

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Westhead Lathom St James' Church of England Primary School	
Address	School Lane, Ormskirk, L40 6HL
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Excellent
The impact of collective worship	Excellent

School's vision
<p>'A curriculum that is challenging, inspiring and engaging; in which all pupils flourish spiritually, creatively and academically to become confident young people.'</p> <p>'With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine.' Ephesians 3:20</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's aspirational Christian vision, passionately articulated by the whole community, shapes innovative and transformational practice within every aspect of school life. Rooted in biblical teaching, it relentlessly drives school development. As a result, staff and pupils feel confident and empowered to take risks and be creative, leading exceptional flourishing across the school. The school is beginning to share its excellent practice with other schools. • The ambitious vision shapes a curriculum that is challenging, engaging and inclusive. Equality of opportunity is passionately upheld and all pupils feel valued for their God given gifts. Leaders' recent innovations have led to carefully planned opportunities for spiritual development across all subjects. As a result, pupils flourish in their learning and are rapidly developing as individuals with liberty of thought and compassion. • The school's vision for equality inspires leaders to make bold decisions, filling pupils with hope, love and care for each other. Pupils act passionately in the face of injustice. As a result, character development strongly contributes to pupil flourishing. • Sparked by God's power to transform, the remarkable partnership between pupils, leaders and clergy leads to deeply nourishing worship life within school and the local community. Pupils confidently contribute to a highly engaging joint school and church prayer life that has sparked church growth, leading to rich spiritual flourishing. • Leaders have developed an aspirational and creative religious education (RE) curriculum, tailored carefully to pupil need and experience. As a result, pupils are confident and knowledgeable in their understanding of Christianity and a range of world faiths and worldviews.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to share excellent practice with other schools, particularly in empowering pupils to be active partners in all aspects of Church school life, leading to wider pupil flourishing. • Further extend curriculum opportunities for developing pupils' liberty of thought so that they become even more confident as advocates for positive change in themselves and others.

Inspection findings

Westhead Lathom St James' ambitious Christian vision drives inspirational practice. Strengthened by its biblical basis of God's transformational power, school leadership is passionately inclusive and aspirational. As a result, adults and pupils are confident and compassionate, leading to exceptional flourishing in this excellent Church school. Leaders, including highly effective governors, constantly seek new ways to enable God's power to work within the school community. As a result, insightful school self-evaluation and development planning spearhead innovative change. Partnerships, including those with the local church and diocese, powerfully enrich school life. Parents deeply value the school as the heart of the local community, linking their child's achievements and character directly to the school's Christian vision and supporting values.

Inspired by the school vision, leaders instil a culture of free thinking and empowerment. As a result, the staff team is exceptionally positive and creative. New members feel quickly welcomed and a rich programme of professional development results in adults who are confident of their role in a Church school. Leaders actively encourage individual talent. For example, a member of the support staff, a gifted artist, teaches art across the school and has the liberty to take risks in the curriculum. As a result, pupils' individual responses in art are exceptionally creative.

The school's Christian vision of aspiration and creativity shapes a bold curriculum, designed to inspire all learners. Skilled and confident teaching results in lessons where pupils collaborate and reflect extremely well. For example, in response to work on leadership and the school Christian value of wisdom, one older pupil reflected, 'Being wise is more than just intelligence. It is living your life in the right way, knowing what you know.' Adults value each pupil as a unique child of God with individual gifts to be cherished and nurtured. Thus, pupils are free to record their learning in many creative ways, including art, drama and digital media. Adults support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities highly effectively. All pupils feel loved and included in every aspect of school life and actively engage in lessons. As a result, pupils learn exceptionally well. In recognition of its profoundly inclusive approach, the school holds the Lancashire Equality Mark for Disability Equality. Staff have a knowledgeable understanding of spiritual development. Starting in the early years, a culture of exploration and 'igniting passion' develops pupil confidence and creativity. Inspired by latest research, teachers effectively use big questions in every subject to explore meaning, purpose and liberty of thought. This whole school approach is in its development stage and has yet to be fully embedded. Immersive experiences, including residential trips, increasingly enable pupils to grow into self-assured, compassionate and reflective learners.

Character development is exceptional. The school's vision of challenging injustice spurs pupils to be proactive agents of change. Highly valued pupil-led groups, notably the school council and ethos groups, are the seed bed of much innovative action. Leaders are boldly creative in opening membership to the whole school, empowering all pupils to be active partners in decision making. Animated by a questioning curriculum and collective worship themes, pupils routinely propose social action themselves. They proudly speak about engaging the local MP to improve significant litter issues in the field adjacent to school. Their enthusiastic campaigning has resulted in marked improvements to the local environment. Pupils movingly describe how the school vision fuels their determination to tackle injustice on a global scale, including toilet twinning with Uganda and raising money for Ukraine. 'If we put our faith in God,' said one pupil, 'He will put His faith in us and, through His power, we can make a difference.'

The school's powerful vision for equality moves adults and pupils to watch over one another



with remarkable compassion. Pupils talk openly about their feelings, knowing they will be listened to and supported. Motivated by examples of Jesus' teaching, pupils jump instantly to help others. They run a popular lunchtime 'worry club' where anyone can come and talk through problems. 'We run the club because Jesus helped other people,' said one club leader. 'We want to follow what Jesus says.' Pupils and parents deeply value the club's positive impact on wellbeing. 'My child knows how to talk about worries, which helps them develop good mental health,' said one parent.

Highly innovative and inclusive, collective worship is at the heart of school life. Led confidently by a range of staff, clergy and pupils, enriching encounters with stillness, prayer and song lead to deep spiritual flourishing within the whole school community. Profoundly moving themes, based on the school's Christian vision and values, prompt pupils to appreciate deeply how Jesus' teachings impact on their own lives. This routinely spurs deeper thinking and action beyond worship. For example, touched by Creation, pupils developed an engaging prayer trail around their school field, cherishing opportunities for peaceful reflection. Pupils are intrinsically involved in all aspects of decision making, leading to rich innovation, particularly in the flourishing partnership with the local church. Pupils talk joyfully of their regular contribution to Sunday church services. Adults directly attribute the recent growth in the church congregation to pupils' active and enthusiastic participation. This creative, pupil-led approach to collective worship instils a culture of deep reflection and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The school's excellent practice is recognised locally and leaders have shared their innovative approach at diocesan training events.

The school's vision of high aspiration underpins an engaging and challenging RE curriculum. Exceptionally well-led and resourced, RE is central to school life. Confident and knowledgeable teaching inspires pupils to explore theological concepts and their own beliefs in a highly collaborative way. For example, in upper Key Stage 2, pupils' work on the Christian sacrament of reconciliation leads to deep discussions about the nature of forgiveness. Teachers creatively use a rich variety of high-quality resources to bring to life a range of world faiths. Pupils' engaged responses lead to a meaningful understanding of world religions and worldviews. Pupils are passionate about their love of RE and achievement is high across the school. Leaders' highly effective commitment to celebrating diversity extends beyond RE to all aspects of school life. Classrooms are full of positive materials that support equality. As a result, pupils deeply respect and uphold diversity. The school is recognised for its expertise and holds the Lancashire Equality Mark for Race, Religion and Belief and Socio-Economic Equality.

Westhead Lathom St James is a highly innovative Church school, living out its Christian vision with passion and creativity. Leaders share much excellent practice with other local schools and have the skills and capacity to do so more widely.



Information			
School	Westhead Lathom St James' Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	13 October 2022
URN	119377	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Liverpool	Pupils on roll	96
Headteacher	Helen Clark		
Chair of Governors	Paul Livesley		
Inspector	Sue Mawdsley	No.	930