

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great Barr St Margaret's Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Birmingham Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7AP

School vision

Learn to love, love to learn, strive to serve.
 We believe that love comes first. It is the foundation of who we are and all we do.
 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Mark 12: 31
 Our values of thankfulness, respect, perseverance, responsibility, forgiveness and truthfulness are at the heart of everything we do.

School strengths

- Senior leaders, including governors, have a clear and strong understanding of the school's vision which shapes the work of the school. The vision enables everyone to love, learn, and strive to serve.
- The vision shapes the curriculum built around local and global perspectives. As a result, pupils flourish well in their learning and personal development.
- Collective Worship is distinctively Christian and central to the daily life of the school. Themes linked to the school's values underpinned by scripture, facilitate and promote the school's vision.
- Pupils have a keen sense of injustice. They are pro-active change makers who make a difference.
- Religious education (RE) has a high priority. Pupils learn well due to the carefully constructed curriculum. They comprehensively deepen their understanding of Christianity as a world wide faith.

Areas for development

- Strengthen and increase the involvement of adults as well as pupils in planning and evaluating collective worship. This is to further enrich spiritual experience for everyone.
- Promote and establish a deeper understanding of spirituality amongst staff. This will enable them to explore and articulate its impact on themselves and others.
- Provide planned opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum so that pupils are given all opportunities to develop spiritually.

Inspection findings

Conscientious and dedicated leaders bring their Christian commitment ensuring that the vision is lived throughout this inclusive school community. Everyone is supported, cared for and nurtured. The value of love, modelled by staff, supports all pupils enabling them to feel safe and valued. Every pupil has opportunity to flourish as seen in the awards for the Archbishop's Young Leaders or recognition for demonstrating a school value. Trusting, caring relationships are firmly rooted and

central to the Christian vision. Sincere and grateful testimonies by parents uphold this assertion. Secure links with the church are maintained due to the inspiration and dedication of the church worker. Leaders are resolute in their determination to protect and support the well being of all. A trained Mental Health First Aider is available for staff who feel valued and listened to. They are provided with regular 'check ins'. Pupils benefit from art therapy and support from the well-being team. There is a significant commitment to staff professional training and development reflecting the regard leadership has for them.

Pupils enjoy learning, achieve well and flourish. This is because the skilfully crafted bespoke curriculum, shaped by the vision, is both aspirational and inclusive. A pupil describes flourishing as 'a tree with the sun shining down, the teachers' knowledge shining on the branches who are children growing and learning'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are appropriately supported and thrive. They become confident successful learners. Innovative and ambitious career pathways are shared such as the visit by a news presenter. A recent 'Rock Steady' music day enabled pupils with SEND to participate showing particular resilience and enjoyment. Support is given ensuring no-one is excluded from extra curricular clubs due to hardship. Pupils are confident learners willing to discuss a variety of subjects such as environmental issues, the Irish potato famine or Martin Luther- King. They 'love to learn'. Their interest is reflected through lively responses to challenging questions. When asked about injustice, pupils were animated in their explanations about how important human dignity is to everyone and the link with how you treat people. The work of Rosa Parkes and Elizabeth Fry were referred to.

Leaders work hard ensuring the vision is central to shaping future developments such as the introduction of the spirituality policy. Pupils provide some insight into spirituality as coming 'from inside you, willingness, kindness, understanding', 'having courage', 'how everyone is unique, different, special'. Overall pupils' understanding is limited. Whilst there are examples of provision for the development of spirituality such as forest school and wild worship, these are few. Establishing a shared understanding of spirituality and how to provide for its development is underway working alongside the diocese.

Governors uphold the Christian vision and values, supporting the school with care and diligence. They use the simplicity of the vision as a focus when making challenging decisions. A comprehensive view of RE and worship is gained from their monitoring activities and recent presentation from the RE leader. Governors live out the vision and 'strive to serve' their school community with kindness, dignity, respect and love, always supporting the blossoming of pupils and staff.

Collective worship is the coming together of the school's vision and life. There is a recognisable structure and pattern which creates familiarity and routine. Storytelling and skilful questioning provide opportunities for pupils to consider and reflect on their own lives and actions. Pupils are invited to participate in prayer time or reflect quietly. This focus time contributes well to their spiritual development. The singing is lively and heartfelt. Christian traditions are clearly visible throughout the school with the Bible, cross and candles in evidence. Worship is distinctively Christian and highly inclusive, resulting in a respectful sensitivity towards those who have different religious beliefs and worldviews. It is a significant focal point of the day, as a time to be together for reflection and prayer. It successfully supports pupils' understanding of how the vision is lived out through the school's values. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how they know several biblical stories used to illustrate the messages such as forgiveness. They are able to relate learning to their own lives. Two Key Stage 1 pupils explained that after a 'falling out' they were able to forgive, 'let go' and move on. Older pupils explained that worship 'gives a better connection to faith', 'it helps me to connect with everything around me', 'new teachings help me through everyday life', 'brings me close to God'.

Pupils are change makers. They demonstrate powerful voices in the range of leadership roles they undertake facilitating their flourishing. They have an impassioned sense of justice and service for others, the embodiment of 'strive to serve'. The Switch team take pride in the work they undertake and feel empowered by their conviction to address injustice. They talk with passion about how unfair it is that a girl in Uganda who wanted to be a nurse was unable to get to school and learn, due to the distance. They raised funds to buy her a bicycle. Pupils are keen to make a difference. They have a sophisticated understanding of social justice and equality. Through their support of local and global charities, pupils are given opportunities to see beyond themselves. Pupils take action to make a meaningful change beyond their own lives such as raising money to fund a farm for eleven families in Kenya.

RE is highly valued and enables pupils to flourish well. It is effectively led and taught. Curriculum planning supports progression of learning across the school. The leader is proactive in seeking and sharing appropriate training from the diocese. Teachers stay current with strategies and resources. Pupils acquire substantial knowledge due to the well planned and sequential curriculum. They make good progress including those pupils with SEND as reflected in pupil's workbooks, teacher's assessments and monitoring reports. Key Stage 1 pupils talk confidently about places of worship and how they are important to all religions. Older pupils believe it is important to 'learn about lots of religions because we need to learn about each other so that we can live well together.' A range of religions and worldviews are effectively explored. 'Big questions' stimulate thinking and discussion. They develop a particularly secure appreciation of Christianity as a global living faith and name countries where Christianity is practised such as in Uganda and Kenya.

St Margaret's vision is at the heart of this school's Christian community. Secured by their values, inclusion is at the centre of school life enabling all to live well together and flourish.

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

Information			
Inspection date	25 January 2024	URN	103995
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	234
Diocese	Lichfield		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Stuart Jones		
Chair	Ian Simms		
Inspector	Sally Kaminski-Gaze	No.	2238