

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Baxenden St John's Church of England Primary School	
Address	Church Avenue, Baxenden, Accrington, BB5 2RQ
School vision	
<p>Our school helps us to walk with Jesus to be the best that we can be. Through God's love and guidance we create an ethos of shared endeavour, friendship and co-operation to help us flourish academically, emotionally and spiritually.</p> <p>'I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.' Philippians 4:13</p>	
School strengths	
<p>The Christian vision is an authentic and creative response to the needs of the pupils and wider community. It is fully embedded in the daily life of the school. Pupils and adults can demonstrate how 'walking with Jesus to be the best they can be' is a lived reality, inspiring them to flourish.</p> <p>The carefully constructed curriculum is highly effective and further enhanced by a diverse range of extra-curricular opportunities. It has been shaped by the Christian vision with the aim of building resilience and preparing pupils for the next stages in their lives.</p> <p>Leaders work tirelessly to maintain a culture of inclusion and care. All are valued, whatever their background or need. As a result, adults and pupils are known as individuals and flourish in a purposeful, nurturing environment.</p> <p>From the early years onwards, pupils are encouraged to seek out opportunities to 'live the faith'. They learn to act as agents of change both in school and at home. This has a powerful and often transformative impact on the school and wider community.</p> <p>Religious education (RE) is highly valued as an academic subject. Teachers are well-supported by leaders and confident in teaching RE, ensuring pupils make good progress.</p>	
Areas for development	
<p>Establish a whole school understanding and shared language of spirituality. This is so that all opportunities can be identified and used for the spiritual nurture of pupils and adults.</p> <p>Broaden the scope of the RE curriculum to include more consideration of non-religious worldviews. This is to help deepen pupils' understanding of, and respect for, others.</p>	
Inspection findings	
<p>Baxenden St John's is highly effective as a Church school. In recent years leaders have worked with pupils, staff and parents to develop a Christian vision that is now well-established. The idea of 'walking with Jesus', while interpreted in different ways, challenges and inspires everyone, whatever</p>	

their faith journey. For some it suggests following an example of how to live well. To others it is a source of companionship and comfort in difficult times. The accompanying verse from the Bible is a strong encouragement to pupils and adults. By trying hard, not giving up and aiming high, the school community thrives in a culture of opportunity and perseverance. The governing body is fully involved in the life of the school. Drawing on endurance developed from recent challenging situations, governors offer a high degree of support for staff. There is a well-structured programme of monitoring and feedback to senior leaders. This provides the governing body with a good understanding of all aspects of the work of the school. The school benefits from very strong partnerships with the local church and the diocesan education team. The 'God Squad', run by a member of the church, offers pupils opportunities to lead worship and grow in faith. Local clergy are highly motivated by a strong vision to work with the school in support of families. A thriving children's ministry includes many pupils and complements the school's Christian vision.

The enquiry-based curriculum develops pupils' curiosity and builds resilience. Leaders are determined that pupils should be well-prepared for the challenges of the next stages in their lives. They regularly question, explore and debate in the course of learning. A wide range of responsibilities enable pupils to mature and develop independence as they grow through the school. Pupils enjoy learning, benefitting from creative teaching and a culture that embraces mistakes as opportunities to learn. The bold assertion that 'I can do all things' works as a powerful motivator. This supports pupils to make steps in learning with confidence. An impressive extra-curricular offer allows pupils to experience different sports, music and art activities. Parents value the way in which these opportunities often lead to deeper interest and involvement. Leaders show further commitment to this development of character by encouraging performance and competition in and out of school. Regular time is given for reflection in lessons to ensure that academic learning is balanced with emotional and spiritual development. There is not, however, a consistent school-wide understanding or language of spirituality. As a result, staff do not make the most of all opportunities for spiritual development.

The commitment to shared purpose in the Christian vision has helped shape the school as a reflective worshipping community. Leaders give collective worship a high priority. Thoughtful planning based on Christian values and the church calendar, gives opportunity to many different people to lead worship. This includes staff, local clergy, diocesan leaders and various groups of pupils. Occasional issues-based worship, researched and led by pupils, covers important subjects such as equality, disability and racism. This provides information and challenge while reinforcing a dedication to inclusion. Pupils and staff value collective worship as a vital part of each day. It provides spiritual nurture to all, whatever their faith, through prayer and reflective practice. Care is given to the choice of music used to support themes and create an atmosphere of contemplation. Leaders monitor the impact of collective worship regularly and listen carefully to the views of pupils and adults. This process, and the ideas put forward, inform the development of practice. For example, the projection of the Christian vision in worship now includes pictures and symbols to aid communication.

The aspiration of 'shared endeavour and co-operation' is an important part of the school's Christian vision. Leaders work hard to achieve this and, as a result, people experience the school as a nurturing community. There is a culture in which peoples' lives and needs are put before systems. Vulnerable pupils are well-supported with carefully targeted interventions in school and by a wide range of external agencies. Staff feel cared for personally as well as being offered, and encouraged to access, high quality professional development. The governing body takes its responsibility for staff wellbeing very seriously, listening to concerns and offering help as necessary. Staff know the families of pupils well and respond quickly and discreetly to concerns. Leaders listen carefully to parents and are willing to 'go the extra mile'. However challenging or unique an issue, there is a determination to work together to find solutions that maintain individual dignity.

The school's Christian vision offers Jesus as an example of how to live well. This extends to the adoption of other role models. The four school 'houses' are named after key figures from recent history who challenged injustice in various ways. These, and other examples, are used to inspire pupils to 'live the faith' both in school and at home. Parents regularly share examples of times when pupils have put Christian values into action. These are collected in class books and celebrated in collective worship. As a result, a transformative culture of responsibility and justice has been developed. In this school it is natural for pupils to question, challenge and act in response to unfairness and injustice. This is enhanced by the partnership with the Bethany Project in Tanzania and the school parliament's extensive charity fundraising programme.

RE has a high priority as an academic subject. Weekly lessons are taught confidently by class teachers who are supported effectively by leaders and each other. The curriculum is well-sequenced, developing knowledge of Christianity and other faiths alongside progressive skills for learning. However, the current offer does not include sufficient consideration of non-religious worldviews. Units of work from the adopted syllabus are chosen carefully, and sometimes adapted, to meet the needs of pupils. Regular monitoring ensures that the curriculum continues to be relevant and challenging. This is particularly the case in the older years to prepare pupils for the diversity they will experience in secondary school. Leaders are highly motivated and knowledgeable, making the most of training opportunities provided by the local diocese. Learning in RE is enhanced by the annual cultural diversity week. Muslim and Sikh visitors use creative ways to present their faith as a daily lived reality. Pupils enjoy RE and talk with enthusiasm about their learning. They feel safe in lessons to share their own thoughts and opinions. This enables pupils to question and develop their own beliefs and convictions.

Teaching in RE is effective across the school. As a result, pupils make good progress in the development of both knowledge and skills. Self-assessment activities following each unit of work provide information about pupils' learning. This enables teachers to plan subsequent lessons based on what pupils already know and understand. Moderation of assessment across a group of local Church schools provides confidence in the accuracy of judgements.

The inspection findings indicate that Baxenden St John's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	20 October 2023	URN	119440
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	208
Diocese	Blackburn		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Julie Green		
Chair	Jerard Knott		
Inspector	Peter Barfoot	No.	2216