



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Catharine's Church of England VA Primary School, Wigan	
Address	Scholefield Lane, Scholes, Wigan, WN1 3LP

School vision

Here at St Catharine's our children are at the heart of all that we do. We are committed to providing a loving, safe Christian community where together we prepare our children for future success. Through our innovative curriculum we empower and inspire a lifelong love of learning, where our children achieve their full potential as we love, believe and achieve together.
 'Love one another just as I love you' John 15:12

School strengths

- The school describes itself as the 'St Catharine family' and is a place where togetherness is key. Therefore, flourishing abounds as a result of the school's Christian vision being the driving force that transforms lives.
- Strong, positive relationships are highly effective in providing an exceptionally nurturing environment where all are accepted and valued. Pupils and adults thrive as recipients of abundant, unconditional Christian love.
- Collective worship is a much-valued focal point of the school day. It is most successful in deepening pupils' understanding of the how the vision is lived out through Christian values. It also provides an oasis of calm for moments of quiet, personal reflection.
- The vision shapes a curriculum where pupils enjoy learning and therefore achieve. This is because the skilfully crafted, bespoke curriculum is adept in being both aspirational and inclusive.
- There is a high quality of provision and teaching in religious education (RE). This is exemplified in how the subject is made relevant to the pupils' daily lives.

Areas for development

- Further enrich pupils' spiritual development by establishing a shared understanding of spirituality that builds on existing opportunities across the wider curriculum.
- Build on current good practice to broaden pupils' experiences in bringing about social justice. This is to enable them to become more effective agents of change.

Inspection findings

St Catharine's makes a significant difference to its community. The school's vision drives change and transforms lives. This is because the vision is made a reality. It is lived out through its biblical roots and in following Jesus' command 'to love one another' (John 15:12). It is encapsulated in the strapline 'Love, Believe, Achieve', making it accessible to the whole school family. Christian values, such as perseverance and hope, facilitate the vision in being lived out on a daily basis. Governors are rigorous in undertaking their responsibilities to monitor the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. Consequently, they know the school well and are both wise and bold in their choices to

secure a positive impact. Governors are mindful in their decision making, ensuring that the choices they make 'further the vision'.

Pupils flourish as a result of the bespoke curriculum that reflects the needs of both the individual pupil and wider school community. Its aspirations are rooted in the vision. Leaders evidence the clear impact of the curriculum through both high attendance and positive outcomes. The curriculum's legacy provides lasting success, with former pupils winning awards at high school. Pupils are inspired in their studies through known phrases which focus on 'brilliant beginnings' at the start of a new topic. Their learning is subsequently celebrated in their 'fabulous finish'. Skilful planning and the wider overview ensure that the curriculum is easily accessible. Engaging topics, enrichment activities and fully-funded, frequent educational visits enable all to thrive. Pupils' individual talents are celebrated and developed through focused extra-curricular activities. Their lives are enriched through spiritual moments that permeate the curriculum and additional activities, some that are planned and some spontaneous. Pupils' deep spiritual growth is not fully harnessed as opportunities that nurture spirituality are not routinely planned.

Collective worship embodies the vision in bringing the school together to share in God's love. It is a much-loved daily activity with the highlight being the weekly visit to the local church. This genuine warm welcome is unashamedly inclusive, with pupils from the neighbouring special school eagerly rushing across to join in at church. It is a joyful occasion where pupils express themselves and sing with a glad heart. There is a seamless, mutually beneficial partnership with the local church. Both school and church care for one another in service to the community. Pupils have a sense of belonging in the church and worship is a safe space for them to reflect. They find solace in prayer and embrace quiet, spiritual moments. However, the lack of a shared understanding of spirituality restricts the ways in which pupils extend those deeper experiences. Those leading worship use carefully chosen words to ensure that all present feel invited rather than compelled to join in.

Exceptionally strong relationships make a real difference because the Christian value of love anchors the vision. Adults and pupils alike are nurtured as acceptance and trust facilitates growth. Leaders are determined in securing the safety and wellbeing of both pupils and adults. 'Going the extra mile' is a routine occurrence. Leaders are relentless in pursuing all avenues to secure the right outcome for families in need. School provides a safe haven where pupils can be themselves, confident and happy in the knowledge that they individually matter. They also make a point of caring for others, regularly thanking the school cook and being respectful to the site supervisor. Staff model Jesus' example and genuinely care for their school community. One pupil stated it simply, saying, 'We know we are loved.' This approach secures effective support and positive outcomes for pupils and families facing specific challenges. Likewise, promoting good mental health and wellbeing is a priority in the school. By working with different organisations and seeking out new opportunities, the school secures the best support available. This also safeguards that those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged also access targeted assistance. There is a low staff turnover because they are well supported in their roles. Governors and leaders recognise the importance of a manageable work-life balance. There are successful systems in place to ensure that this is maintained.

Diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated with dignity as the Christian values of love and respect work in harmony. Therefore, it is second nature for pupils to show kindness to others, recognising that we are all the equal. Pupils seek a quick and effective resolution for the rare occasion when there is conflict. Forgiveness and reconciliation provide real healing and learning in these circumstances.

The vision is a catalyst in driving the school to look beyond its immediate vicinity and to make thoughtful choices. Pupils gain a good knowledge of the wider world and have a powerful sense of justice and fairness. For example, one pupil spoke eloquently about a current international conflict.

Individual pupils have campaigned for key causes, raising awareness across the school. Pupil groups, such as ‘young governors’ and ‘mini police’, provide a strong voice to air ideas and challenge issues. Pupils are provided with the skills to champion injustice but have intermittent opportunities to be regular agents of change.

The vision is at the heart of RE. Hence, pupils are emboldened by the subject, seeking to understand and question, thus developing their own thoughts and ideas. Therefore, pupils make good progress in the subject, which has a prominent place in the weekly timetable. They acquire a thorough, lasting knowledge of the content covered. Pupils speak with confidence about Christianity, worldviews and different faiths. Religious literacy is a prominent feature and, therefore, key vocabulary successfully scaffolds pupils’ learning in the subject. They value the opportunities to reflect on key concepts and how they are relevant to the modern world and their own lives. An example of pupils retelling the story of the Good Samaritan in a current context, demonstrated their deep personal understanding. Pupils gain a broad perspective and access additional moments to consider big questions. This is because the wider curriculum makes planned, pertinent links and draws on knowledge from RE. Pupils also recognise that RE supports them in gaining a deeper understanding of diversity. This is because skilfully planned lessons secure effective sequential learning and provide a well-balanced breadth of topics. Thorough and routine assessment ensures that all pupils are fully supported and are provided with appropriate challenge. Thorough monitoring and evaluation moves the subject forwards. Leadership in RE is strong and staff are well-supported, accessing focused training and quality resources. School staff are abreast of the latest developments in RE as they actively seek support from the local diocese. Governors and leaders are expert in evaluating the impact of the RE curriculum, guaranteeing that it is representative of a Church school.

A pupil encapsulated their experiences of the school and why they flourish by concluding that ‘love makes this school special’.

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

Information			
Inspection date	19 January 2024	URN	106464
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	208
Diocese	Liverpool		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Sue Pittendreigh		
Chair	David Ryder		
Inspector	Jo Williams	No.	863