

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Bolton	
Address	Kentford Road, Halliwell, Bolton, BL1 2JL
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

School's vision
<p>Let all that you do be done in love. This is based on 1 Corinthians 16:14.</p> <p>Vision statement: To serve by valuing, inspiring and nurturing everyone, strengthening and celebrating our diverse school community and holding our Christian values at the forefront of everything we do.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's Christian vision is shared, lived out by the school community and is firmly underpinned by biblical roots. This results in excellent relationships and an environment where all feel valued and unique. • The Christian vision ensures the needs of all learners are effectively met. This means pupils with additional needs, or who may be vulnerable, are quickly identified and well supported. • The vision leads to a culture of tolerance and respect. As a result, pupils become advocates for change and instigate a range of social action projects. • Collective worship and the rich, creative curriculum provide ongoing opportunities for prayer, personal reflection and self-awareness. This leads to a progressive deepening of spiritual development. • Religious education (RE) gives pupils a good knowledge of the Bible and of major world faiths. Exploration of core theological concepts is limited.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide more opportunities in RE to explore core theological concepts in order to expand pupils' understanding of Christianity.

Inspection findings

The re-development of the school's Christian vision results in a vision that embodies and permeates the life and work of St Matthew's. This is nourished by strong biblical roots and driven by core values: love, respect, friendship and creativity. Pupils and adults strive to be role models of the values and weekly awards celebrate this. The vision is centred on love. It leads to a school family who nurture and encourage each other to be the best they can be. As a result, all are able to flourish and develop independence.

Senior leaders promote and lead the vision with clarity and passion. It weaves through all aspects of school life with relevance and focus. Governors rigorously monitor the Christian foundation of the school via a clear system of self-evaluation. This means they know the school well and ensure it meets the needs of its diverse community. Parents say this creates a school where people are proud of their beliefs. Senior leaders share their experience of church schools when offering leadership capacity to another school.

The vision leads to a very happy school. Staff feel valued and respected. Leaders challenge them to develop and achieve. They attend training around vision development and well being. They speak of the school as a 'second family' and feel supported during difficult times. Good mental health is encouraged and pupils have access to regular nurture groups and mindfulness activities. Pupils clearly articulate the vision saying, 'Enjoy and love people around you.' As a result, pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they welcome everyone with courtesy and friendliness.

The highly inclusive vision promotes high expectations and aspirations. Learners receive bespoke one to one support and intervention strategies. Parents are complimentary about the way the school invests in pupils with additional needs. They give examples of how regular communication with home, adapted learning and involvement of specialist agencies benefit their children. This enables them to progress academically and socially. The vision has a major impact on the school's vulnerable families and community outreach work. Leaders strategically deploy resources to provide intensive pastoral support, including play therapy. The local community use the school as a centre of support. The school offers a warm space, love and encouragement during difficult times. The link with a local supermarket provides technology resources to assist families at home. This project also allows pupils to sensitively organise and run a foodbank in school.

The vision empowers pupils to take on leadership roles. These include an ethos team and eco warriors. This offers pupils a voice, which they use to the advantage of the wider community. Dismayed by the amount of litter near their homes they organise litter picks. Pupils learn about pollution of the natural world during World Oceans' Week and take action to reduce plastic. Pupils link with a local mosque to provide food parcels for families. They have a mature understanding of inequality and discuss key figures from the apartheid movement, for example, Nelson Mandela. They have a keen sense of injustice and enthusiastically instigate action with a large number of local, national and international charities. The school council raise money to help people in Turkey following an earthquake.

The vision makes an important contribution to spiritual development. The creative curriculum is crafted to meet the learning and spiritual needs of pupils and prepares them for future life. The richness and diversity in the curriculum ooze out of every corner of the school environment. Pupils express themselves through beautiful artwork and imaginative design projects. Difference and diversity are celebrated with pride. The established forest school gives pupils a sense of awe and wonder of the natural world. It offers the freedom to build strength of character in a safe environment. Educational visits to the beach and countryside

enhance this learning and widen pupils' experience invaluablely.

Collective worship is excellent. It is at the heart of school life. It leads to a deepening of spirituality. Pupils of all, or no, faiths are invited to pray or reflect during worship times. They access reflection areas around school. They say, 'Jesus teaches you to pray with your heart.' Parents give examples of how this leads to their children choosing to pray at home, for example, before meals. Adults enjoy leading class worship and value this as a time of calm. Pupils' heartfelt sung praise, accompanied by sign language, is a deeply spiritual experience. Worship is a clear expression of the vision and values and seamlessly links to the school day. Pupils talk about the similarities and differences in how Christians and people from different world faiths worship.

The local church community supports the school in developing worship. They plan alongside staff and lead worship in school. Pupils discuss the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They understand this is represented in worship by a Bible, cross and candle. Learning around Christian festivals and Anglican traditions is enhanced by visits to the local church. The school benefits from the 'Children Changing Places' project run by the diocese. The ethos team develop their skills as young leaders of worship by taking part in 'Upbeat' sessions. Younger pupils benefit from 'Wiggle Worship,' which strengthens the link between the school and church community. Pupils confidently lead spontaneous prayer during class worship. Individual classes present acts of worship for their families.

RE is well led and managed. Leaders engage well with the local diocese to access training and resources. The local RE hub provides a network of good practice and expertise. The enquiry based RE curriculum allows pupils to explore 'big questions' and develop critical thinking skills. Pupils have a good knowledge of the life of Jesus and Bible stories from the Old Testament. They see the relevance of this to their own lives. They provide the story of Jesus befriending Matthew as an example of how 'bad people can change.' They speak of Jesus as the light of the world and link the concept of the resurrection to the importance of forgiveness. Pupils do not currently have enough opportunity to engage with text to explore core theological concepts. RE gives pupils a good knowledge of world faiths. They knowledgably discuss places of worship, holy books and prayer poses. Younger children learn about religious festivals, for example, Christmas and Diwali. Assessment systems enable teachers to track progress effectively in RE. This feeds into future planning and training.

The impact of the Christian vision is best summed up by the actions and words of pupils. They say, 'If you do something, do it in love and be grateful for what you have.'

Information			
School	St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Bolton	Inspection date	14 February 2023
URN	105205	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Manchester	Pupils on roll	441
Headteacher	Kay Ritchie		
Chair of Governors	Paul Strout		
Inspector	Anne Barker	No.	959