

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

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School			
<b>Address</b>	South Meadow Lane, Preston, Lancashire PR1 8JN		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	5 March 2020	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary Controlled primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Blackburn	<b>URN</b>	119358

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<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>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

### School context

St Stephen's is a primary school with 296 pupils on roll, including a nursery. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. Mobility is higher than average. The school serves an area of high deprivation. The headteacher, incumbent and most governors have joined the school in the last four years.

### The school's Christian vision

**"Aspire to Greatness"** "For we are the handiwork of God, born in Christ Jesus to do good things as God has prepared in advance for us to do". Ephesians 2:10

All members of St. Stephen's diverse and vibrant community are committed to loving and supporting one another to achieve the very best for both children and adults in Broadgate - as God would wish us to do. We are proud to be a highly inclusive school which enables the community to flourish.

### Key findings

- Leaders have ensured that a clear Christian vision provides the cohesive thread which runs throughout and holds together this special school community.
- Highly inclusive Christian worship enables all pupils and staff from different faiths and none to come together as a school family.
- This richly diverse school community enjoys hearing one another's stories. This is partly a result of inspirational leadership of religious education (RE) which ensures that pupils are excited by the subject.
- Involved and dedicated governors from different faith backgrounds are highly supportive of the Christian character of the school and are committed to developing it still further.
- Some monitoring systems are still developing and the school's understanding of spiritual development, as distinct from social, moral and cultural development, is not yet explicit in policies.
- Very strong partnership working with the church enables pupils to engage in social action projects which benefit the local community.

### Areas for development

- Ensure that monitoring of worship and the Christian vision is systematically recorded in order to fully inform future development planning.
- Make explicit the school's understanding of spiritual development so that progressively deeper opportunities can be planned and monitored.
- Ensure that the school continues to develop future Church school leaders so that they can contribute strategically and fully to continuing school improvement.

**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 Stephen's is a community which exemplifies what it means to live together well. Parents describe the school as a focal point for interfaith working. Religious and ethnic diversity are celebrated in a Christian context. A number of families deliberately choose to send their children to the school because of its Christian ethos.

The vision, 'Aspire to Greatness', successfully motivates all groups of pupils to aim for increasingly higher standards. The underpinning Christian values are very well-embedded and feature prominently in the life of the school. The overarching Bible verse from Ephesians celebrates the understanding that everyone is 'God's handiwork' and it inspires and motivates the community 'to do good things'. Pupils confidently explain that, as God created them, 'He loves us very much and, in return, we need to do good things.'

The Christian vision drives the school's approach to inclusion. Despite a challenging context, there have been no permanent exclusions for over four years. School staff work closely with families to increase attendance and this is improving. Parents describe the pastoral team as 'brilliant' and 'on it'. Teachers 'know everything that's happening' and act promptly to deal with concerns. The school's passionate commitment to inclusion and the variations between cohorts of pupils mean that standards data is not straightforward. Dips in published data are heavily affected by factors such as pupil mobility. However, the school's thorough tracking and the targeted support of learning mentors ensures that the most vulnerable pupils make good progress.

Values of love, respect and understanding shape the school's approach to behaviour management. The policy has undergone major revision as a result of the new vision. Parents describe how the immersive environment of St Stephen's enables their children to 'embody Christian values as part of everyday life' both at school and at home. The effectiveness of the policy is evident, for example in the playground at lunchtime. Pupils play well together. Relationships between pupils and adults are respectful and mutually supportive. Quiet, respectful listening by all pupils is a striking feature of whole school worship.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas to improve from the previous inspection. The governing body is very actively involved and well informed. However, formal recording systems for monitoring worship and the Christian vision are not yet robust and so opportunities for more focussed development planning are missed.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have attended diocesan training. The deputy leads training in school for other staff and plays a key role in supporting staff to understand the church school character of St Stephen's. Opportunities for distributed leadership and for the development of future church school leaders are emerging.

Pupils talk very enthusiastically about worship. Pupil leaders, including pupils from different faiths, play an active role in planning and leading worship. One Hindu parent spoke of her child's pride and enjoyment in being a worship leader. A pupil said that being a worship leader helped them to feel closer to God. The headteacher and deputy, together with the incumbent and members of the church, plan and lead remarkably inclusive acts of Christian worship. Adults ensure that pupils can attend worship with integrity. No pupil is withdrawn. Pupils choosing not to take part in certain aspects do so quietly and respectfully. The headteacher and deputy ensure that staff are well supported to lead acts of class worship. Pupils readily cite examples of worship prompting them to action. One pupil spoke of how the news of devastating fires in Australia prompted her to remember to be grateful for safety. A Reception pupil wrote that he felt angry after learning about children who had no food.

Prayer is a very natural part of school life and contributes strongly to the flourishing of pupils and adults. Pupils have a range of opportunities to pray, publicly and privately, and to reflect. Prayer and reflection spaces in classrooms are popular and well-used. The Reception children requested their own prayer area, including a Bible and a cross. They make good use of it during continuous provision. Some Year 6 pupils commented on the fact that prayer gets more difficult as they grow up, 'because we have to do something about it'. Reflection is a theme

across St Stephen's. Some pupils choose to go to the school's peaceful reflection space, 'the nest', at lunchtimes to reflect on their behaviour.

Pupils flourish as a result of curriculum opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), and for 'Wow experiences' such as bulb-planting, beach trips and a planetarium visit. As a result, the school's provision for spiritual development is good. However the school's understanding of spiritual development, as distinct from social, moral and cultural development, is not yet explicit in policies. Leaders have developed a curriculum which is particularly relevant to the school's context. One example is the linking of World Book Day and the Hindu festival of Holi. The establishment of a special book group has enabled vulnerable pupils to access quality texts at home. Pupils' social and emotional skills have improved alongside their understanding of the natural world as a result of Forest Schools work.

The school's Christian vision inspires pupils to want to make a difference. Pupil leaders on the school council are active in their support for charities such as Water Aid or Make a Wish. They often suggest the choice of charity, such as the local homeless centre. The eco council clearly explain how Christian values, such as generosity, justice and peace, motivate them to take action. The school and church work very closely together to benefit the local community. Examples include a food market in school, the provision of food parcels and backpacks, involvement in the Community Connectors Action Group and the creative use of church and school premises.

The RE curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to understand the living faiths of the local community. These include Hindu, Muslim and Christian enrichment weeks which take place each year. Visits and visitors add to this provision. As a result, pupils demonstrate respect for religious belief and a curiosity to learn more. They show good understanding of Christianity as a living world faith. Pupils speak with excitement about working with the vicar and the Open the Book team from church. Class reflection books encourage pupils to ask deep questions. Teachers' marking is respectful, personalised and supportive and it prompts further questions. Assessment and monitoring systems for RE are rigorous. Leadership of the subject is exemplary. RE provides a very safe space for pupils to learn about each other's stories.

Headteacher	Helen Wright
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