



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>St Thomas Church of England VC Primary School, Bradley</b>	
Address	Sherwood Avenue, Bradley, Huddersfield, HD2 1RQ

### School vision

Jesus told us The Parable of the Mustard Seed.  
 “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.” (Matthew 13 31-32)

Everyone at St Thomas CE (VC) Primary - children, adults, governors, parents and visitors, - no matter what their starting point, has every opportunity to reach their full potential. Following the vision statement ‘From Tiny Seeds, Grow Mighty Trees’ we know that each person can flourish and achieve their goals while feeling that they are cared for and valued. With the strength and love of God - anything is possible.

### School strengths

- The school’s deeply embedded Christian vision is understood by everyone. It creates exceptionally harmonious, respectful, and supportive relationships.
- St Thomas’ is a community with vibrant invitational worship at its heart. Leaders, staff and pupils contribute confidently in collective worship and this drives continual improvement.
- The effectiveness of St Thomas’ as a Church school is greatly enhanced by strong, mutually beneficial partnerships. The relationship with clergy members of the local Church, is particularly rich and strong.
- Pupils and adults are well supported by the provision of high-quality resources to develop good mental health and wellbeing. As a result, people are treated well in a safe, supportive environment. This enables all to learn, work and thrive.
- Religious education (RE) is of high quality, valued by all, and led by a highly effective RE practitioner. Consequently, pupils flourish in RE.

### Areas for development

- Extend opportunities for pupils to explore questions of justice and think deeply about global inequality. This is so they may understand how they can influence positive change
- Embed a shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual growth so that all pupils and adults are able to flourish.

### Inspection findings

408 pupils, 24 languages and 10 religions make up some of the family at St Thomas Primary school. The deeply considered and embedded Christian vision envelops the school with nurture and love. Leaders, united by the vision, strive to enrich the lives of everyone, enabling all to flourish within an aspirational community. Governors articulate how their vision shapes every aspect of school life. They offer rigorous yet appropriate challenge to school leadership, creating an ethos of continued

improvement.

Pupils grow from ‘seeds to mighty trees’, shine and ‘fly away’ in accordance with the school’s vision. Pupils correctly identify that they are proud of how each year they as seeds are given opportunities to grow. They recognise that the strong values support their growth. The vision of enabling everyone to grow is effective in meeting the needs of pupils, families and the community, raising aspirations. The relationship with the church and community is exemplary, together they initiate local celebrations and support one another during difficult times.

The vision of believing that with the ‘strength and love of God anything is possible’ supports leaders to nurture those who need additional support. A distinct culture of raising aspirations permeates daily life. Bold decisions by leaders ensure individuals receive high-quality interventions, addressing specific needs. Using the inclusion model and specialist rooms, each pupil with additional needs has their needs met quickly and accurately. The language of becoming the best person you can be, is widely embraced. Staff offer seeds of hope through a range of experiences, which help pupils recognise their talents. For example the indoor darts competition resulted in a trophy for the Atlantis House team. Through trusting relationships with staff, pupils set themselves targets to achieve even more in their learning. They grow in confidence, readily identified in the way they pose questions and show curiosity. As a result of the vision the reputation of the care provided by the school is notable. Families actively choose this school.

Visits to places of worship deepen understanding of a range of faiths. This supports the inclusive community. Pupils accurately identify that there are differences in culture, but value each other’s opinions. They talk of the importance of ‘growing new leaves of knowledge’ as it can ‘change lives for good’. Through the vision, challenges are understood to be opportunities for growth, developing resilience. The vision makes it clear that all have a responsibility for others, where each can make a difference, giving hope for the future. Pupils show a growing understanding of their responsibility of caring for God’s world. The school produces its own fruit and vegetables with pupils from the ‘grow club’ nurturing the seeds. Pupils are also aware of the needs of others beyond the school. They know they have a responsibility to the outside world and fundraise for a variety of organisations. Strong links with the Welcome Centre who provide food and clothes to the community, make them aware of local and national concerns. However, pupils have not yet fully developed their understanding of how they can impact social action at a global level. They are not as clear as they could be on the depth of injustice which exists in the world and the influence their voice could have.

Leaders accurately identify the impact of the vision as being a life-changing experience in living life to the full, using Jesus’ teaching as guidance. An essential part of this is the way individuals work together, make relationships and contribute to the community. Pupils are nurtured to create a community which is based on love and respect for all. ‘Team Thomas’ is seen as a key part of the vision, where working collaboratively means each can achieve more. Pupils relish sharing ideas and learn from one another, celebrating others’ successes. There is a sense of being part of a family, where older pupils model the Christian values and nurture peers. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility within school with application forms and interviews, leading to wider-ranging roles. These include head prefects, prefects, wellbeing ambassadors, worship council, hunger hut assistants and play leaders. These opportunities keenly reflect the school’s vision by enabling pupils to grow and emphasise the importance of service to others.

The Christian vision is brought to life through collective worship. Each aspect of the vision is explored and linked to Christian values, so pupils see the difference these make. This draws on Jesus’ teaching, enabling pupils time to reflect on its significance. Christian values are used throughout the day, so their importance in a variety of situations is established. Pupils are enthusiastic to be part of the collective worship committee, contributing to improvements. They confidently plan, lead and evaluate worship. Prayer is valued and many pupils choose to pray

spontaneously at the end of worship. The invitational approach means that those of all faiths and none can reflect in the quiet. Pupils have time to reflect in their classes at the end of collective worship. Pupils and adults recognise these times of collective worship bring the community together. They play an important part in developing pupils' spirituality. To support this throughout the school, multiple reflection areas stimulate different ways of talking to God. Keyboards, telephones and microphones are just some of the ways that pupils pray and talk to God. Older pupils talk confidently of what it means to be able to connect with God. They speak of feeling a wider aspect to life. Whilst staff have some appreciation of where spiritual development opportunities occur, further opportunities are needed.

RE is carefully planned and allows pupils to develop a clear understanding of Christianity as a living faith. They understand the importance of learning about world religions and are aware of similarities between them. RE is taught through an enquiry approach using art, discussion and debate, enabling pupils to access learning. Pupils are confident to share their ideas when discussing 'Big Questions'. The emphasis on discussion creates a safe space where they can explore their own faith and the faith and beliefs of others. Pupils confidently articulate their ideas and are quick to apply them to their own lives.

These inspection findings indicate that St Thomas Church of England Primary Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	24 October 2023	URN	136109
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	408
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation			
Acting Headteacher	Cathryn Goddard		
Chair	Silva Scott		
Inspector	Elaine Bowers	No.	960