

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School

Address	Nicholas Road, Blundellsands, Liverpool, L23 6TS		
Date of inspection	7 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary School
Diocese	Liverpool	URN	I04922

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

St Nicholas Primary School has 210 pupils on roll of which the majority are White British. A very small minority of pupils, from a range of backgrounds and heritages, speak English as their additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below the national average and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average and rising. Attendance is above the national average. St Nicholas has been a Teaching School since 2015 and holds the Church School Partnership Awards 1 and 2. The parish are awaiting the appointment of a new vicar.

The school's Christian vision

Belonging, Believing, Becoming

St Nicholas is where everyone shares a sense of belonging, believes in each other and works together to become living logos within our world, shining for Jesus. Christ is the heartbeat of our school-church family, the unseen but ever present teacher in its classes, the model for its entire staff and the inspiration for its pupils.

Key findings

- The school's deeply embedded Christian vision and inspirational leadership of the headteacher, together with dedicated staff and committed governors, ensure that both adults and pupils thrive in this highly inclusive, respectful community.
- Nurturing relationships, based on Christian love, have a significant and positive impact on all members of this caring community. The wellbeing of all pupils and staff is of the highest importance.
- Collective worship plays a pivotal role in supporting and conveying the school's Christian vision and associated values. It provides daily opportunities, for pupils and adults, to share in reflecting on and living out this Christian vision.
- Religious Education (RE) is highly valued. Creative teaching, including enquiry based learning, leads to enthusiastic and exemplary pupil engagement, resulting in high standards.
- Strong and mutually beneficial links with the parish church and church family make a significant contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character.

Areas for development

- To further enhance and extend the existing system of pupil evaluation of collective worship so that all pupils have the opportunity to be involved in the process.
- To share the good practice in RE and worship with other schools through Teaching School work.

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

The school's deeply embedded Christian vision is founded upon well established Christian values and rooted in gospel teaching. Leaders, including governors, passionately articulate how their vision shapes every aspect of school life. They have excellent insight into their school and ensure that the vision drives forward developments. Consequently pupils become well-rounded young people who believe in themselves and are equipped to make a positive contribution to society. As one parent said, 'Our vision is not just talked about, it's lived out.' As a result, pupils achieve very well and thrive in their learning. Rigorous and ongoing systems monitor the school's effectiveness as a church school. These have an extensive impact upon its continuing development.

The headteacher demonstrates inspirational Christian leadership, which ensures that senior leaders and staff understand the distinctiveness of working in a Church school. The strong link with Liverpool Diocese ensures appropriate professional development and support as the school lives out its Christian vision. It is a welcoming and highly inclusive community where everyone is respected and valued with a deep sense of belonging. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and relationships based on forgiveness and reconciliation are exemplary. Pupils know they can express their worries and anxieties and be listened to. One pupil said, 'God hugs my heart when I'm worried about something.' Staff at all levels understand and live the vision. They recognise how it positively impacts on them professionally and personally. As a result morale is high and staff speak of the many ways they feel supported and valued, attributing this to the culture of the school's distinctive Christian ethos. Parents speak highly of the school's commitment to supporting families and meeting the learning and emotional needs of their children.

The broad curriculum successfully supports and challenges all pupils to apply their learning to life in school and beyond. As one member of staff said, 'When our children leave they are ready to live out the Christian values they have learned in school.' Consequently all members of the school community demonstrate Christian compassion and concern for justice. The school supports a number of local and global charities from which pupils' involvement leads to a deeper understanding of poverty, disadvantage and deprivation. Each week Charity Friday allows pupils to nominate and organise their own charity event. Pupils are made aware of global issues and are encouraged to be agents of change to make a difference in the world. A link with a Spanish school and its community helps to broaden pupils' views of how Christianity is lived out in other parts of the world. Through their active engagement in all aspects of school life pupils have a strong voice, which is listened to. This contributes well to them understanding that they can make a difference both in school and further afield.

As a nurturing, supportive and inclusive community, high priority is given to the wellbeing and mental health of all pupils, their families and staff. This strongly reflects the school's Christian vision. Pastoral care is a strength, impacting positively on the attainment and progress of pupils and professional growth of staff. Pupils with additional needs are very well catered for and enabled to thrive in the school.

Governors support and challenge robustly in all areas of school improvement. They demonstrate a high level of commitment, purpose and challenge through a robust cycle of self-evaluation. Church school issues are given high priority and are included in each year's school development plan. Governors have regular involvement in the school's life and work through their visits, learning walks and conversations with pupils. They also receive detailed information from the headteacher, RE leader and members of the governor Christian distinctiveness committee. This ensures that strategic development is highly effective.

Worship, which begins with a Christian greeting, is at the heart of the school and central to its daily life. It is inclusive and sensitively led with well planned themes developed around the school's Christian values, the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. All teachers lead worship and this ensures a rich variety of worship styles. Consequently pupils enjoy worship and participate enthusiastically whilst maintaining a due sense of reverence. One pupil said that worship is 'a time to be calm and think'. In addition to exploring the Christian faith, worship enables pupils to develop a sound understanding of beliefs, practices and celebrations of world religions. Visits to different places of worship enhance this further, leading to a respect for all faiths. As a result of this and the wide curriculum offered, pupils are well prepared for life in British society. They also take on many roles, which develop responsibility. Pupil worship leaders plan termly whole school worship and small groups of pupils plan and deliver class based worship on a rota basis. The annual Remembrance worship led by Year 3 pupils is particularly important for residents of nearby care homes. Parents are invited regularly to class led worship and also to share in church school services and monthly 'Church@School' services. Therefore the whole school

family feels fully included. Effective systems are in place for monitoring and evaluation of worship. However, the school recognises that there is an opportunity to extend this further to seek the views of all pupils.

Pupils know and use traditional prayers and responses and understand the value and importance of prayer and personal reflection, which are afforded great significance. There are well used reflection areas in every classroom and each classroom has its own Christian value displayed on the door. A garden of prayer and reflection offers opportunities for stillness, prayerful contemplation and spiritual inspiration for all members of the school community. The whole school visits church for special occasions as well as benefitting from the Experience Easter, Harvest and Christmas events. Positive links with the church community enhance worship benefitting both the church and the school and giving pupils a strong sense of belonging to the wider Christian community.

The Christian vision and values shape the way decisions are made regarding the curriculum and extended learning. The use of *Understanding Christianity* supports this well and reflects the *Church of England Statement of Entitlement*. The curriculum for RE mirrors best practice in the school by enabling deep thinking. Pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to ask challenging questions and voice their opinions. Provision for those with additional learning needs and those who are vulnerable is exceptional because of careful planning and targeted support. RE deepens pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith and enhances their appreciation and understanding of the beliefs and customs of non-Christian faiths.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

The high priority afforded to RE successfully supports consistently creative teaching and productive learning across the school. Pupils are inspired and challenged by their learning, which develops enquiry skills well. This enables pupils to share and discuss their own thoughts and ideas whilst respecting those of others. RE is regularly and accurately monitored with assessment used well to identify next steps in learning. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic RE leader offers excellent support and guidance to staff. Pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs, make good or better progress in RE and standards are high. This demonstrates how the school creatively enables pupils to flourish by reflecting its vision in action through learning in RE.

Headteacher	Rebecca Woods
Inspector's name and number	Stephen Burrow 622