Diocese of Liverpool

Keeping On Track

School	**St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Blundellsands.**
Adviser	**Robert Haigh**
Date of Visit	**19th September 2023**
School's theologically rooted Christian Vision	The Christian vision is deeply embedded. It inspires the mission of the school, 'Belonging Believing Becoming' and its core values. It is clearly theological in its roots and the template for decisions made by school leaders. Its invitation to envision a 'Christian family that views all its members as special' and to 'feel Christ as the heartbeat of this school-church family' is transformational for children and adults alike. The vision inspires a vibrant ethos and culture which is focussed on the flourishing of all. It celebrates belonging, equity, diversity, inclusion and respect. It also fuels the school's drive to reach out into the local community and the wider world. Ascertaining the impact of the vision on the school's Christian character is a strong feature in the monitoring, review and evaluation processes employed by leaders and governors.
How was the vision developed and how does it respond to the CONTEXT of the school?	The vision and mission statements were formulated following a process of wide and careful consultation. They are reviewed annually. The school responds adeptly to its context. The locality is largely White British with a mixed socio-economic profile. The school fulfils parental expectations by providing quality teaching and a wide variety of ambitious curriculum experiences. Together these promote the high academic achievement of all pupils. The school is also courageous in affirming that this is not the full story. It succeeds in its aim to disturb and challenge perceptions of the world beyond the immediate area. It raises pupils' horizons and gives them a deeper understanding of the issues of the day. Pupils say that they are enabled to learn and grow by investigating a variety of faiths and cultures, expressing their creativity, exploring life's 'Big Questions' and engaging in social action, international partnership and global citizenship. The vision for providing every child with the opportunity to thrive drives the commitment to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and their families. Parents and carers recognise how well the school meets the needs of families experiencing difficulty through its ministry of pastoral care, practical support and advocacy. Links with the parish are dynamic, fruitful and mutually beneficial. The 'Church@School' and 'Bridge' initiatives enable pupils to know that they are part of a wider Christian community beyond the school. The Revd Beth is a welcome and esteemed member of the school family as teacher, pastor and worship leader.

How does the school environment and digital presence celebrate its theologically rooted Christian vision?	An attractive and exciting website leaves the enquirer in no doubt about the school's Christian identity. The physical environment is welcoming, vibrant, and proclaims the school's Christian character through eye-catching displays and symbols. The nurturing Christian family atmosphere is pervasive. All pupils are known well, valued and surrounded by loving relationships. None is left behind. Pupils say they value the space in their classrooms for worship, prayer and reflection because they help them to grow in faith.
To what extent have the area/s for improvement from the previous SIAMS inspection been addressed and with what impact?	The areas to develop identified in 2020 have been addressed. Pupils of all ages and stages have become more involved and confident in the evaluation of collective worship. This enables them to reflect and understand more about why worship is important for Christians. The school, formerly a Teaching School, has maintained its role as an active and respected partner for church and community schools in the areas of Religious Education (RE) and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This sharing of practice has had significant impact by enhancing the knowledge, expertise and effectiveness of staff and pupils alike.
How is the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enabling pupils to flourish?	Pupils say they feel safe and cared for. Their impressive conduct, mutual support and attitudes to learning reflect the high expectations of staff and the culture of hope, aspiration and caring that the vision inspires. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), engage in a range of opportunities which promote their academic progress and character development. Pupil voice is regularly heard, genuinely valued and acted upon. Pupils readily assume leadership roles which enable them to make meaningful contributions to school life, demonstrate the core values, and express a deep sense of connection with the school's vision and mission. The curriculum provides effective support for pupils' development as advocates of social justice. The adage 'flourishing children enjoy education' is certainly true at St Nicholas.
How is the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enabling adults to flourish? [staff, governors and parents]	The vision includes the commitment to enable staff to develop their talents and expertise. The inspirational headteacher and the strong leadership team encourage colleagues to engage in appropriate training. Members of staff appreciate these opportunities for professional development. They are treated with dignity and feel valued, supported and empowered in their professional roles within the school family. The collective wellbeing and pastoral care of staff is an important concern of leaders and governors, who also frequently show appreciation and gratitude. Staff are proud to be part of the professional learning community knowing that by their mutual encouragement, modelling of professional behaviour and the improvement of their practice they are making a strong contribution to realising the school's vision.

	Governors are enthusiastic and visible in their service to the school. Arrangements for governance enable them to be well informed and not only to contribute from their strengths but also to develop new areas of knowledge and expertise. The school's relationship with its families is strong and flourishing. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and are increasingly recognising that the school's vision guides all its activities. They recognise that the school is compassionate, approachable and listens. Therefore, they feel confident in seeking help in times of need.
Agreed current strengths:	The impact of the school's Christian vision is profound. The vision and values drive professional practice and prompt a range of effective interventions to remove barriers to flourishing. The headteacher's dynamic, committed and visionary leadership is strongly supported by a team of dedicated leaders, teachers and support staff, vigilant governors and enthusiastic pupils. All are enormously proud of their school. The feeling of family in the school is palpable. Staff and pupils value the sense of identity and belonging they experience in this nurturing community. As a result pupils behave well and are eager to learn. Highly supportive relationships between staff and pupils are based on the school's core values. Collective worship is paramount. It is planned and led by a strong team of adult and pupil leaders. Pupils say that worship, enriched through the exciting partnership with the local church and the Diocese of Liverpool, enables them to grow closer to Jesus. Innovative Religious Education (RE) is led and taught well. It is given high priority as a core subject. RE provision meets the requirements of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Pupils are positive about the subject and enjoy its investigative approaches to learning which enable them to achieve high standards and grow spiritually.
Agreed areas for development:	Enable governors, staff and pupils to prepare the school for the next SIAMS inspection under the 2023 Framework and the seven Inspection Questions (IQ) contained therein. The re-examination of the school's vision statement and SIAMS self-evaluation processes is already underway. Continue to develop provision for collective worship through training for staff and pupil worship leaders and their involvement in the evaluation of the impact of worship on the spiritual growth of pupils and staff.

	Deepen pupils' knowledge of world religions and their awareness of the impact of Christianity as an international faith. This will enhance their understanding of, and commitment to, global citizenship.
Signed Headteacher	Rebecca Woods
Signed Adviser	Robert Haigh