

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Saint Aidan's Church of England High School

Vision

'I have come that they might have life, and have it in its fullness' John 10:10

We aspire, we believe, we succeed.

Strengths

- Ambitious leaders, including governors, know their school well and are passionate in ensuring the Christian vision is a lived experience. Integrity, humility and service to the whole school community guide their drive to ensure that students and adults experience 'life in all its fullness.'
- The Christian vision creates an aspirational culture of possibility through the broad curriculum and wide variety of learning opportunities which extend students' horizons. Consequently students, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from an ethos which values them as individuals. This enables them to flourish and, in some instances, transforms lives.
- Inspired by the Christian vision, a highly nurturing culture permeates throughout the school. Caring and loving relationships ensure that students and staff know they will be listened to and their voices heard. Staff go above and beyond to support the pastoral needs both of students and colleagues. This powerfully enables a feeling that, if challenges are encountered, they can be overcome.
- Opportunities for students and staff to worship together create a valued sense of togetherness. These allow meaningful moments to reflect on teachings from the Bible as well as time to pause within the busyness of the day.
- Leadership and teaching in religious education (RE) is made highly effective through the powerful use of challenge and strong subject knowledge of staff. This enhances students' knowledge and understanding of a range of worldviews and faiths. The curriculum is thoughtfully balanced, ensuring they have a clear understanding of Christianity as a global and living faith.

Development Points

- Enhance the impact of form group worship. This is to extend the consistency of the way different styles of worship enrich the spiritual development of students and adults.
- Extend the shared understanding of spirituality throughout the school. This is to strengthen the way students respond to the opportunities for spiritual development in the curriculum and collective worship.
- Extend the mutually beneficial partnerships with the local churches. This is so the impact of this enriches opportunities for the flourishing of adults and students.



Inspection Findings

The long-established Christian vision of 'life in all its fullness' drives leaders' decisions and actions. This creates a culture of high aspiration and care. Understated in the way it is displayed around school, the words of the vision are, however, powerfully evident in loving relationships. It is a lived experience which recognises the deep worth of each individual in a tangible ethos of togetherness. Students and adults are proud to belong to the nurturing Saint Aidan's family. This is because it is a place where the voices of individuals are heard. Inspired by Jesus' teachings, leaders serve their school community with a deep understanding of its Christian foundation. They work collaboratively with parents, carers, governors, staff and students to ensure that decisions reflect the vision. As a result, students express a feeling of being listened to, understood and safe. Parents describe a sense of being optimistic about the future because of the positive impact of the vision on their children.

The curriculum is infused with a rich variety of development opportunities. It is carefully designed to challenge and inspire learners, extending horizons through a range of meaningful visits and activities. The breadth of the curriculum widens students' learning experiences. Carefully planned personal development days enrich the academic opportunities that are available within the curriculum. Art projects and boat trips in the Lake District provide experiences for students to develop spiritually. However, the way they express the impact of these experiences is limited. This is because there is not a shared understanding of spirituality to provide them with a language to do this. Saint Aidan's is a highly inclusive school. Leaders break down barriers to learning through listening to students' needs and seeking to find a way to help them succeed. In this way, the vision of 'life in all its fullness' is a guiding light for the personalised support provided for students. This includes those with SEND or who are identified as disadvantaged and vulnerable. Consequently, the vision creates an ethos of possibility where individuals are known and loved as the unique person they are. The impact of this can be truly transformative on the lives and experiences of students and adults.

Collective worship is shaped by the Anglican foundation of the school. Students and staff value gathering in the large hall, creating a sense of togetherness and unity. This provides opportunities to pause and reflect. The school's '10:10' awards reference the Bible verse that inspires the vision. They provide students with a range of experiences explicitly linked to the Christian foundation of the school, such as leading prayers. Consequently, the vision directly enhances the provision of worship, inspiring students to take action based on the weekly theme. Students and adults are invited to reflect on Bible stories and the lives of inspirational people. These encourage them to consider their own actions and choices. Through this, worship provides meaningful moments for spiritual development which are enriched through termly Eucharist services. Occasional family services offer opportunities for the wider community to worship with the school. In addition, the chapel, or 'Upper Room', offers further space for reflection and time to talk with the chaplain. Leaders, including governors, deeply value worship and actively monitor its provision. However, the impact of worship in form groups on the spiritual flourishing of adults and students is inconsistent.

The vision inspires a culture of dignity and respect where adults and students are treated well. Wellbeing is effectively modelled by leaders and staff, and reflected in loving relationships which are evident throughout the school. Leaders are driven by the vision to ensure that, in this large school, staff and students are personally known. Good mental health is enhanced through the carefully considered provision of counselling and pastoral care. The nurturing structure of mixed-age form groups is deeply appreciated by students. They value the supportive 'family time' with older and younger students gathering together. Carefully constructed transition opportunities support the movement of Year 6 pupils from their many primary schools. Welcome letters written by older students are one of a range of highly effective measures to support a smooth start to the school. The warmth of greeting and hospitality for visitors powerfully embody the importance placed on relationships. People matter at Saint Aidan's.



As one of the largest employers in the area, partnerships with the local community are important. The '10:10' awards enrich students' understanding of their own personal responsibilities to their school and the wider area. This culture of responsibility is evident through their active charitable work which is often inspired by the personal experiences of staff and students. There is a tangible sense of pride from students in the positions of responsibility that they have within the school. These reinforce opportunities to make ethical choices such as recycling waste to have a positive environmental impact. The vision encourages students and staff to look at opportunities to serve others. Examples include supporting foodbanks with Harvest Festival donations and strengthening the community work of their link partners in Cambodia. Students have a clear understanding that their actions can positively challenge injustice in the world. Acts of love flow from Saint Aidan's and positively impact on lives beyond the school. Relationships with local churches continue to grow and develop. The clergy are actively and enthusiastically involved in the daily life of the school. This is starting to provide increased support for the pastoral and spiritual wellbeing of staff, families and students. Leaders and clergy share a commitment to enhance this mutually beneficial partnership.

RE is a high priority subject area. Close work with the diocese ensures that the curriculum is well-sequenced and relevant. The active engagement of staff in professional development positively impacts on the effectiveness of the curriculum. Consequently, students demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of a range of worldviews and faiths, including Christianity. RE leaders and staff combine to create a highly effective team of specialists who are aspirational for their students. Leaders, including governors, effectively monitor RE. Collaborative work with the RE leader ensures the outcome of subject reviews strengthens the provision. Students understand the relevance of the subject and the way it extends their understanding of the diverse world they live in.

Teaching in RE is highly effective with students immersed in creative learning experiences which motivate them to want to know more. Challenge is delivered through well-phrased questioning which encourages students to think deeply and reflect on what they are learning. This extends their awareness of the way faith is lived out and heightens their understanding of Christianity as a global religion. Effective assessment practices ensure staff have a clear understanding of the progress that students make, adding extra support where needed. Examination style questions are expertly modelled which provides clarity for students, strengthening their progress. The vast majority of students take the full GCSE course. The school offers appropriate alternatives for those students for whom a more personalised curriculum offers a more manageable route to success. Training opportunities provided by the diocese enhance expertise in teaching RE, impacting positively on students' learning.

Information

Address	Cartgate, Preesall, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire. FY6 ONP		
Date	14 and 15 October 2024	URN	119789
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	837
Diocese	Blackburn		
Headteacher	Andy Smith		
Chair of Governors	Sue Pullen		
Inspector	Paul Rusby		