

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Barnabas & St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Blackburn	
Address	Oakenhurst Road, Blackburn, BB2 1SN

School vision
<p>At St Barnabas and St Paul's Church of England Primary School, our vision is that we become the best for God that we can be, in all we do, whilst demonstrating Christian values which are pertinent to all faiths.</p> <p>Our vision is based on Colossians 3:23, 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.'</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The united staff team models and lives out the clear Christian vision with energy, hope and a passion for inclusion. This inspires all pupils to work together to 'be the best for God that they can be'. • Leaders explain the Christian vision with conviction and love and ensure that it runs through everything. This has developed a very safe and supportive culture where pupils learn to respect and value one another. • Collective worship is both faithfully Anglican and rigorously inclusive. This enables all pupils and adults to participate with integrity and respect. • Strong leadership of religious education (RE) ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and supports teachers so they teach well. Consequently pupils learn well and make good progress. • School leaders have been tireless in pursuing and establishing links with local churches since the closure of the school's own linked church. Anglican clergy who visit to support the school provide an explicitly Christian visual embodiment of the vision. Pupils know them well and are confident to ask them deep questions.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore partnerships with other schools beyond those already established as a way of further enriching spiritual flourishing. • Strengthen further pupils' understanding of the difference they can make as agents of change beyond their local community.
Inspection findings
<p>Leaders ensure that the Christian vision is at the heart of this school. Pupils acknowledge that it 'makes a good difference' and helps them to do their best. Since the arrival of the current headteacher two years ago and the restructuring of the staff team, the Christian vision has driven everything. The renewed leadership team has a clear focus on the vision. Staff and pupils speak unselfconsciously about 'being the best for God that we can be'. The vision shapes policies and strategy and underpins decision-making. The new behaviour policy, which encourages pupils to</p>

reflect more on their actions, is shaped by the vision. It is effective. Children use the language of the vision even when reflecting on their behaviour at home. Pupils understand what the vision looks like in action because they see it lived out by adults and other pupils. The school's recent success in improving attendance reflects several of the associated Christian values, including hope, compassion and perseverance.

The vision shapes the curriculum. Inclusion matters. Leaders ensure that all pupils can access learning. Pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) are successfully included because personalised support enables them to 'become their best'. Adults offer an extensive range of clubs, providing more opportunities for all pupils to succeed. Leaders have a deep understanding of spirituality. They have used this to audit the school's existing provision. As a result, subject leaders identify and plan for spiritual opportunities within their subjects. Pupils make regular use of the prayer and reflection areas in each classroom. Activities such as 'worry' boxes, 'thank you' boxes and 'prayer trees' provide opportunities for pupils and adults to reflect or pray. Reception pupils, after being at school for only a few weeks, talk about prayer quite naturally. They know that they can pray when they feel sad. Some say that prayers make God happy. One child has even created her own reflection area at home.

Collective worship is remarkably inclusive. This enables all pupils and adults to participate with integrity. The large school population is majority Muslim and all pupils attend collective worship. Leaders clearly acknowledge and value the different faiths represented in the school. Worship is unashamedly Christian, with simple, familiar Anglican responses and extensive use of the Bible. Pupils' knowledge of the Bible outline is good and so they enjoy being able to contribute. Collective worship enriches the spiritual life of the school. Leaders invite pupils to join in with the prayers, allowing time and space for individual reflection. Leaders' careful choice of songs enables everyone present to join in. Pupils and adults sing well together with enthusiasm and respect.

Pupil leaders enrich the school's worship provision. They are a visual reminder of the vision as they work 'with all their heart' to create high quality acts of worship. As they plan, deliver and evaluate worship, these pupils in turn have rich opportunities to deepen their own spirituality. They describe feeling 'joyful' when they lead others. Adults have established links with two Church schools in very different contexts to help pupil leaders further develop collective worship. One school is small and rural, the other large, with mainly White British pupils. Current shared work is focusing on ways of leading worship in response to world events.

Since the previous inspection, the local church has closed. School leaders have worked tirelessly to establish new links and to ensure a visible Anglican 'presence' in the school. Pupils now know clergy from the nearby St Luke's. They are sufficiently at ease with them to ask questions such as, 'What does Jesus mean to you?' Families attend events, such as family fun days, organised by the church. Clergy from St Andrew's have recently joined the governing board. This is enriching partnerships with the church and further strengthening governors' monitoring of the Christian vision.

This school is rich in encouragement. In the spirit of St Barnabas 'the encourager', adults' support for pupils builds up confidence and equips them to flourish. Staff run a well-attended programme of workshops for parents that enables them better to support their children's learning. Families and staff give personal examples of quiet, discreet 'behind-the-scenes' support that leaders provide for their wellbeing. Pupils like the fact that everyone 'gets a turn' at having leadership roles. Involvement in the Outdoor Play and Learning Programme (OPAL) is further strengthening the school's provision for wellbeing. Motivated by 'wanting to be their best for God', the OPAL pupil leaders effectively support others to play well together.

Pupils respond with interest and empathy when they encounter different or challenging viewpoints.



This is because adults teach them the skills for ‘respectful disagreement’ from an early age. In Key Stage 1, for example, teachers use puppets to support pupils to express their own opinions. Respect is evident throughout the school. Pupils are inspired to be agents of change. There is a whole-heartedness about their desire to make a difference. Inspired by collective worship, one pupil organised a raffle to help those affected by the Moroccan earthquake. Another pupil is organising a car wash to raise funds for the school’s missions partners in Kenya and Nigeria. One pupil talks about his changed behaviour after learning about child labour in the chocolate industry in Ghana. Pupils’ thank you letters to the foodbank show a mature understanding of social action.

RE has a very high profile in the school and is highly effective. The subject leaders are experienced senior staff. They ensure that all class teachers have the resources and continuing training to teach the subject well. Strong links with diocesan advisers ensure that training is up-to-date and relevant. The school follows the diocesan syllabus, adapted appropriately for its context. This means, for example, that pupils encounter teaching about key Christian festivals more frequently. An annual multi-faith week allows additional opportunities for visits to places of worship. Governors know about the effectiveness of the curriculum through first-hand visits and regular reports from the headteacher and subject leaders.

Pupils clearly love RE. They value the opportunities to learn ‘how to act respectfully around other people’. They discuss differences between religions with respect and care. Commenting that, ‘We always learn something new’, pupils give numerous examples of RE lessons that made them think hard. Pupils develop appropriate knowledge of core concepts because teaching is good. Progress is strong. Sensitive support for pupils with SEND enables them to revisit stories that intrigue them. More able pupils receive appropriately challenging tasks. Pupils enjoy writing back to teachers’ marking. Leaders’ rigorous monitoring ensures that assessment informs teaching.

The inspection findings indicate that St Barnabas and St Paul’s Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	12 October 2023	URN	119499
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	415
Diocese	Blackburn		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Debbie Withey		
Chair	Mark Clayton		
Inspector	Penny Burnside	No.	772