

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| The Blue Coat Church of England School, Oldham | |
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| Address | Egerton Street, Oldham, OL1 3SQ |
| School vision | |
| <p>The Blue Coat School mission is that we are here to serve our young people, to ensure that they become everything that they can be and everything they are meant to be.</p> <p>We want our young people to experience a distinctively Christian education. At a personal and human level, we try to discern what is right: what would God want?</p> <p>The fulfilment of our mission is rooted in our core values of faith, vision and nurture.</p> | |
| School strengths | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The embedded, theologically rooted Christian vision inspires all to be ‘everything that they can be and everything they are meant to be’. It is highly relevant to the needs and aspirations of adults and students. • Leadership at all levels, including trustees, governors and students, enriches the lives of all within the school. Decisions are based upon the school-wide appreciation of each person as uniquely created in the image of God. • Relationships and the pastoral care and support of all is a palpable strength of the school. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are vulnerable and/or have additional needs. This ensures that adults and students receive welcome and nurture in a community that they themselves recognise as faithful, just and loving. • Thoughtful, thoroughly planned collective worship binds this large community. Rich and varied, it reflects the breadth of the Anglican tradition and invites those present to experience moments of prayer and reflection. • Religious education (RE) provides all students, from Years 7 to 13, with engaging and challenging programmes of learning. Consequently, learners make very good progress, have a mature understanding of a range of world religions including Christianity, and different worldviews. | |
| Areas for development | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the inconsistencies that mean a small number of students do not always experience high quality daily worship. This is so that all regularly encounter prayer, teachings from the Bible and the Trinitarian nature of Christianity. • Develop a shared understanding of spirituality across the school. This is so that occasions for spiritual development can be more effectively planned within the curriculum and opportunities for flourishing are maximised. | |
| Inspection findings | |
| The Blue Coat School’s established and theologically rooted Christian vision, nurtures and enriches | |

the daily experiences of all. It enables all to flourish by considering what God would want for each unique member of the community. The intention of every policy, action and practice is to empower individuals in reaching their God-given potential. This includes developing adults in their roles so that they are professionally fulfilled and able to enhance the experiences of students. In this the vision is highly effective. The impact of the Christian vision is known because it is at the heart of robust and regular self-evaluation. School and trust leaders hold the school to account as a Church school, ensuring that the embedded vision is a living reality. Conscious of the need to serve both the Anglican and wider local communities, admissions arrangements support families of Christian and other locally represented faiths. This results in an increasingly hospitable and inclusive school that respects differences in heritage and religion. The school is a shining example of religious and racial tolerance and cohesion.

Adults appreciate that for students to be ‘everything they can be, and are meant to be’, they must encounter the right learning opportunities. All learners access a curriculum that encourages them to aim high and explore their potential. This includes students with SEND or who are vulnerable and/or disadvantaged. The curriculum reflects the academic ambitions of the trust for learners. It encourages learning that is progressive, relevant, rich, deep and enables students to see the connections between academic disciplines. Woven through lessons is an encouragement for students to appreciate ethical and eco-sensitive approaches to God’s world. Similarly, subject leaders carefully consider opportunities to nurture students’ spirituality. However, spiritual development is not yet fully embedded. Leaders at all levels consider the needs of individual students when focusing upon the curriculum. Carefully considered and flexible student groupings maximise opportunities, supporting students to learn successfully and to pursue their next steps. The curriculum is underpinned by the desire to be aspirational, focus on their potential and contribute positively to society, both as students and adults. The extensive programme of additional activities encourages all to explore new interests and develop and nurture their talents. A student described this provision as being ‘something perfect for everyone’.

Inspirational collective worship contributes significantly to the school’s spiritual life and an appreciation of the breadth of the Anglican tradition. Meticulously planned worship is shared throughout the trust. Its impact is thoughtfully evaluated and ensures rich opportunities for all to grow in their personal spirituality. Echoing the Christian and secular calendars, and exploring the Bible through music, prayer and stillness, worship invites everyone to share reflective moments. It encourages an appreciation of the impact of the Bible upon the lives of believers and enables all to meet in different settings and groups. Students enjoy planning and leading worship. Form worship is creative. Younger students readily participate with the ‘circle time’ approach while older students appreciate the challenging questions and prayerfulness of form reflections. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of collective worship for a small number of students. Where this occurs, it limits individual opportunities for spiritual flourishing. A Christian Union and staff prayer group enrich the prayerfulness of the school as does the availability of the prayer room. An established and proud bond exists between the school and Oldham Parish Church. Ministers from the church regularly lead school-based worship including termly communion services for all. The parish welcomes the whole school for Christmas, Easter and founder’s day services. These are experiences that a student described as ‘awesomely special’.

The aspiration to enable all to thrive academically, socially, professionally and emotionally as God intends, shapes decisions in this nurturing, aspirational community. Exceptional formal and informal pastoral care contributes to excellent relationships and support, including for the most vulnerable. A culture of openness and trust ensures students feel safe and listened to. Good behaviour and high attendance maximise students’ opportunities in all aspects of school life. Adults quickly recognise and respond to the needs of students and each other through actively supporting good mental health and wellbeing. Learning and activities build self-esteem, balanced with humility,

and integrity and prepare students as future citizens. Senior students act as role models and contribute to school leadership. They successfully nurture and facilitate opportunities for, and the hopes of, younger students. Leadership skills of all are developed through exciting initiatives that encourage both teamwork and independence including The Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The school's ambition to discern what is right, and what God would want, is encapsulated in its approach to justice and responsibility. Adults and students readily recognise, understand and respond to inequality and injustice. Placing equal importance upon awareness raising, giving of time and fundraising, support for local, national and international charities and causes is generous. A lasting impact of the leadership programmes completed by all Key Stage 3 students is the focus on making a difference to communities. This results in a strong culture of volunteering that empowers students to continue independently acting as agents of change within society. Equally, adults within the school share their expertise with colleagues throughout the trust so that all learners can thrive.

Trust and school leaders ensure that RE is at the heart of learning and popular with students. Highly effective subject leadership contributes to the success of RE within and beyond the trust. The team of subject specialists, have deftly crafted programmes of learning that are exciting, rich and relevant. Challenging learning brings world religions, including Christianity, to life as they are explored in their local and global contexts. Students investigate different worldviews and revisit prior learning to extend their knowledge and understanding. RE is consistently well-taught and students rightly consider it a safe place to discuss and explore faith. Teachers' expertise ensures students appreciate the academic skills associated with the subject. Students use religious terms regularly and accurately to express theological and philosophical ideas. Younger students respond confidently to demanding questions about religions and worldviews. This forms the firm foundation for GCSE studies at Key Stage 4. All sixth form students complete a course in RE developed by the school. It enables them to explore important RE themes through the Bible. Religious studies is a popular and successful A-level course. Students including those with SEND make very good progress and achieve outcomes in line with, or better than, national comparators. They know the progress they are making towards exacting academic targets because they receive timely feedback upon their work. Teachers use rigorous, accurate assessment outcomes to plan for enhanced student success. Students appreciate the help and support they receive from their teachers and take responsibility for improving their own work. In this they reflect the impact of the school's encouragement to be 'everything they can be and are meant to be'. Visits and visitors add to the depth of learning enabling students to appreciate the impact of religion upon believers' lives. The RE department enhances learning beyond lessons through focus days and contributes to the school's rich additional activities programme.

The inspection findings indicate that The Blue Coat School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

| Information | | | |
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| Inspection date | 18 September 2023 - 19 September 2023 | URN | 137133 |
| VC/VA/Academy | Academy | Pupils on roll | 1694 |
| Diocese | Manchester | | |
| MAT/Federation | The Cranmer Education Trust | | |
| Headteacher | Robert Higgins | | |
| Chair | Janet Gregory | | |
| Inspector | Fiona Ashton | No. | 860 |