

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Christopher's Church of England High School, Accrington	
Address	Queens Road West, Accrington, BB5 4AY

School vision
<p>St Christopher's is a Church of England Academy where pupils and staff work together, in the knowledge and love of God. We try to act out our faith in daily life, with Christ as our example. Within our strong Christian, Anglican context, we seek to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of our pupils, growing together as a caring, supportive, community whilst preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their adult lives.</p> <p>'That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers'.</p> <p>Psalm 1:3</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspirational leadership has deeply embedded the Christian vision. It is expertly modelled by dedicated leaders. The vision and virtues are widely understood and support the flourishing of all. • Leaders, including governors, effectively monitor St Christopher's as a church school. Impactful decisions, guided by the vision, are made to nurture students in all areas, including the vulnerable and disadvantaged. • Detailed and considered planning results in a school worship life that is fundamental to St Christopher's distinctiveness. This is further enhanced by the wide-ranging partnerships with the local clergy. • Supportive relationships are a strength of the school. Students' behaviour and attitudes are shaped by the vision and underlying virtues. • Very effective leadership of religious education (RE) has established a challenging curriculum enhancing students learning. This has a positive impact on their understanding of a range of faiths and world views, including Christianity.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend opportunities to share good practice with wider partnerships. This is so that the impact of the school vision is further extended beyond the school community.
Inspection findings
<p>Inspirational leadership at St Christopher's creates a dynamic environment where all are welcome. This has helped generate a vibrant school where the vision and associated virtues run throughout the school like a golden thread. They are firmly rooted in the ambition for students and adults to be successful. Policies and practices are intentionally created by leaders to enable students to have a wide range of opportunities to prosper. Governors support leaders, through robust monitoring and evaluation, keeping the vision and virtues central to the work of the school. There is a shared</p>



enthusiasm and determination to improve life chances for all students. St Christopher's leads the Church of England North West secondary school network. At present their learning and expertise is limited to being shared within this group. Staff speak highly of the excellent support they receive. They succeed because they know leaders care deeply about their wellbeing and are given every opportunity to thrive. The diverse nature of the school is reflected in a vision that emphasises all-inclusive love of God for each one. Through the breadth of the provision, spiritual development opportunities within the school are strengthened.

The well planned, inclusive curriculum aims to meet the needs of all learners. Department specific purpose statements, linked to the virtues, explain how they are applied in each subject area. These are clearly displayed in classrooms. This amplifies the integrated approach to academic and spiritual development. Within the maths curriculum, for example, questions and problems are carefully set that involve the practical application to Christian charities. The curriculum incorporates a range of opportunities for pupils to foster spirituality, as well as special spirituality days. These include wide and varied inputs from external faith based providers, including Christian bands. In this way students are supported effectively in the development of their personal spirituality. Staff have high ambitions for students and are committed to ensuring everyone is successful. Those who have individual needs are well supported and staff consciously endeavour to enable them to thrive. Parents speak highly of the opportunities and help their children receive. The sixth form provision is exceptional in providing education for all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is through a bespoke foundation pathway created by the school. These pupils are fully involved in the wider life and opportunities of the main sixth form.

At the heart of the distinctiveness of St Christopher's is the worship life of the school. Collective worship is central to the start of the school day, binding the whole school together. It is expected to take place without exception. The school has developed highly effective partnerships with a number of local clergy. This has enabled the development of the chaplaincy team. Each year group has a linked vicar. This team plays an active part in the delivery of worship, supporting spiritual development, particularly through times of stillness and reflection. Meticulous planning by leaders provides a varied and inclusive calendar of worship. Collective worship and the celebration of the eucharist is a high priority for the school. One example of this was the ambitious delivery of the eucharist to the whole school upon the death of Her Majesty the Queen. The eucharist was shared with well over one thousand communicants in an outside space at school. Staff and students felt proud to show respect to the monarch as the leader of the Church of England. The strength of the collaboration with the church is seen through an initiative linked to the Church of England national strategy. This has seen the introduction of youth church bringing school, home and church together. As a consequence of this families are regularly worshipping and receiving the eucharist together in school. These strong well-established relationships with the local and wider church ensure collective worship is central to the life of the school.

Students thrive in this nurturing environment. The quality of education provided is recognised by parents, with some students travelling long distances to attend. Parents speak of 'planting' their child at St Christopher's in line with the vision. They appreciate the nurturing environment that opens opportunities for spiritual growth, as well as academic development. Within the school, each child is known and seen as an individual. Students enjoy attending this school. Evidence of the impact of the vision and virtues is exemplified in high attendance, exceptional behaviour and positive relationships across St Christopher's. Reflecting the 'caring, supportive community', excellent pastoral care and inclusive practice is extended to each one. As such mental health and wellbeing is a priority. The dedicated wellbeing team provide early interventions and support for students experiencing difficulties of any kind. The school has developed a holistic approach to supporting ever changing needs, including employing qualified counsellors. As a result, students can confidently approach a wide range of trusted adults and feel supported.

Students are encouraged to be active citizens and make a difference in the wider world. They engage in regular opportunities to learn about charities as well as local and global issues. For example, they are involved in supporting the local food bank, a homeless charity and a cancer bank. Student groups, supported by leaders, are working successfully to make a difference in the community beyond the school. The award-winning work at national and international level of the eco group has made a difference to those around them. For example, they collect items for forthcoming proms. These are then available for current students, supporting 'recycle and reuse'. They have worked to raise awareness of the homeless and are actively involved in sustainability projects. They have set up and run a 'trashion show' winning a national award for raising awareness about global issues. Students have been inspired to engage in activities that enable them to become agents of social change. The school 'quest award' initiative encourages each student to become involved in the broader opportunities the school provides. This includes charitable activities and volunteering. Further openings for volunteering are encouraged through the highly popular Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

RE is highly regarded and this is reflected in the commitment to the strong subject leadership. It is well led by expert subject leaders who are ambitious for the students and the department. Attainment of the gold RE mark multiple times, reflects the determination of this department to provide outstanding RE. Lessons are well planned and engaging. A robust monitoring and evaluation system is in place. Staff receive good support and appropriate professional development. As a result, they teach the RE syllabus with confidence. Students are well prepared for GCSE through the sequenced Key Stage 3 curriculum, exploring Christianity and other world faiths. Religious studies is a popular A level course. All students in Key Stage 5 explore wider RE themes through a carefully planned programme. Opportunities for debating and applying theological and philosophical thinking, often around controversial subjects, aid the enjoyment of the subject.

St Christopher's is an inspirational school where all are given opportunities to thrive. The vision of working together, is clearly demonstrated in this nurturing community.

The inspection findings indicate that St Christophers Church of England High School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	28 February 2024 - 29 February 2024	URN	137421
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	1315
Diocese	Blackburn		
MAT/Federation	Single Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Richard Jones		
Chair	Frank Whitehead		
Inspector	Tina Astley	No.	2205