

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Stretford	
Address	Poplar Road, Stretford, Manchester M32 9AN

School vision

We want everyone to thrive at St Matthew's and this vision is summed up by our motto which is taken from Matthew 5:16. 'Let your light shine'. We believe all children can shine at St Matthew's and we strive for every member of our school family to succeed and flourish with us.

School strengths

- As a result of the Christian vision, members of the St Matthew's community feel valued and equipped to realise their full potential. The positive school environment creates a welcoming climate of understanding and acceptance where pupils can 'let their light shine'.
- Strong relationships are deeply rooted in Christian love. The nurturing provision across the life of the school creates an inclusive environment where pupils and adults can flourish.
- The Christian vision and values are lived out, empowering pupils to respect themselves and others. Equality and difference are actively celebrated and embraced. This creates an inclusive culture in which pupils and adults shine.
- The rhythm of inclusive and invitational collective worship is an important focus for each day. It is deeply valued by the school community. It expresses the vision and impacts deeply on pupils and adults.
- Religious education (RE) is highly inclusive and appropriate for the context of this school's diverse community. Pupils of all backgrounds effectively develop and deepen their knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

Areas for development

- Further develop opportunities to embed a shared understanding of spirituality throughout the curriculum. This is to enrich the range of experiences that nurture pupils' spiritual development.
- Extend professional development for teachers in RE. This is to build their confidence in the teaching of the subject.
- Develop a consistent approach for leaders and governors to evaluate the school's Christian vision and distinctiveness. This is to ensure that they are more secure in their understanding of this important element of the school's work.

Inspection findings

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School is a beacon of light. The school's vision, to 'let your light shine', is firmly embedded and drives actions and decisions made in school. This results in a richly nurturing environment, where everyone is valued and able to thrive. Families often choose this school because of its strong Christian values, and the moral compass it provides for pupils. This contributes meaningfully to spiritual development and wellbeing. Governors know and support the

school well. However, there is no formal and robust process in place for governors to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's Christian distinctiveness.

Leaders are inspirational role models for all. Their enthusiasm has a profound impact, igniting positivity in adults and pupils alike. It inspires confidence and enables the community to flourish. Adults readily model to pupils what it means to challenge themselves, to 'let their light shine', and overcome difficulties. This enables pupils to develop their academic abilities, natural talents and to be encouraged to inspire others in the world.

Learning is built around a clear understanding of flourishing through living out the vision of the school. Leaders and governors are ambitious for every pupil, particularly those who are most vulnerable. They ensure that pupils are fully included in the life of the school. This includes the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Early intervention for pupils experiencing difficulties in their learning is of paramount importance, enabling them to access their lessons. This positively builds pupils' self-confidence and supports the excellent behaviour that is evident in classes and around the school. On occasions, meaningful opportunities for spiritual experiences arise in lessons. However, there is limited planning and structure to explore and develop spiritual understanding throughout the curriculum.

A thoughtful pattern of daily collective worship is inclusive and inspires the school community. Pupils and staff are involved in its planning and delivery. Consequently, themes are relevant and thought provoking. They link with Christian values as well as events in the liturgical year. An established routine of prayer and reflection provides a spiritual opportunity to consider God and deeper aspects of life. A range of dedicated spaces around the school support pupils' thinking and reflection. Pupils enjoy using these spontaneously for prayer and contemplation. This is not yet fully developed. There is a limited shared vocabulary to explore and articulate spiritual and ethical issues in significant depth. Daily collective worship is a joyous occasion in which pupils are eager to participate. It provides opportunities for calm reflection and enthusiastic praise. Pupils enjoy the weekly worship with the vicar, visits from other members of the church and the wider community who provide valuable support. When leading worship, visitors often explore practices of their own religion. This provides pupils with the opportunity to encounter people from different faiths and consider their own thoughts and beliefs. Parents welcome the opportunity to share the school services held in church. This helps them to feel included in the spiritual life of the school.

The vision promotes positive, caring relationships between staff, pupils and their families. This is a school where every individual is known well. Parents are confident to seek advice from the school, who work closely with agencies to support disadvantaged and vulnerable families. Pupils recognise the importance of their part in championing others. They acknowledge each other's challenges and are keen to help and encourage. Their role of 'advocates for refugees' is a powerful example of a generous response to a need in the community and school. The vision inspires a culture of forgiveness and second chances. Consequently, this is embedded in the school, and pupils feel that this is the right thing to do. On rare occasions when things go wrong, relationships are quickly and effectively restored. Leaders, driven by the vision, place the wellbeing and good mental health of everyone as a high priority. Consequently, the school thrives as staff and pupils 'let their light shine'. They feel valued, are mutually supportive of each other, and are highly committed to the school and its community.

The school is keen to promote justice and responsibility. Work on internationally recognised award schemes results in pupils knowing their rights and the rights of others. Through its vision, a wide range of opportunities and roles are offered for pupils giving them a strong voice in school. One moving example is a weekly event, where Year 5 pupils prepare and read out 'affirmations' to the whole school. These outline current world issues and how the pupils might respond to them. They are

powerful and inspiring to others and as a result, this is a school of action. Recent examples include children working with the local MP to campaign for safer roads and litter picking with church members. Pupils' recent organisation of a march around the school grounds was their response in support of the rights of women. Through such events, pupils are confident that they can contribute to change and have an impact on their world.

At St Matthew's, RE is well led and meets requirements for the subject as a Church school. The RE leader has worked hard to build and implement a curriculum that is progressive and meets the community's needs. As a result, pupils know and understand about the faiths and worldviews represented in the school and local area. Regular and effective support from the diocese and clergy enhances the teaching of RE. Some staff are not fully confident in teaching elements of the theological and philosophical concepts of the subject. Nonetheless, pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and are keen to find similarities and make connections between faith, belief and practice. They are confident discussing each other's faiths in class and are quick to highlight the gifts and achievements of their peers. This results in the vision being lived out. Pupils acknowledge difference and celebrate that they are unique individuals made in the image of God. They are proud to let their light shine.

The inspection findings indicate that St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Stretford is living up to its foundation as a Church School.

Information			
School	St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Stretford	Inspection date	1 February 2024
URN	106337	VC/VA/Academy	VC
Diocese	Manchester	Pupils on roll	186
Headteacher	Shelley Lynton		
Chair of Governors	Judith Stott		
Inspector	Helen Lever	No.	C.23/24