallows		
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 in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Carolyn Whiteway	No.	933