

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Blackburn St Matthew's Church of England Primary School	
Address	Withers Street, Blackburn, BB1 1DF

School vision
<p>We aim to provide a positive learning experience in a safe and respectful environment. We strive to teach an inspiring and inclusive curriculum that promotes a love of learning. As a Christian school, we endeavour to develop the spiritual and moral values of all members of the St. Matthew's family, and a meaningful, loving relationship with God. We want our children to be cheerful and independent individuals who reach their potential and are proud of their achievements. We hope to develop confident, caring citizens who are well prepared to enjoy happy and rewarding lives.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theologically rooted Christian vision is deeply embedded. The shared commitment to the vision supports the flourishing of pupils and adults within a loving and supportive school community. • Leaders have created a warm, welcoming school inspired by the vision and lived out through the values. All feel included with a sense of belonging and watch over one another with love. As a result of this, relationships are exemplary. • Leadership is strong and nurturing. The wellbeing of the whole community is a priority. This culture is exemplified through positive interactions throughout the school environment. • Collective worship is varied and enjoyed by all. Valuable opportunities are provided for individual classes and whole school worship. These experiences effectively encourage spiritual growth. • High quality religious education (RE) and supportive leadership enables a curriculum which is broad and relevant, providing space for deep thinking. Effective monitoring and assessment supports the development of pupils' wider knowledge and understanding.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend pupils knowledge of global issues to enhance their experience and develop as courageous advocates for justice. • Enhance the process of planning, leading, evaluation and monitoring of collective worship. This is to strengthen leader's understanding of its impact and effectiveness. • Further strengthen pupils' knowledge of various religions and views through the evaluation of the revised RE syllabus.
Inspection findings
<p>St Matthew's is a warm, welcoming and joyful school. The Christian vision inspired motto of 'live, love, learn', supported by associated values, encourages the flourishing of adults and pupils. When recently adapting the vision, based on the Christian foundation, the local community needs were a significant consideration. Being inclusive and sensitive to those it is serving is a high priority. The</p>



leaders are very clear that the vision reflects the determination to improve the life chances of the pupils in the area. It is at the heart of all decisions made at school. Examples of the vision in action are evident throughout the school, showcased in the strong supportive relationships between adults and pupils.

Visionary leadership has responded to the specific needs of the school community. All have equal access to the curriculum. Members of the leadership team ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), remain in the classroom environment as much as possible. The curriculum is sensitively adapted and delivery styles vary to take account of the pupils needs. Teachers and teaching assistants provide carefully targeted support and focused interventions. Thoughtful consideration of the needs of the community and strategic funding decisions have enabled many changes for the benefit of the pupils. This included the creation of specific inclusive areas for intervention work. The development of a smaller nurture class of mixed Year 5 and 6 pupils allows appropriate support for emerging specific needs. This inclusive strategy has resulted in learners flourishing in this environment. The determination to provide positive learning experiences that are inspiring and inclusive underpins curriculum planning. These wider opportunities link firmly back to values. For example, when discussing global issues this was linked to a discussion around compassion.

Daily collective worship is carefully and sensitively planned, allowing everyone to be present with integrity. It enables pupils and staff to consider the wider world and reflect on their own actions and behaviours. The programme is adaptable accounting for the need to be responsive to sudden events. This also allows the support of specific pupil interests. A pupil asked about the history of the school. Photographs were used to emphasise the changing community since WW2. This encouraged discussion around how it had changed and how the school maintains its Christian distinctiveness. A blended delivery approach is used. Due to the very positive feedback from staff and pupils about online worship during the pandemic, the school decided to use this approach in a regular slot during the week. Pupils remain in classrooms and the interactive worship is delivered online. This enables an increase in pupil engagement in individual classes. There are opportunities for small group discussion and feedback to the wider school in a smaller nurturing environment. The delivery in this way encourages pupil confidence. An example of an activity was the collective writing of a psalm of thankfulness, the value of the half term. Each class contributed a line. The pupils are keen and eager to contribute. This was put together and displayed in each classroom during the day. This visibly demonstrated to the pupils the value of their contributions to the worshipping community. The vicar and youth worker from the parish church also deliver collective worship regularly. Members of the congregation run Bible study opportunities in school during 'the big lunch club'. Pupils enjoy having the opportunity to engage with visitors talking about faith experiences. Monthly prayer meetings are held for staff and all are welcome. They vary in their beliefs and share this prayer time together. Staff feel connected and have practical experience of living out the vision.

Pupils enjoy attending the school. This is seen through excellent behaviour, levels of attendance and positive relationships across the community. Parents are highly supportive of the school staff speaking with enthusiasm about the encouraging and inclusive nature. The families respect each other's faith and live well together. They feel valued and reassured with lots of information, including evenings about specific topics. 'Nothing is a problem' to the staff was repeated multiple times. An example of this is the supportive, friendly meet and greet in the morning. Parents value this opportunity to share concerns. They feel listened to and supported and often leave feeling content. Families experience the vision through daily interactions and in the wider extracurricular opportunities offered. Parents enjoy attending collective worship on Fridays, when their child has 'been spotted' demonstrating one of the wider values. They are rightly proud of being an inclusive school sensitively embracing the multi faith community.

Pupils engage in regular opportunities to learn about charities and wider global issues. They are encouraged to become active citizens making a difference in the wider world. The values in action group explore how to positively support those in need. Letters written to supermarkets and the local MP have enabled them to share their ideas and receive responses. They have gained understanding of how unpredictable events can have immediate impact on lives. When the Syrian earthquake was reported, they quickly responded organising a collection of resources to send to support this cause. Pupils are developing as active citizens and exploring wider opportunities to be agents for change through the school council and the values in action group.

RE is held in high regard by leaders and this is reflected in the significant curriculum time allocated. The RE syllabus is effectively used. Pupils confidently articulate knowledge of the Bible and are able to respond to big questions. The link governor meets regularly with leaders and has oversight of Church school distinctiveness. This strong link and valued support are positively welcomed. Staff and pupils talk with enthusiasm about opportunities to work with governors about the RE experience, Christian distinctiveness and ways to enhance areas of school. The leadership work closely with staff to ensure they are confident in delivering the recently introduced syllabus. Lessons are well planned, engaging and challenging. A regular quality assurance system is in place. Staff receive exceptional support with appropriate professional development delivered regularly. Effective teaching and learning of RE supports pupils in developing their curiosity and deep respect for a range of religions. St Matthew's has a strong and positive relationship with the diocese. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning outcomes ensures an accurate picture of the quality being delivered. Conferencing allows pupil voice to contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Thoughtful planning has ensured a curriculum that is engaging and sequenced to maximise learning of pupils. The developing school systems enable rigorous monitoring and careful tracking of pupil knowledge and progress.

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

Information			
Inspection date	13 September 2023	URN	119505
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	275
Diocese	Blackburn		
MAT/Federation	St Matthew's Church of England Primary School with Brunel Nursery School Federation		
Headteacher	Julian Rogers		
Chair	Fred Kershaw		
Inspector	Tina Astley	No.	2205