

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Blackpool St Nicholas Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	School Road, Blackpool, FY4 5DS
School vision	
We prepare every pupil for their best future, by ensuring they achieve their full potential and attain the knowledge, skills and understanding for success as we believe that ‘with God, all things are possible.’ Matthew 19:26	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clear, inclusive and highly aspirational Christian vision is a powerful driver for the positive culture of the school. The active language of possibility and comprehensive provision of opportunity enable all adults and pupils to flourish. • Built on the principles of possibility and connection, the school’s curriculum is shaped and energised by its Christian vision. Pupils thrive in a learning environment that nurtures curiosity, character and potential. • Pupils and adults are supported with empathy, compassion and love. The promotion of wellbeing is a high priority that has an often transformational effect. The lives of many people have been significantly improved with practical help and emotional support. • Worship is a significant and highly valued part of the rhythm of school life. As a result, the whole school community is nurtured and encouraged on their life journey. • Taking responsibility and acting to improve the lives of others is expected of pupils from the start. This reflects a culture of selfless care that seeks to make Jesus the model for how all should live. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the profile of spirituality further by agreeing a shared language and more structured approach to its development. This is to help build consistency and ensure that opportunities for spiritual development are identified and used across the curriculum. • Extend the scope of teaching in religious education (RE) to include more opportunity for philosophical enquiry. This is to support the development of pupils’ own convictions and beliefs. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Building on the highly aspirational and inspiring Christian vision, leaders have developed a vibrant, positive culture that enables all to flourish. There is a strong commitment to provide teaching and opportunities that give pupils and adults hope for a better future. Pupils are safe, happy and motivated to both learn and help others. Staff feel cared for, valued and fulfilled. They work very closely as a mutually supportive team, actively encouraged to contribute to the continuous development of the school. Parents recognise and value the positive impact of the Christian vision. Regardless of a family’s faith background, they see all pupils being nurtured and challenged to aim</p>	

high. Pupils move on to high school with Christian values influencing their thoughts and actions.

The curriculum has been designed to raise the aspiration and expectations of all pupils. They are challenged and encouraged to look upward and outward and to believe that they can achieve anything they attempt. In this way the curriculum has been shaped by the strong, positive message of the Christian vision. There is an emphasis on the core knowledge pupils need in each unit of work. They are encouraged to make connections between what they learn and what they already know. This is enhanced with a wide range of first-hand experiences and links within the local area. There is a commitment by the governing body to provide staffing for forest school sessions in the extensive school grounds. As a result, all pupils regularly enjoy learning in the outdoor environment. Balanced with classroom experience, this helps pupils develop a sense of hope and possibility for themselves and the environment. The curriculum develops aspiration by introducing pupils to examples of the best human achievement from around the world. This deliberate intention to inspire and motivate broadens the idea of what is possible. Pupils are very reflective about their learning. They have a clear understanding that making mistakes is a vital part of the learning process. Success is defined as much by the attempts made, as the outcomes achieved. There is an expectation that teachers will offer classes times to respond spiritually in lessons. However, the approach to spiritual development is not structured or consistent across the school.

The vibrant worship life of the school provides rich opportunities for adults and pupils to develop spiritually. Regular whole school gatherings are eagerly anticipated, characterised by a strong sense of shared expectation. This even spills out into spontaneous singing along to music being played as classes enter the hall. Everyone is encouraged to feel that they are of value in the community. This means that worship always offers something relevant to their individual life journey. Time is given in smaller groups for further discussion and reflection, with responses recorded in class worship books. The framework for worship is a termly focus on the school's Christian values. Careful use of Bible stories and teaching helps to challenge pupils and staff to apply these to their own lives. The worship programme is enhanced by the weekly involvement of clergy and celebration of festivals in the Church calendar. The variety of styles and elements of worship used across the year provide a breadth of perspectives. By exploring ideas and questions in different ways, everyone is supported in their search for meaning and purpose. Pupils are keen to join the 'Christian Leaders' group because of the opportunity it gives to deepen their spiritual experience.

People are treated with dignity and respect and can be confident that they will be listened to. They benefit from the consistently positive message that 'all things are possible'. There is a strong commitment to identifying pupils' learning needs early and providing the appropriate support and intervention. This is inspired by an approach to challenges that seeks solutions and expects success, for individuals and the whole school. Leaders maintain a culture of hope and success by understanding the vital importance of staff wellbeing. Recent changes to marking and feedback, and clear expectations for email communication, have helped to reduce workload significantly. Leaders respond very sensitively to pressures experienced by staff in their personal lives. This includes offering flexibility in working and sending appropriate tokens of appreciation, condolence and celebration.

From the early years onwards, pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others and take active steps to offer help. This creates a culture of responsibility across the school. There was a very enthusiastic response when the 'Make a Difference' group was established. In a short time they have led several high profile projects. These include fundraising for national charities as well as responses to global and more local environmental issues. Working with 'Surfers against Sewage' they have had a positive impact on the problem of litter around the school. There are strong partnerships with other local groups, including the church and local care home. Helping older members of the community is mutually beneficial, strengthening relationships and understanding

across generations. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to be inspired by figures in history and those currently making a difference.

RE is given high priority as an academic subject and is enjoyed by pupils and teachers. The curriculum is well-structured and follows a logical sequence. The majority of time is spent exploring Christianity. Pupils are also introduced to beliefs and practices across other religions and worldviews. They revisit certain themes and ideas at different stages, ensuring that knowledge and understanding develop progressively. Leaders and teachers are well supported with access to high quality resources and training. Expertise is available in school when help is needed with more challenging elements of the curriculum. This helps increase confidence and contributes to the quality and impact of teaching. Information in assessments at the end of each unit is used to inform planning for the next steps in learning. As a result, pupils make good progress. They respond well to the enquiry-based approach, engaging enthusiastically in discussions of the questions raised in units of work. They feel safe to express their own thoughts and ideas. There is a good balance between learning about belief from core texts and encountering practice within different religions. However, sufficient time is not given to philosophical enquiry to support pupils in developing their own beliefs and convictions.

With faith in the potential of God's power to change lives, this school inspires hope for a better future.

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

Information			
Inspection date	21 November 2023	URN	119594
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	413
Diocese	Blackburn		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Claire Taylor		
Chair	Stephen Dunstan and David Barnes		
Inspector	Peter Barfoot	No.	2216