

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Aughton St. Michael's Church of England Primary School			
Address	Delph Park Avenue, Aughton, L39 5DG		
Date of inspection	22 November 2018	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Liverpool	URN	119388

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 Judgement	Grade	Good
The impact of collective worship		

School context

Aughton St. Michael's is a primary school with 197 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and 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 headteacher has been in post since 2010, although there have been some significant changes in staffing in recent months.

The school's Christian vision

Achieving all we can to develop fully our hearts and minds.
Sharing in a loving, caring, Christian community.
Making sure everyone is valued.

Key findings

- Leaders passionately articulate the school's inclusive Christian vision. However, the vision's biblical basis is not clear. As such, it is not used systematically in shaping strategic planning and policies and is not readily understood by the pupils.
- Distinctly Christian values are the heartbeat of the school. They are woven into all aspects of daily life and enrich relationships both within and beyond the school.
- All pupils feel valued in school and there is a strong ethos of dignity and respect within the local community. Pupils are strong advocates for social change and work with several organisations to bring this about. Their experience of religious diversity within the wider world, however, is limited.
- Partnerships, particularly with parents and the local church, are highly effective and mutually beneficial. They enable pupils and adults to flourish.
- Collective worship is inclusive and welcoming. Carefully planned themes link creatively to the school's Christian values and pupils' learning in religious education (RE). As a result, worship themes inspire them to action. Opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship are limited.

Areas for development

- Reaffirm the school's Christian vision with the whole school community so that it is overtly rooted in biblical teaching and shapes strategic planning and policies.
- Provide more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to encounter at first hand major world religions and world views, so that they understand and appreciate global diversity.
- Give opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship independently to enhance their creativity, engagement and spiritual development.

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

Aughton St. Michael's has a long-standing and inclusive Christian vision. School leaders, including governors, passionately describe how it is central to school life and underpins the school's Christian values. Leaders consult the school community every few years and adjust the core values to keep them relevant and engaging. The six Christian values are prominently displayed around the school and are woven through the curriculum and collective worship. As a result, pupils and adults articulate clearly how each value impacts on their thoughts and actions.

The headteacher is highly committed to her Christian vision for the school and models its caring and inclusive ethos. However, school documentation does not sufficiently show how the vision statement shapes school strategic planning. Similarly, pupils are unsure of the vision's biblical basis and not wholly confident in explaining how it relates to their daily lives.

Partnerships with parents and the local church are strong and mutually beneficial. Parents understand the vision statement's link with the school name. They speak movingly of the school's efforts to ensure families feel valued. 'Warmth hits you as you walk through the door,' said one parent. Leaders work hard to support staff, who say they feel valued and their wellbeing is important. Through links with the diocese, staff develop their understanding of church school education.

School leaders ensure the broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to achieve their best within a Christian context. Christian values are woven carefully through its themes. Pupil achievement is good and broadly in line with national averages for most groups. Leaders have welcomed support from outside the school to improve pupil outcomes. They have taken bold ethical decisions in adjusting teaching and learning to enable pupils to flourish academically. There are detailed plans in place to address the achievement of disadvantaged pupils but the impact has yet to be seen in achievement data. Leaders are passionate advocates for inclusion. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are very well supported. Leaders ensure the school offers a breadth of clubs so that all pupils are able to extend their learning. Spiritual development is taught progressively through the school. Topics such as the slave trade and the life of Frank Foley demonstrate pupils' growing ability to explore spiritual and ethical issues. One pupil explained, 'Frank Foley's Christianity made him brave. He helped Jews escape the Nazis because he knew it was the right thing to do.'

The school's Christian vision is clearly aspirational and pupils describe how they are encouraged to do their best in all areas of school life. Using a sound theological basis, leaders recently adopted the Christian value of resilience, which effectively enhanced the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. They planned activities through collective worship and the curriculum, including in the school's woodland area. As a result, pupils say they are more able to cope with setbacks and change. School leaders, in partnership with the church and other local groups, have a strong commitment to charitable causes. Pupils understand how their community action supports their Christian value of koinonia. They speak with conviction of their support for a range of local and national charities, particularly one inspired by a family within the school community. The Archbishop of York Young Leaders Award motivates pupils to be advocates for change, for example in reducing plastic in the environment.

The school's vision for a caring and loving Christian community creates positive relationships at all levels. Pupils say they love coming to school. They behave well and strongly support each other. Parents recognise this as a strength of the school. One parent said, 'I definitely feel that the strong Christian message of love one another and respecting each other is modelled and demonstrated at St. Michael's.' Attendance is good and the number of exclusions is very low. Pupils talk about forgiveness and reconciliation with some theological understanding. However, the school does not sufficiently outline how these values shape policy making.

Leaders affirm how the inclusive Christian vision enables all pupils to be respected and valued. Pupils recognise and respect diversity within their school community. The relationship and sex education policy has a strong Christian basis. It encourages pupils to see themselves as special in the eyes of God and supports them in forming positive relationships. Although pupils show some understanding of diversity outside their local community, the curriculum provides limited first hand opportunities for pupils to encounter a range of world faiths and views.

Collective worship is highly valued. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the importance of joining together to sing, pray, celebrate and reflect. They describe how worship helps them link their Christian values with biblical teaching and how this impacts on their thinking and actions. Pupils particularly value the weekly collective worship led by the local vicar. They say he helps them understand the relevance of the Bible in an interactive and engaging way. Parents value the opportunity to join in with school worship, including attending festivals in church. This focus on celebrating the Anglican seasons helps pupils perceive God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Reflection areas in classrooms confirm how themes inspire thoughtful responses. Pupils speak about how prayer helps them cope with life. The headteacher and vicar ensure that worship develops pupils' understanding of Christian values. They provide innovative worship experiences for pupils, such as the outdoor remembrance service held recently in the school grounds. As a result, pupils and adults talk about the relevance of Jesus' teaching in today's world. The governing body monitors and evaluates collective worship effectively and pupils give their views, leading to improvements. Pupils enjoy taking responsible roles within worship. However, their opportunities to plan and lead worship regularly are limited.

Statutory obligations for RE and collective worship are met and RE teaching is in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The RE leader is aspirational in her vision for the subject. Her careful curriculum planning and focus on staff development have led to effective teaching, including the good use of resources. As a result, pupils respond to theological concepts with a deepening understanding. The recent introduction of floor books in every class has given opportunities for all pupils to respond creatively, most effectively to religious art. As a result, pupils show a growing understanding of Christianity as a living world faith and can critically reflect on their views and ideas, which enhances their spiritual development.

Headteacher	Fiona Cottam
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