



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sankey Valley St. James Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Dorchester Road, Warrington, WA5 1XE

School vision

Jesus inspires us to live the best life that we possibly can.
 In our school we:
 Belong to God’s family, our school family and our community.
 Respect God, ourselves, other people and their differences.
 Create a future where we can all achieve our hopes and dreams as part of God’s creation.
 Flourish to be confident, caring and happy in God’s love.
 “I came that you might have life and live life in all its fullness.”
 John 10:10

School strengths

- As a result of the deeply held vision, all members of this nurturing Church school family share a deep sense of belonging and feel valued. The vision and associated values are the driving force behind leaders’ actions at every level. This results in flourishing for all.
- Collective worship is carefully planned, inclusive and thought provoking. Pupils and adults alike value this special part of the school day. As a result, worship contributes significantly to spiritual flourishing for all.
- Shaped by the vision of life in all its fullness, the personalised and aspirational curriculum means that the needs of all members of this diverse Church school community are met.
- Nurturing support for the wellbeing and mental health of both pupils and adults is highly effective. Staff and pupils respect and care deeply about one another. This creates a culture in which everyone thrives, confident in the knowledge that they are loved for who they are.
- Links between school and the local church community are strong and impactful. This supports pupils to develop a deeper knowledge of the teachings of the Bible and understand Christianity as a living world faith.

Areas for development

- Embed and further enhance opportunities for pupils to act independently as advocates for change. This is to deepen their understanding of injustice and inspire them to make a difference to the lives of those within, and beyond, school.
- Broaden pupils’ understanding of a range of world religions and viewpoints, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is to extend their understanding of the diverse nature of the world in which they live.
- Extend the explicit ways in which spirituality enriches all areas of the curriculum. This is to further enhance spiritual flourishing for all pupils.

Inspection findings

The Christian vision of Sankey Valley St. James fully reflects its context, enabling pupils and adults to flourish. The school's community is diverse, with pupils from a variety of different religions, views, cultures and languages. Everyone is valued as the unique person they are. Consequently, the vision of 'life in all its fullness,' is a lived reality, reinforcing the idea of God's unequivocal love for all. Adults and pupils describe a deep sense of belonging to a compassionate family where respectful relationships are paramount. As a result, aspirations are high. The associated values of love, joy, hope and peace are demonstrated through the exemplary behaviour and attitudes of pupils. The distinctively Christian vision of this Church school creates a calm and ambitious learning environment. The impact of this is that everyone feels safe and 'at home.' The outworking of the vision is clear in school policies, including the behaviour policy. Rewards for both academic and non-academic achievements provide everyone with the opportunity to succeed. The governing body challenges and supports school leaders in their quest to be the best they can be. Governors use their relevant skills to support leaders in specific areas, including collective worship, religious education (RE) and safeguarding. This strengthens the effectiveness of the school as a Church school.

Collective worship enhances the spiritual life of the school. Pupils value the variety of worship which is enhanced by regular visitors. These include members of different churches, a representative from the Hindu community and the vicar. The vision of belonging is characterised by high levels of mutual respect between adults and pupils. Worship is overtly Christian in nature, but the diversity of the school community is never forgotten. For example, whilst Anglican symbols are central to worship, Muslim pupils are also invited to introduce their own significant objects. This creates a sense of universal inclusion. All members of the school community clearly understand the impact of prayer and reflection. Pupils singing and the playing of instruments provide moments of stillness for all to reflect on their personal relationship with worship. This enriches adults and pupils' spiritual growth. Dedicated reflection spaces are well used by both pupils and adults. Links between the local church and school are exceptionally strong with regular Eucharist services held in school. Communion classes are also offered annually. Furthermore, school and church collaborate to provide opportunities for worship and spiritual reflection outside school hours. Parents and carers value this and church events are well-attended. Consequently, worship impacts positively on spiritual flourishing both within and beyond the school community.

The associated values of love, joy, hope and peace are the driving forces behind the school's focus on good mental health. There is a wealth of initiatives which support staff wellbeing. Staff feel cared for and valued. Continuing professional development is highly prioritised and adults are encouraged to have high aspirations for their future. Staff describe the excellent pastoral care they have received in times of personal crisis or challenge. Consequently, staff turnover is exceptionally low. Leaders understand that 'life in all its fullness' does not mean a life without challenges. Staff know their families well and care deeply for them, particularly in difficult times. The special educational needs coordinator and pastoral lead provide families with support quickly and effectively. Parents describe the many ways in which staff frequently go 'above and beyond' to support them. This includes a breakfast club and a meet and greet service for pupils struggling to attend school.

A direct impact of the vision of belonging means that pupils both respect and celebrate difference. One pupil explained how 'we should accept everyone like God does.' The school's ongoing work towards a recognised award in this area further encourages the sense of togetherness which permeates throughout the school. Leaders recognise the importance of pupil voice. Reflecting the vision, every pupil belongs to the school council. Class meetings offer an opportunity for pupil voice to be gathered. They report that leaders listen to, and respect, their views. Pupils are engaged in actions to support their community. These include litter picking and fundraising for the local hospice. Pupils have a strong sense of what is unfair in the world. However, they are less confident

about how they can be agents of change.

The curriculum design centres around the aspirational vision of flourishing for all. A determination to adapt teaching to meet individual pupils' needs means that barriers to learning are quickly identified and removed. Clubs, enrichment weeks and visits enhance the curriculum, allowing individuals to develop their unique talents or interests. The school allocates budget to ensure that everyone can access these activities, irrespective of personal circumstances. Consequently, all pupils have high aspirations for the future because they are confident that they can fulfil their potential. Pupils enjoy initiatives such as forest schools which provide time for them to be at one with the natural world. This enhances their spiritual development. Leaders have created a shared definition of spirituality for staff to refer to. However, they have not fully identified explicit ways of developing spirituality across the whole curriculum.

RE is valued as an important subject with a high profile. The experienced subject leader ensures that sufficient time is dedicated to it. A creative curriculum, high quality resources and impactful training means that RE is taught effectively. Pupils enjoy this subject and respond well in lessons. Highly personalised teaching and targeted support mean that all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, make good progress. Pupils' learning about Christianity is secure and they make deep and meaningful connections. They speak sensitively about a diversity of beliefs and views and link this directly to the vision of belonging and respect. However, pupils' knowledge of other world religions and viewpoints is not always as developed as their knowledge of Christianity. This means that not all pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, have a fully developed understanding of the diversity of the world.

Adults and pupils alike value belonging to this happy and inclusive Church school. They know that they are cherished for who they are. As a result, they all genuinely believe in a future where they 'can achieve their hopes and dreams.'

The inspection findings indicate that Sankey Valley St. James School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	24 January 2024	URN	133676
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	207
Diocese	Liverpool		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Deb Feltham		
Chair	Martin Thorpe		
Inspector	Joanne Hyslop	No.	972