

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School, Elton	
Address	Colville Drive, Bury, BL8 2DX

School vision

Learning, loving and growing; together as God's children.
 Our vision is about celebrating the uniqueness of every individual, inspiring a lifelong love of learning and experiencing life in all its fullness.
 It is rooted in John 13: 34:
 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.'

School strengths

- The Christian vision is well understood by leaders and deeply rooted in its community. The vision, to love one another as Jesus loved us, drives the school priorities and its decision making. As a result, the pupils and adults learn and grow together exceptionally well.
- Inspired by its vision and values, leaders actively create a school culture of inclusivity and equity. It welcomes, nurtures and supports all, including the vulnerable and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), enabling them to flourish.
- Underpinned and strengthened by caring and loving relationships, pastoral support is at the heart of this school. As a result, adults and pupils feel well supported, flourishing and growing together as unique children of God.
- Collective worship is inclusive and invitational linking closely with the school's vision providing opportunities to reflect, ask big questions and praise God. Worship is varied and led by a range of staff and pupils.
- Religious education (RE) has high priority in the curriculum and the school improvement plan. Pupils value and enjoy their RE lessons which are creative, engaging and challenging. As a result, pupils make progress and gain a deeper understanding of Christianity.

Areas for development

- Develop a shared definition and understanding of spirituality amongst staff and pupils. Use this to deliver rich and relevant experiences which nurture spiritual development, across the curriculum and school life.
- Ensure the transition to the new RE curriculum is fully implemented. This will enable pupils to develop a balanced and deeper understanding of world religions and world views over time.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to explore issues of injustice in the world and encourage them to respond. This ensures pupils gain confidence as independent agents of social change and the school's Christian vision has a wider impact.

Inspection findings

St Stephen's is a nurturing school where staff go the extra mile, so all feel loved and cared for. Passionate about ensuring all flourish, leaders welcome everyone as unique individuals into the St Stephen's family, embodying its Christian vision. As the school joins the Sycamore Church of England Trust, its vision centres on growing together as God's children. Rooted in this vision they find strength to overcome challenging times. The school and the Trust's values align together. They are palpable in how they are lived out and central to their decision making. Through the strength of the school's vision and values, leaders demonstrate compassion, love and respect for one another. This culture results in valued and listened to adults, well supported leaders and places children at the heart of every decision made.

Leaders and governors recognise, that all children are unique, and have different needs. Pupils with SEND and those who are vulnerable are championed by staff and are included in all school activities. Within this proactive culture of nurture and encouragement, everyone is able to reach towards their potential and flourish.

Collaborating with the Trust, the curriculum is redesigned to incorporate varied opportunities and experiences, ensuring a broad and enriched learning offer. As a result, pupils love coming to this school and they talk enthusiastically about their learning. Within the new curriculum offer, there are opportunities for pupils to ask 'big questions' and to explore their heritage and different cultures. For example, pupils thoughtfully reflect on the importance of Black History Month inspired by Martin Luther King's speech 'I have a dream'. Equality of opportunity extends to the wider life of the school. Pupils and parents talk passionately about the enhancement afternoons and the breadth of opportunities on offer to them. One family describes how their child asked to join the choir and sing for the elderly, to help the residents feel valued and bring joy. Aspects of spirituality are generally explored in lessons as they arise, strengthening pupils' awareness of their place in the world. However, experiences are not explicitly planned across the curriculum, and a shared understanding of spirituality is not yet developed.

The school's vision and values are central to all acts of worship. Collective worship is varied, inclusive and highly valued throughout this school. During whole school or phase worship pupils are inspired to learn from the teachings of Jesus, regardless of their faith background. Pupils listen intently to the word of God, sing with joy and confidently share responses. Even the youngest pupils recognise worship as a special time. The use of candles and music encourages them in this. Quiet reflection time offers pupils opportunities to consider the important messages and prayer is invitational. Equally, visits to church for learning and to celebrate key Christian festivals enriches pupils understanding of prayer and worship today. Internal worship spaces support prayer and reflection but the school environment is not yet fully developed to advance spiritual flourishing. Meaningful class worship embraces current affairs with reflection, prayers and biblical examples a natural and important aspect. However, shared planning of an explicit theme across the range of worship opportunities is underdeveloped and lacks cohesion.

The wellbeing of both pupils and staff is a high priority, allowing everyone to flourish. Relationships in the school are very good because both staff and pupils are treated as valued and unique individuals. The school nurtures its pupils, supports parents, and leaders offer an 'open door' to any staff who have concerns or problems. Pupils know that they can speak to adults at any time and that they will be listened to. Governors prioritise decisions that will enable all to flourish in their pastoral and academic wellbeing. For example, the importance of the pastoral lead to the wellbeing of pupils. Pupils, use their daily wellbeing scale and talk openly about the ways in which they can help themselves and seek help in school. As a result, pupils develop coping mechanisms and improved self-esteem helping them to achieve. Pupils behave well. They say that, when they fall out, they use

their values of love, respect and forgiveness to restore and repair. Bullying is rare and pupils report that they feel safe in school. Parents rightly appreciate that staff have time to talk to them. They speak positively about the help that they receive to support their own wellbeing.

Pupils are aware of issues in the world. Resources used in collective worship help them to understand some current affairs. Eco warriors support Water Aid and harvest engages pupils in actively supporting local charities like Porch Boxes, and Community Grocery Store. Currently, these are largely teacher-led. Pupils do not yet have a full understanding of how they can be agents of change in their own communities and the world at large.

RE has a high status in school and meets the statutory and church requirements. In recognition of the importance of RE, it is only taught by class teachers. The school actively engages in diocesan training, and local cluster RE meetings. Teachers use the assessment frameworks accurately capturing pupil achievement. As a result, teaching is adapted well to meet the needs of all learners. In-depth monitoring and evaluation confirm that RE teaching is good. Sequenced and coherent teaching enables pupils to develop a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They recall prior learning and use this to inform their work and build their understanding. Learners appreciate diversity of beliefs and practices across a range of world faiths and world views. Through enrichment opportunities they celebrate a wide range of festivals such as Diwali and Eid. This RE teaching reflects the schools' Christian vision, encouraging pupils to be active citizens and foster community engagement. However, the curriculum structure does not support long term understanding and retention of pupils' learning about world religions and worldviews. Leaders recognise this and are transitioning to a new diocesan syllabus. RE work is showcased in class 'floorbooks' alongside individual pupil books. Pupils are proud of their work and clearly say how they enjoy their RE lessons.

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

Information			
Inspection date	23 November 2023	URN	130327
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	198
Diocese	Manchester		
MAT/Federation			
Acting Headteacher	Sally Denney		
Chair	Sarah Howard		
Inspector	Pam Hartley	No.	941