

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

| <b>St Leonard's Church of England First School</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| Address   | School Lane, Dunston, Stafford, ST18 9AG |
| School vision   |  |
| <p>Love is at the heart of our school, our love of learning, God, ourselves, and others. We are committed to offering a rich curriculum that allows all to flourish both academically and spiritually. We want all to have a voice, knowing we can make a difference. We live out our vision through our values:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thankfulness, Trust, Courage, Forgiveness, Service, and Respect.</p> <p>Our vision is summarised in our motto Learn to love, love to learn. The Bible tells us;<br/> <span style="text-align: center;">‘Let all that you do, be done in love’ 1 Corinthians 16:14</span></p>  |  |
| School strengths  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Leonard’s vision lies at the heart of the school and is central to strategic and operational decision making. It is a place of welcome where priority is given to a love ‘of learning, of God, of self and others’.</li> <li>• Collective worship is an uplifting, spiritual experience. It inspires pupils and adults to live out the vision and values of the school.</li> <li>• St Leonard’s vision has inspired leaders to develop learning experiences that are tailored to the needs of its community. This creates a purposeful environment where pupils ‘love to learn’ through personal efforts and achievements.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is well led and is given high regard. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the subject and recognise that it helps them appreciate a range of faiths, lives and cultures.</li> <li>• Pupils have an exceptional and intuitive knowledge that the vision applies to all areas of life. As a result, they take active steps to support others at school, in the local community, and nationally.</li> </ul> |  |
| Areas for development   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish formal systems for monitoring and evaluation of the impact of collective worship and RE. This is to support leaders to make continued improvements to St Leonard’s as a Church school.</li> <li>• Deepen pupils’ understanding of injustice in the wider world. This is to develop their understanding and skills to become thoughtful and successful global citizens.</li> <li>• Build a shared language around spiritual experiences offered across the curriculum. This is to strengthen leaders’ planning and evaluation of the impact of spiritual development.</li> </ul>  |  |
| Inspection findings   |  |
| <p>St Leonard’s is a place of welcome where priority is given to a love ‘of learning, of God, of self and others’. Its securely embedded Christian vision lies at the heart of school life. The school is well supported by Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT). In partnership with the Trust, leaders</p>   |  |



ensure the vision is lived out strategically and operationally, thus shaping pupils' rich experiences. Additionally, governors, school leaders and SUAT collaborate closely with representatives of the diocese. As a result, they have a sound understanding of current thinking in Church school education. The committed governing body confidently makes decisions which benefit the school. For example, they have invested in a chaplain who provides emotional and spiritual support for pupils, staff, and families.

The vision inspires leaders to develop learning experiences that are tailored to the needs of pupils. This creates a purposeful environment where pupils 'love to learn' through personal efforts and achievements. It allows teachers, who are dedicated to individuals' academic, social and spiritual growth, to successfully meet learning needs. The school's values and vision are carefully incorporated throughout the curriculum. Conscientious monitoring and evaluation ensures these remain central to learning. Furthermore, a wide range of events such as themed days, trips and visiting speakers enhance pupils' learning. Their experience is strengthened further by quality extra-curricular activities such as gardening club, sports clubs and school council. Leaders, including SUAT and governors, understand the need for everyone to be able to explore their spirituality. They ensure pupils have fruitful opportunities to do this. For example, the use of outdoor learning to connect with the natural world encourages thoughtful reflection. Additionally, in partnership with a local charity, Youth Net, permanent reflection and prayer spaces have been developed. However, there is no shared language to express spirituality or plan and evaluate its impact across the curriculum.

Fund raising and community work helps pupils understand they are part of a local and national community. Examples of their efforts as agents of positive change range from delivering Christmas cards to the elderly, to clearing leaves or organising foodbank collections. Pupils articulate clearly and naturally how the vision and associated values link to these actions. They express an exceptional, intuitive, knowledge that the vision applies to all areas of life. Consequently, they understand that they can bring about change for the better and they take active steps to support others. However, opportunities to explore a more comprehensive global perspective of injustice within the wider world are limited.

Inspired by the vision, collective worship is an enriching and uplifting experience that enables pupils and adults to develop spiritually. Leaders ensure it is inclusive, invitational and thought-provoking. It conscientiously addresses the needs of a first school cohort so that their experience is age-appropriate. The weekly pattern of worship is thoughtfully planned and varied, providing effective opportunities for pupils to become involved or lead. Therefore, pupils have a strong, positive view of worship and the impact it has on their lives. They experience this in various ways, such as feeling as if 'God is sitting right next to me'. Therefore, for those for whom it is appropriate, collective worship embodies the school's vision by creating a love of God. A regular focus on current news stories enables pupils to understand how faith sustains people through crises. It inspires them to help others. Weekly 'big questions' are used to encourage philosophical thinking. Pupil's contributions to these discussions are sent home via the school's weekly newsletter. This allows parents to develop deep conversations with their children. The newsletter is also shared with the diocese and used within other schools as an example of good practice. Although governors monitor collective worship, its impact is not evaluated. Therefore, the extent that it contributes to spiritual growth is not clear.

RE is held in high regard. It is well led and managed and has an emphasis on asking questions, gathering information and reflecting. It engages and enthuses pupils, enabling them to think critically and explore deep questions successfully. They enjoy studying a range of faiths, lives and cultures and value what others say. Additionally, learning about Christianity as a living faith makes a constructive contribution to the Christian character of the school. Effective support is given for staff to build on their subject knowledge and practice. They access training provided by SUAT and the

diocese. Furthermore, the RE leader benefits from attending local hub meetings. This ensures up-to-date subject knowledge, and expectations are available and shared appropriately within school. Internal moderation of pupils' work by staff enables a clearly defined progression in learning. However, formal systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of RE are less developed. This limits opportunities to challenge pupils' academic and spiritual growth.

The vision drives a culture where adults and pupils are treated well. Consequently, pupils develop high levels of confidence, strong communication skills and build healthy relationships with each other. Inspired by the school's values, they are taught how to reconcile differences through love and forgiveness. Consequently, they are respectful of one another, treating each other with kindness. Pupils' emotional welfare is prioritised. This is demonstrated by staff who use their room as a refuge for those needing time out during their day. Here, pupils are welcomed and given simple activities, such as 'mindful colouring', promoting a sense of calm before they return to class. The accessibility of staff, school leaders and the pastoral team, is appreciated. It is evident that the school lives its vision through its approach to others around them. Leaders have created a keen sense of community where pupils and adults thrive. They are proactive in addressing circumstances that might affect the mental health and wellbeing of staff. Notably, wise decisions take teachers' workload into account. Cohesive relationships amongst staff exemplify the vision. This is seen in the emotional and practical support they offer each other, and kindness shown during challenging times. Consequently, adults and pupils live well together in an inclusive culture where they can flourish.

The inspection findings indicate that St Leonard's Church of England First School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

| Information     |  |                |        |
|-----------------|--|----------------|--------|
| Inspection date | 19 June 2024                             | URN            | 147423 |
| VC/VA/Academy   | Academy                                  | Pupils on roll | 83     |
| Diocese         | Lichfield                                |                |        |
| MAT/Federation  | Staffordshire University Academies Trust |                |        |
| Headteacher     | Catherine Philips                        |                |        |
| Chair           | Katrina Gibson                           |                |        |
| Inspector       | Delia Sheppard                           | No.            | 942    |