

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Wilfrid's Church of England Academy, Blackburn	
Address	Duckworth Street, Blackburn, BB2 2JR

School vision
<p>“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10 v 10</p> <p>The vision of St Wilfrid’s is taken from our motto and a verse from the gospel of John. We believe that this life should be lived out to the full, through direction and guidance from the Lord. Our hope is that the daily experiences within the Academy will enable our students to develop holistically, growing in character and valuing all others. Students will learn values through academic study and everyday interactions. They will be inspired by the spiritual and enriching out-of-lesson experiences, and in turn, inspire hope in others.</p> <p>Students will become stronger, well-rounded and content individuals who value themselves and others. They will be given opportunities to develop and experience a fully inclusive environment.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Christian vision has been carefully crafted to reflect the needs of the academy’s community. It underpins all decisions that are made. As a result, students, including those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), are able to flourish.</li> <li>• Pastoral care is exceptional and permeates out into the local community. Consequently, students and adults really are treasured, and lives are transformed.</li> <li>• Diversity is truly embraced and celebrated. This makes the school an extremely harmonious place where students and adults live well together.</li> <li>• Collective worship is truly inclusive. It is welcoming and inspires adults and students to reflect on their own beliefs and actions.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is an asset to students’ learning journey in all years. The subject leaders and teachers ensure that lessons are purposeful and challenging. This results in students who take responsibility for their achievements. The department contributes significantly to the Christian life of the wider academy community.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend opportunities to respond to injustice and inequality at a national and global level. This will enable students to become better agents for change.</li> </ul>
Inspection findings
<p>Rooted in the story of St Wilfrid, this academy has a deeply embedded, biblically rooted, Christian vision at its heart. The vision is modelled and upheld by strong leadership. This has ensured that the academy has established itself as a beacon within its community. It is a shining example of equity, inclusivity and fairness, where students and adults thrive. Students and adults clearly articulate the vision, and its associated values. This unites the academy in its determination that ‘you can live life</p>

to the full'. The academy ensures that even challenging conversations are framed in the context of care. As a result, adults, including parents, and students clearly recognise that each person is valued as a unique individual.

Students receive exceptional pastoral care. Individuals are cared for as unique children of God. The academy's vision forms the foundation for the curriculum, interweaving spirituality into all areas. It has been carefully constructed to meet the needs of students in the context of its community. Provision for students with SEND is carefully planned, in partnership with parents and students. As noted by one parent, 'the academy's ethos underpins everything'. The opening of the THRIVE building is enabling vulnerable students to continue with their studies in a smaller environment. They are nurtured until they are ready to transition back into the academy. The academy's pastoral hubs are there for all students to support their welfare and are very well used. As a result, students flourish and are supported to live life in all its fullness. Parents enjoy the weekly devotional links to the current academy theme, reporting it leads to important conversations at home.

The academy celebrates the heritage of all their students and staff with a culture day. Students and staff wearing their traditional cultural dress and sharing their beliefs allows them to flourish as part of the wider academy community. Wellbeing for all is at the heart of the academy. Staff appreciate initiatives such as Friday breakfast. They are supported to develop professionally through bespoke training. Consequently, staff retention is high. Relationships at all levels are built upon mutual respect. As a result, adults and students live incredibly well together in a harmonious learning environment.

Collective worship is at the heart of the academy and sets the tone for the beginning of each day. Each act of worship, whether year group based or in tutor groups, is grounded in the academy's vision. Students are clear that worship is always invitational and inclusive. They find inspiration in the parts of worship that promote a sense of belonging. A student remarked that 'as everyone comes together, we share kindness and welcome'. Times of quiet and reflection are part of each act of worship, which includes the invitation to pray. This provides valuable moments of stillness and further opportunities for spiritual growth. Students enter to a musical ensemble drawn from the academy's worship group which sets the tone for the worship. Students report that 'they are lucky to be able to experience worship in many different places'. Local churches facilitate an annual whole staff Eucharist, and opportunities for different year groups to take part in Eucharist. One student spoke of the sense of community and peace that this act of worship provides for him. St Wilfrid's worship at Blackburn Cathedral for Holy Week. The students describe how St Wilfrid's day is the highlight of the year with a 6th former carrying the cross. The whole academy following this to the cathedral. The students describe how St Wilfrid's Day, fills them with a spiritually formative experience. On Ash Wednesday 140 students came to be ashed in the chapel by the local clergy. One student reported that they understand why 'God calls us all to love one another'. The faith club, meet weekly to learn more about praise and worship. Students enjoy the chapel Eucharist where they lead worship, prayers and reading. A weekly prayer session is held for staff in the chapel, supporting their spiritual growth. The academy ensures prayer and spirituality spaces for all staff and students. The addition of a designated Muslim wash and prayer space for staff and students to practise their faith, confirms that everyone is valued.

As they live out the clear vision, students at the academy are very aware of the need to balance rights and responsibilities. They often speak of the need to 'treat our neighbours as ourselves'. They are willing to challenge injustice within the context of their academy, for example standing up for their friends. There are clear links to local charities, often through the academy's house system. The Wilfridian award for Y7 and Y8 students has a 'faith and service' element to it. Students can use these to select the charities by considering the impact of the charity and the difference their support can make. The local foodbank and the support for 5 students in Rwanda led to Compassion8 being

formed by Y8 students. This has further developed into each house sponsoring a child in Rwanda and proudly recounting that they had ‘broken the cycle of poverty’ for many children. Across the curriculum students can identify opportunities they have for the consideration of ethical issues and making principled choices. However, students have not fully developed an understanding of how they can individually impact social action and injustice in the wider world.

Highly effective subject leadership contributes to the success of RE. The team of subject specialists have deftly crafted a curriculum that is exciting, rich and relevant. Challenging learning brings world religions, including Christianity, to life as they are explored in their local and global contexts. Students investigate different worldviews and revisit prior learning to extend their knowledge and understanding.

RE is consistently well-taught and students rightly consider it a safe place to discuss and explore faith. Teachers’ expertise ensures students appreciate the academic skills associated with the subject. Students use religious terms regularly and accurately to express theological and philosophical ideas. Younger students respond confidently to demanding questions about religions and worldviews. This forms the firm foundation for GCSE studies at Key Stage 4. All Year 11 students complete a GCSE course in RE. ‘It enables them to explore important RE themes through the Bible’. Religious studies is a popular and successful A-level course.

In RE students including those with additional needs and the disadvantaged make very good progress and achieve outcomes in line with, or better than, national comparators. They know the progress they are making towards exacting academic targets because they receive timely feedback upon their work. Teachers use rigorous, accurate assessment outcomes to plan for enhanced student success. Students appreciate the help and support they receive from their teachers and take responsibility for improving their own work. This reflects the academy’s vision to ‘live life in all its fullness’ and be everything they can be. Visits and visitors add to the depth of learning. Sixth form students who do not take A level continue to explore a range of religious and ethical themes, expanding these into the qualifications. In addition to extending their knowledge of RE, this fortifies the development of their personal worldviews, enabling students to appreciate the impact of religion upon believers’ lives. The RE department enhances learning beyond lessons through focus days and this contributes to the academy's rich additional activities programme.

The inspection findings indicate that St Wilfrid’s Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	26 February 2024 - 27 February 2024	URN	136900
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	1485
Diocese	Blackburn		
MAT/Federation	Single Academy Trust		
Principal	Victoria Michael		
Chair	David Rintoul		
Inspector	Elaine Bowers	No.	960