

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Little Lever	
Address	Norris Street, Little Lever, Bolton, BL3 1BQ
School vision	
<p>Love, learn, grow.</p> <p>At the centre of our logo is a simple cross. As a Church of England Primary School, we are proud to have Christ at the centre of school life. The two children represent our school community and they can be seen reaching for the stars as we encourage all children to shine. Love: references the Christian faith of the school, an individual's beliefs and values, love for each other and to know that we are loved. Learn: we come to school to 'get better at things'. To make the best progress we can, to make mistakes and learn from them. Grow: to grow as a person, as a friend, as a learner, as a citizen and to understand our place in the world.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision, accessible to all through the highly effective logo and short summary, is lived out throughout the school. As a result, pupils and adults flourish nurtured in love, motivated to learn and enabled to grow. • The carefully constructed curriculum is enhanced by an impressive extra-curricular offer and wide range of first-hand experiences. These address the specific needs of pupils by focussing on building self-esteem and the exploration of diversity. • Worship is at the heart of this welcoming school community. It provides staff, pupils and visitors with rich experiences to nurture their individual spiritual development. • All adults and pupils are treated with dignity and respect, their needs being met with understanding and compassion. In many cases this level of care is transformational. People know they are loved and, as a result, are able to learn and grow. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a shared understanding of spirituality and a consistency of related language. This is to ensure all opportunities for spiritual development are identified and their impact expressed by pupils and adults. • Fully embed the newly adopted religious education (RE) syllabus, together with its matching assessment system. This is to enhance pupils' religious literacy and ensure their progress in RE can be effectively tracked and celebrated. • Extend the opportunities provided to all pupils to respond to the needs of others. This is to help pupils develop a sense of themselves as agents of change. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The school knows, understands and serves its community very well. Rooted in the love and life of Jesus, the Christian vision is the beating heart of the school. The strong emphasis on personal</p>	

growth and development alongside academic learning ensure that pupils and adults are able to flourish. This is achieved in a calm, purposeful environment that nurtures each individual in the love of God. To many, knowing the reality of being loved and accepted has a transformational impact on their lives. The school offers a place of safety for pupils considered vulnerable and their families. Within this, all are able to settle and thrive. Parents and carers appreciate the way in which each pupil is both cared for individually and valued as a part of the school community. Leaders work hard to communicate clearly and build positive relationships. They are supported by an enthusiastic and proactive governing board which applies the motto 'learn, love, grow' to itself. Governors know the school extremely well and are committed to their own development through regular training and involvement. Staff continue to learn and grow, working closely as a team. They benefit from opportunities to develop in their careers and take on increasing responsibility. The school is nestled in the heart of its community and plays a vital role in many aspects of local life. Through pastoral support and practical care it offers stability, consistency and hope. This is, in turn, enhanced by a strong partnership with the local church. A monthly Eucharist service for older pupils and 'whizzy worship' for families and younger children provides additional spiritual nurture for all. The life of both school and church are enriched through effective communication, shared action and joint celebration. In this way the school's vision serves the wider community by bringing people together.

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn in order to grow, as people and citizens, as well as academic learners. In this way it is shaped by the Christian vision and addresses specific local needs. Leaders are passionate in their desire to raise the aspirations of pupils and their hopes for the future. This is achieved through the offer of a range of first-hand experiences and the careful inclusion of examples of diversity. Learning in geography develops understanding of global issues. The choice of books by authors from a variety of cultures helps pupils to hear voices from around the world. The impact of this is evident in the questioning and discussion of older pupils as they celebrate difference and diversity. They are able to draw on their learning and use their imagination creatively. This helps them to appreciate their place in the world and begin to understand the lived experience of others. Some opportunity is given for reflection and personal response in lessons. However, there is not a consistent approach to spirituality or a shared language. Consequently, the impact of opportunities for spiritual development are limited.

Collective worship is highly valued as an important part of the life of the school. Pupils and adults benefit from the sense of community they feel and the encouragement they find in worship. All feel welcome, whatever their faith or worldview, and are enabled to take inspiration from the varied programme. Time is given for reflection, prompted by questions or challenges. Further opportunity to respond to ideas and themes is given in class, with comments recorded in class worship books. Reflection on the values-based themes is also supported by interactive displays in classrooms and shared areas. As a result, worship provides some meaningful moments to grow spiritually.

The Christian vision encourages leaders to provide opportunity for pupils and adults to grow. This is evident in the awareness of needs and the high level of care and support given to each individual. The vision to love, learn and grow enhances opportunities for all. This includes pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those considered vulnerable. All flourish as a result of the care they receive. The school works hard to build strong relationships with parents and carers. Good use is made of local services and agencies to access specialist support. The governing board demonstrates commitment to the growth and wellbeing of all in finance and resources. Space and staffing on site is dedicated to learning mentorship activities. This means that pupils receive support as need arises. Leaders ensure that curriculum and extra-curricular activities are accessible to all pupils, regardless of their needs. This extends to providing adult support in after school sessions if necessary. Staff are treated with dignity, respect and understanding of both their personal and professional lives.

As pupils work through the school's curriculum, they develop an understanding of justice and a concern for others. This is a result of the focus on diversity in literature and units of work in history and geography, in particular. There is also opportunity to explore the lives of key figures who have taken action to make a difference in the world. Each year the Year 4 cohort completes the Young Leaders Award which introduces pupils to different approaches to social action. The oldest pupils are given significant responsibility on their annual 'Takeover Day'. They apply for and then perform the full range of adult tasks across the school. This is taken very seriously and is highly effective in preparing pupils for their move to secondary education. The school council is very active in planning and leading a wide range of fundraising activities. However, there is not a structured programme of opportunities for all pupils to take action and be 'agents of change.'

RE is given high priority as an academic subject. Leaders have recently adopted a new syllabus which is being taught across all year groups. The structure of the new curriculum ensures balance and diversity. It provides good coverage of teaching about Christianity with detailed exploration of belief and practice in other religions and worldviews. In this way RE enables pupils to encounter high levels of diversity consistent with the rest of the school's curriculum. It is also now more relevant to the needs of the pupils in their locality. Teachers have access to good quality resources to ensure accuracy in their teaching. Staff knowledge and understanding are enriched by training provided by the diocese and support from experienced leaders. As a result, the curriculum is effective and pupils enjoy learning.

Having received recent training and currently planning work together, teachers are confident in their delivery of the RE curriculum. Information is presented clearly, with an emphasis on key vocabulary and core concepts. Displays and working walls in each classroom contribute to the development of pupils' religious literacy. Assessment of their knowledge and understanding is ongoing in lessons and used to annotate plans. This ensures that aspects of the content of some units are revisited and teachers are able to consolidate learning. The clear structure and regular assessment enable pupils to make progress. However, the approach is not fully embedded and some steps in learning are not made clear to all pupils.

St Matthew's is well-served by its Christian vision and highly effective in its core purpose. Everyone is able to learn and grow, nurtured in a loving environment.

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

Information			
Inspection date	1 December 2023	URN	105242
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	207
Diocese	Manchester		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Georgina Ryding		
Chair	David Mayor		
Inspector	Peter Barfoot	No.	2216