

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

Address	Wellington Road North, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 4QG		
Date of inspection	29 November 2018	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	Manchester	URN	106128

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

School context

St Thomas' CE is a primary school with 554 pupils on roll. The school has an average level of religious and cultural diversity and 21% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. Since 2016 the school has operated on two sites and numbers on roll are increasing to become three form entry by 2020. Senior leadership teams have been adjusted to reflect this change. In January 2018 Ofsted found that the school continued to be good.

The school's Christian vision

We actively seek to promote the teachings of Jesus, upholding the principles of justice and compassion. We aim to show respect to others and uphold the rights and responsibilities of all, regardless of race, religion, age or need. We aim for children to succeed in body, mind, heart and spirit.

Key findings

- The Christian vision threads through all aspects of school life. It is discernible in the relationships, care and support offered within this highly inclusive school.
- The curriculum, shaped by the Christian vision, offers a wealth of experiences and opportunities that meet the academic and spiritual needs of pupils.
- The principles of restorative justice are universally understood. This brings depth to pupils' understanding of Christian teaching and of their own place in society as children of God. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes, in lessons and around the school, are very good.
- Effective teaching in religious education (RE) supports pupils in developing a clear understanding of the ways in which biblical teaching influences the lives of believers.
- Thoughtful and well-delivered worship, alongside opportunities for prayer and reflection around the school, support pupils' spiritual development.

Areas for development

- Review policies and procedures to ensure that they fully reflect both the Christian vision and practice of the school.
- Ensure that teaching and learning in RE are of a consistently high standard across the school.

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

The school's Christian vision, mission statement and motto are reflected in all aspects of life at St Thomas'. Senior leaders and governors ensure that decisions and actions are rooted in Christian teaching. As a result, the school's development plan appropriately prioritises actions that support both academic and spiritual development. The school would benefit from clarifying the relationship between the school vision, mission statement and motto. This would support leaders and governors in ensuring that written policies and procedures reflect the school's very good practice. Governors are involved in the self-evaluation process and confidently support leaders in assessing school effectiveness. As a result of this, and the commitment of leaders at all levels, recommendations for action identified at the previous inspection have been addressed.

Purposeful links with the diocese and the engagement of staff with continuing professional development, reflect the school's vision of enabling children to succeed in body, mind, heart and spirit. Pupils' lives are enriched by a broad and balanced curriculum that recognises their uniqueness in the eyes of God. Almost all pupils make good progress academically and pupils with SEND make very good progress. This is because of the excellent support given to pupils by the well-qualified and highly effective inclusion team. A wealth of additional opportunities across the wider school curriculum supports pupils' spiritual development. These include regular arts, science and reflection weeks as well as a wide range of visits and after school clubs.

The school prioritises the Christian values of perseverance and resilience. Consequently, the support pupils give to one another in their learning and in the playground is very good. Pupils learn that as children of God they can and are called to make a difference for others. Participation in the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders scheme enables Year 5 pupils to focus on social and moral issues and explore their personal response. The moral, cultural and social development of pupils is secure. Trained pupil restorative champions work on the playground to resolve small differences and to reflect the Christian values of forgiveness and truthfulness. As a result of their work, which is grounded in the school's Christian vision, the behaviour of pupils is very good. Pupils have opportunities to think about global social action and to consider their response. Practical examples include learning about life in Brazilian favelas and a community in Pakistan.

Extensive provision is made to support pupils' mental health and well-being. This is rooted in the school's Christian vision of promoting the teachings of Jesus by upholding the principles of justice and compassion. Sports coaches encourage activity over the lunch break. Vulnerable pupils receive support through the Sparkle Group. Relaxation classes and art therapy are available when needed. Consequently, the commitment given in the vision statement for children to succeed in body, mind, heart and spirit is fulfilled.

Staff model the school's vision of inclusion and acceptance. They take pride in knowing every pupil well. Staff show a supportive but firm and fair approach when addressing sensitive issues such as punctuality and attendance. Relationships and sex education is delivered from the standpoint of pupils valuing their individuality, knowing that they are a uniquely created person valued by God. Pupils are confident that no child in their school is singled out because of their beliefs, race, family or abilities. This understanding is reinforced in RE, worship and across the wider curriculum. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of the inclusive and welcoming nature of their school.

Worship reflects the school's Christian vision and inspires, enthuses and encourages pupils. Through story, drama and music pupils reflect on issues relevant to them that affect the ways in which they live. They actively engage with extensive opportunities for spiritual reflection and share their responses respectfully. Pupils are familiar with the story of Jesus' life and develop a practical understanding of Christian teaching. Prayer is a natural part of the daily life of the school. Reflection areas in classrooms and prayer stations in each building provide a space for pupils to pray. This provision enriches pupils' prayer lives and contributes to the maturity of their approach to contemplation. The involvement of pupils, teachers and members of the church community in planning and leading worship brings a richness of experience. Staff pray together each week and value this time of re-committal to the school's Christian vision and purpose.

RE is a popular subject. Lessons focus on issues of importance to pupils such as leadership, and gifts with enduring value. Debate is encouraged and pupils develop understanding of the interaction between religious belief and cultural heritage. They listen carefully to one another and are respectful of differing viewpoints. Subject leaders attend regular diocesan meetings for local RE teachers. These inform school based professional development and lead to a shared understanding of standards and subject content. The teaching of RE meets statutory requirements.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE teaching is effective and subject leaders have a good understanding of current developments in teaching and learning. A focus on core concepts has been introduced and is enabling pupils to develop their

understanding of Christianity in a new and exciting way. Well-planned RE themes enable pupils to explore and respond to the ways in which Christianity influences the lives of believers. Through enquiry, debate and the exploration of religious texts, pupils reflect on their own beliefs and values as well as the viewpoints of others. Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of a number of other major world religions. Assessment procedures are accurate and support pupils' learning. Consequently progress is generally good and sometimes excellent. Outcomes are in line with other core subjects. However there is a lack of consistency through the school in teaching, learning and outcomes.

Headteacher

Karen Morris

Inspector's name and number

Gail Fullbrook 530