

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Thomas' Church of England Primary School			
Address	Parkgate Road, Stockton Heath, Warrington WA4 2AP		
Date of inspection	14 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	Chester	URN	111381

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

St Thomas' is a primary school with 208 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school was judged to be good when inspected by Ofsted in October 2018. The school operates full time nursery provision for 24 pupils. Wrap around care for all pupils, including nursery is also provided by the school.

The school's Christian vision

Growing together through faith in Jesus Christ **'Let all you do be done in love'** (1 Corinthians 16. 14). Knowing God through Jesus in our lives let us share, experience and live happiness, laughter and joy in a welcoming, inclusive and loving Christian place. In the eyes of God and with all your heart let us embrace opportunities to learn, achieve and celebrate success and difference. By sharing the fruits of the spirit let us shine out for others to see that we are tolerant, respectful, wise and hopeful in this community and God's world. In journey and love, remember **'I am with you always'** (Matthew 28.20)

Key findings

- Leaders have created an inclusive, aspirational vision. Founded upon the school's established Christian values and rooted in Bible teaching, the vision drives all aspects of church school improvement.
- God's love is clearly evident in the highly supportive, nurturing relationships which support all members of the school family. The vulnerable and those with special needs and/or disabilities are very well-supported so that everyone can flourish and achieve.
- The enriched, creative curriculum, designed to meet the needs of the school community, supports pupils' spiritual and personal development very well.
- Daily collective worship, supported and greatly enriched by strong links with the church, engages and inspires pupils to apply Jesus' teaching about love and forgiveness in their own lives.
- Effective teaching in religious education (RE) excites and inspires pupils. They gain a good understanding of important Christian concepts and belief. However, their understanding of diversity and difference is less well-developed.

Areas for development

- Enhance and deepen pupils' understanding of diversity by providing more opportunities for them to meet people of different faiths and cultures.
- Extend pupils' global knowledge and understanding so that they can challenge injustice and more confidently reflect their concern for God's world and people, to become advocates for change.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

A full review of the school's vision was undertaken last year, involving all members of the school family. As a result, the vision is fully shared and lived out by everyone. Founded on the school's established Christian values and rooted in Bible teaching, the vision fully reflects the school's declared aim, 'to provide an inspirational, inclusive, loving learning environment in which everyone is valued and respected so that they can flourish and achieve'. The vision directs decision-making. It is the driving force behind school improvement, helping to transform pupils' lives and prepare them for future challenges. This is exemplified by leaders' decision to take responsibility for nursery and wrap around care provision. Parents confirm that the changes impact positively on the community and family life. Leaders have created a well-supported, harmonious staff team. All work tirelessly to provide the best possible learning environment for all pupils. This is recognised and very much appreciated by parents who know that their children are loved and supported on their journey.

Leaders continue to develop the creative curriculum enriched by outdoor learning, regular visits and residential experiences. Effective use is made of the school's extensive grounds so that pupils learn to appreciate the wonder of creation and accept responsibility for God's world and people. Christian values are threaded across the curriculum as well as through special themes such as Black History Month. As a result, pupils make effective links between the teaching of Jesus and their own actions to support others. Pupils recognise that they can, in small ways, have a positive impact on their local environment. For example, they successfully challenged the local library closure and continue to litter pick around school. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of global issues, and the ways in which these might be challenged to become advocates for change, is less well developed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all that the school offers. They benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities, some of which are run by the church. They become eager, confident and articulate learners who strive to achieve the aspirational targets set for them by teachers whom they respect. All pupils, including the vulnerable and those with special needs and/or disabilities are extremely well-supported. As a result, all pupils make good, sometimes rapid progress. Levels of attainment are consistently above those achieved nationally.

The calm, welcoming atmosphere immediately sensed by visitors creates a highly positive learning environment in which pupils concentrate and reflect upon their learning. The depth of their personal responses is reflected in the high quality, vibrant displays of work seen throughout the school. Pupils are reflective learners. They benefit from well-considered approaches designed to reduce stress and support their mental health and wellbeing. As a result, they become resilient learners who relish challenge and collaborate well with others. Behaviour is exemplary because all seek to apply the school's core Christian values of love and forgiveness. They learn to disagree well, exchanging ideas confidently and treating everyone with respect. Effective use is made of classroom RE and reflection spaces. They demonstrate the way in which Christian values and teaching in RE are linked across the curriculum.

Governors are a visible presence in school. They meet regularly with staff and pupils, share book scrutinies and engage in reviews of provision. Governors are extremely well-informed through their rigorous monitoring procedures. They share skills and expertise to support continued improvement. They have a very good idea of how the vision is being lived out in school. As a result, they support and challenge the work of the school effectively. Governors have secured strong leadership for RE and collective worship. Both make substantial contributions to achieving the vision and to pupils' spiritual growth. Leaders ensure that the needs of all pupils are met through efficient use of human and financial resources. Areas for development from the last denominational inspection have been addressed and changes continue to be monitored. Partnerships with the diocese, church and local cluster of schools are a strength. Diocesan staff and governor training has been instrumental in the development of RE and collective worship. Middle and senior leaders have benefitted from church school leadership training and the headteacher shares expertise with other local church schools.

Collective worship is a much valued and integral part of school life. The support of the church is powerful. The vicar and church youth leader are frequent visitors. They lead worship, run clubs and support work in RE. Other members of the church offer support, by for example, arranging Experience Christmas and Easter events in the church. Pupils enjoy worship because they feel included. They participate actively, helping to act out stories and respond willingly to questions. Worship planning is thorough. Themes based on Christian values and the teaching of Jesus, are explored creatively. Pupils have a good knowledge of Jesus' life and make very good links between parables, such as The Good Samaritan, and their own behaviour and actions. Prayer and reflection are key features of the school's daily worship life. Pupils know The Lord's Prayer. They write and use

their own prayers, sharing them in books, prayer trees and reflection areas. Pupils are familiar with many aspects of traditional Anglican practice. For example, they use greetings and responses. Key Stage 2 pupils share Eucharist at a church service each term. Festival services, planned and delivered by pupils, are held in church. These are much valued and very well-attended by parents. The impact of daily worship is evaluated rigorously by pupils, staff and governors. As a result, worship continues to evolve and influence the attitudes and behaviour of pupils and adults.

RE makes a substantial contribution to the school's distinctiveness and pupils' spiritual growth. Staff and pupils, are inspired by RE. It provides a safe space in which pupils explore ideas about belief. Careful questioning deepens pupils' thinking as they explore and reflect on the expression of belief. Pupils enjoy the wide variety of approaches used, particularly art and drama. The depth of their responses, and the extent of challenge for pupils, is reflected in the high quality of pupils' individual and group work. Their knowledge of Christian belief and concepts is thorough. Regular church visits and the support of the vicar in, for example, explaining the Eucharist, enhance learning. Pupils enjoy finding out about different cultures and beliefs. Through the study of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism, pupils gain some knowledge of different faiths and cultures. Special weeks, such as the recent interfaith week, extend their experience. However, regular opportunities for pupils to meet people of different faiths and cultures are limited. As a result, pupils' understanding of difference and diversity is less well-developed.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Consistently good teaching challenges and supports pupils' exploration of religious belief and practices. High quality leadership ensures that staff are knowledgeable and skilled. Evidence of pupils' achievement in RE supports teachers' understanding of progression and attainment. Effective end of unit assessments ensure that all pupils make good, sometimes rapid progress. As a result, standards of attainment for all pupils are high, being in line with the above average attainment in other core subjects.

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