

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Thomas the Martyr Church of England Primary School			
Address	Highgate Road, Up Holland, Skelmersdale WN8 0HX		
Date of inspection	10 March 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	Liverpool	URN	119495

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

### School context

St Thomas the Martyr is a primary school with 224 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is considerably below national averages. There has been the appointment of a new headteacher since the last inspection. There are very strong links with the local St Thomas the Martyr Church.

### The school's Christian vision

We develop positive relationships that sustain, nurture and encourage our Christian ethos to enhance outcomes as we grow and achieve together, supporting our precious children as they thrive with energy, passion and resilience to be the best they can be.

"May all that we do be done with love."

1 Corinthians 16 v 14

### Key findings

- The relationships between all the school's stakeholders are particularly strong and nurturing, creating a learning environment that is caring and supportive and based on mutual respect.
- The very strong and supportive governing body access diocesan training wherever possible ensuring that they have a good understanding of current thinking in church school education.
- Collective worship is rooted in the Bible and Anglican practices that allow pupils and adults alike to undertake a spiritual journey that includes personal prayer and reflection.
- Religious education (RE) allows pupils to develop their skills of enquiry and interpretation with the use of 'Big Questions'. However, opportunities for pupils to develop spirituality and a deeper understanding of the awe and wonder of God need to be more evident.

### Areas for development

- To provide pupils with opportunities to develop spirituality and awe and wonder by including the development of spiritual and ethical dimensions in all subjects as well as in RE.
- To inspire pupils to engage in social action projects that they themselves feel passionate about and have identified to address issues of disadvantage, deprivation and exploitation of the natural world.

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**

St Thomas the Martyr's distinctively Christian vision is well established in the daily life of the school. It is underpinned by the foundation scripture, 'May all that we do, be done with love,' from 1 Corinthians 16 v14. This is an especially appropriate verse for the school as it is reflected in the particularly strong relationships within the school. All stakeholders believe that the Christian vision and foundation scripture have transformed lives through their unremitting focus on developing love and a deep rooted respect for all. The core Christian values of kindness, trust, forgiveness, perseverance, hope, love and respect underpin the positive behaviour policy and practices. They are reflected in the strong links with the community and the high expectations staff have of themselves, each other and of all stakeholders. Pupils are encouraged to be reasonable and reflective, accepting responsibility for their own actions and swiftly forgiving and reconciling with one another so that positive relationships can be resumed. They are inspired by adults and other pupils in school to treat others with dignity and respect, embracing difference and celebrating diversity.

There are particularly strong links with the local church as the vicar visits school weekly to deliver collective worship and provide spiritual guidance to both adults and pupils alike. He is partnered with three other churches and schools in the local area, allowing wider links to be explored. Worship is inclusive and invitational and reflects the school's Christian vision and core values. It is rooted in Biblical teaching, Christian festivals and seasons. It reflects Anglican practices and includes the teaching of British values, personal, social education and global citizenship. Pupils speak about the nature of God in age-appropriate terms and are developing their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with the use of symbols. Year 6 pupils are offered the opportunity to take confirmation lessons in school, enabling them to take communion in the termly Eucharist services. Family services are held monthly in church where an increasing number of pupils and their families attend and participate. This provides the opportunity for adults and pupils to work collaboratively, developing innovative projects for both the church and school communities. Examples of this include 'Benedictine Week' where families can learn of the church's interesting heritage. Many pupils attend youth club in school which is led by the Year 6 teacher who is instrumental in providing pupils with additional opportunities to encounter God in a more informal way. The RE leader also runs a lunchtime Explorers Club for Key Stage 2 pupils who want to further engage in a range of Bible-based activities. Both clubs are well attended.

The senior leaders, including the governors, have a very clear understanding of church school education. They are committed to their own continuous professional development and that of teachers, accessing training from both the diocese and the local authority. The headteacher and deputy are both graduates of the Christian Leadership course and are committed to putting current thinking on church school education into practice. The governors are particularly strong and understand their role as critical friends, appropriately holding the leaders of the school to account. They have ensured that all areas of development from the last inspection have been fully addressed.

The chair of governors describes the headteacher as 'our very own good shepherd who will go out for every lost sheep'. Parents speak positively about the school, describing the leaders and teachers as 'exceptional, with Christian values that run like a golden thread throughout the curriculum and extra-curricular activities'. The school's open door policy allows parents to feel confident that any issues or requests they have will be addressed. Pupils are easily motivated to engage in their learning and embark on fundraising activities to raise money for local charities. However, they do need to take more initiative and respond with more passion and drive to issues relating to social injustice and inequality. The interest in these projects needs to be sustained and led by the pupils themselves rather than relying on the enthusiasm of staff to keep projects alive

RE is well led and developed with assessment systems which monitor the attainment and progress of all pupils. Teachers are creative in their delivery of curriculum content. However there are some missed opportunities to develop spirituality and an understanding of the awe and wonder of God and his creation. Pupils are able to ask and answer big questions, developing their skills of enquiry and interpretation and are becoming more confident in discussing their own and others' faith.

The school's admission arrangements ensure that all are welcome, reflected in the excellent provision the school makes for the diverse needs of individual pupils. Subject leaders have developed a rich and exciting curriculum,

enhanced with varied extra-curricular provision. As a result, all pupils including those who are disadvantaged are enabled to flourish and make progress from their starting points. All school leaders have a clear understanding of the context they serve and have rigorous systems in place for collecting and analysing data. Supported by high percentages of attendance and punctuality, pupils' outcomes and progress measures are at least in line with national averages in all subjects. Teachers are addressing the gaps in learning for certain pupils with individual intervention plans that are monitored weekly. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to develop awareness of British values such as individual liberty and democracy through the school council, the ethos group and as a worship ambassador. Resources such as 'Picture News' are used very effectively to develop pupils' understanding of current affairs at a national and global level. Links with a school in Pakistan have led to innovative practice as pupils communicate through letters, sharing each other's learning.

The indoor and outdoor environments reflect the school's Christian character and vision. There are quiet spaces and beautiful interactive displays in communal areas and classrooms, celebrating pupils' achievements as well as inviting a response to the core Christian values. Reflection areas provide opportunities for pupils to read the Bible, learn about inspirational people and post personal responses and prayers. There is a significant commitment to pupils' wellbeing, with the appointment of a family support officer. She works closely with individual families on a range of practical and emotional issues. Great effort is made to accommodate every family's needs. Staff feel valued and respected and can give examples of tangible ways in which their wellbeing has proven to be a priority, and their personal needs have been supported.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

As a core subject the RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The school follows the Blackburn Diocese syllabus, and uses the Understanding Christianity resource to further enhance the curriculum. These high quality resources have facilitated the development of teaching which is judged as good. The creative and cross-curricular ways in which RE is taught allow pupils to explore the Bible and other texts and answer big questions with developing insight. RE is assessed half termly and pupils' work and outcomes are monitored by the RE lead. Achievement is in line with other core subjects.

Headteacher	Carl Roscoe
Inspector's name and number	Joanne Abram 931