

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Laurence Church Junior School

Vision

Learning, Loving and Sharing, guided by Jesus.

'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.' (Proverbs 22:6)

Strengths

- Leaders have embedded a strong Christian vision and associated values that permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils and staff have a deep understanding of the vision and strive to ensure it makes a tangible difference to the school community.
- The vision inspires deep relationships and partnerships which ensure Christian values are the lived experience of the whole school community. This creates a profound, loving ethos where adults and pupils value the worth of each individual.
- Leaders ensure a culture of responsibility and justice that empowers pupils to be confident and active independent agents of change. Consequently, they make a positive difference to the lives of others.
- Spiritual development is an intrinsic and active aspect of worship, the curriculum and outreach. It is deeply embedded into all aspects of school life. Consequently, pupils and staff are empowered to explore their own understanding, faith and views and are well-supported to flourish.

Development Points

- Embed the new religious education (RE) curriculum language and key concepts. This is to ensure it builds upon the existing strong practice enhancing pupils' understanding and exploration of worldviews and faiths, including Christianity.
- Strengthen pupils' spoken responses to their learning within RE. This is to enhance their understanding of their next steps, supporting their progress.



Inspection Findings

At the heart of St Laurence Church Junior School lies a strong sense of relationship and service. The deeply embedded Christian vision and associated values are powerfully lived out and reciprocated by the school community. As a result, there is a shared language of how to live well in community which enables people to flourish. The vision is underpinned by six well-known values which are biblically rooted in 'the feeding of the 5000'. Pupils and staff articulate the values confidently, relating them to Bible stories and their lived experiences. Leaders and staff model the values and expectations through strong relationships with the pupils. For example, pupils are welcomed with 'three hellos' from different members of staff every morning. This ensures pupils are well-known individually and supported in their learning and development by the staff team. Parents articulate that, as a result, pupils know that they are cherished and are supported to flourish. Strong partnerships between the school and diocese ensure access to high-quality training and support. This enhances the robust and effective approach to self-evaluation undertaken by the governors and school leaders. Governors are regular visitors to the school and participate in worship and school activities. Structured monitoring ensures that leaders have an accurate understanding of the impact of the vision. Consequently, the development of the school is proactive and supports adults and pupils to thrive.

The curriculum is innovative, challenging and intentionally designed to enhance and deepen learning opportunities for all pupils. The vision and values are at the core of the curriculum and linked to learning throughout. As a result, pupils evaluate and explore a range of subjects through the lens of the values. To support this, high-quality values books are presented to every class each term. These celebrate and explore each of the school's values as part of the wider curriculum and stimulate a joy of reading. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well-planned, inclusive and adaptive to meet the needs of learners. The removal of barriers to learning, and a passion that all should flourish, are key for leaders and staff. The curriculum is further enhanced by high-quality and enriching extra-curricular activities. Leaders seek to ensure that these are available to all pupils, providing significant support for families to access activities. Music, sports, gardening and French clubs, combined with residential visits provide a breadth of opportunities for personal development. The wider curriculum provision extends opportunities for pupils to develop as individuals and to celebrate their talents.

Spirituality is interwoven throughout all aspects of school life, and particularly through collective worship, the curriculum and enrichment activities. Pupils, staff and families use the shared language of 'what makes you spark?' to articulate spiritual moments or experiences. Rich opportunities to explore spiritual development through activities such as 'inspiration days', are planned into the curriculum. Pupils engage in high-quality reflection and evaluation activities linked to their exploration of spirituality. Consequently, staff and pupils demonstrate a depth of understanding about spiritual development, which is also evident in their learning.

Collective worship embodies the vision and the values of the school. It is underpinned by biblical themes and exploration of spirituality. Pupils and staff lead collective worship effectively so that it is a highly-valued part of the school day. Pupils are responsible for the opening prayer, responses, and the dismissal in whole school worship. The Prayer Council lead weekly class worship by investigating world news events, where they explore spirituality through deep questions. Annual praise and worship events, such as the prayer and interfaith weeks support pupils to explore worship in greater depth. Effective partnerships and relationships with St Laurence Church and local clergy provide a strong expression of the school's Christian foundation. Guests such as artists, sports people and charity representatives bring a rich experience to worship. Consequently, pupils benefit from exposure to a wide range of inspirational role-models who reflect local, national and global perspectives. Collective worship is welcoming and fully inclusive. Pupils' evaluation of collective worship and their discussions with leaders ensure their active involvement in planning relevant and engaging worship. Pupils experience action from their feedback and understand how they can make a difference in school. Parents and community are



regularly welcomed for worship and recognise it as important to the life of the school. The staff Eucharist is regarded as an important and spiritual opportunity to worship together as a school team. It provides a special and inclusive time of spiritual development for those of different views and faiths.

Leaders create a flourishing culture of respect, community and relationship, where all are valued. The reciprocal responses to the recent flood of the school and local housing exemplify the school's exceptional caring culture. Leaders provide open engagement through regular family coffee mornings, training and support for families. Parents hold these opportunities, and leaders' openness, in high regard and appreciate the strength of care the school provides. Pupils are supported to flourish through inclusive, adaptive practices that celebrate diversity and provide effective support to individuals and families. Staff wellbeing and mental health is a priority and leaders' approaches to empowering staff are valued. Reducing workload and enhancing positive mental health and wellbeing provision enables staff to flourish. The outward-focused vision of the school provides an inspirational example of service to the local and global community. Strong partnering with local, city-wide and international charities together with the 'Lenten Projects' enables pupils to become active advocates for change. Leaders ensure that pupils are able to see the impact that their service and giving has had. Consequently, they experience the impact of their work as agents of change and are inspired to do more.

The teaching of RE is strong. High quality leadership and training ensures that staff have a depth of subject knowledge and are confident to extend pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy and are actively engaged in RE with adults supporting them to explore deep theological and philosophical questions. They do so with a good level of understanding of complex concepts. Pupils' progress is well-structured and supported by the high quality planning and tracking by the staff. They make effective progress against the curriculum criteria, which informs their teaching and learning. However, the challenging nature of the curriculum means that some pupils are not fully able to understand their next steps for progress.

The RE curriculum enriches and extends the vision and values of the school. It is a high priority for learning for all pupils and is central to the school week. Leaders ensure that the development of the curriculum reflects a rich understanding of a variety of world faiths, including Christianity. Visits to places of worship positively impact pupils' understanding of faith in a global community. Pupils articulate a strong understanding of the different ways that people worship and their importance to each denomination and faith. The curriculum framework is adaptable and inclusive. Planning for RE is of a high quality providing a challenging and deep curriculum offer for pupils. This enables pupils to engage and deepen their understanding. They are able to recall prior learning well, drawing on a range of sources, including the Bible. Pupils articulate accurately their understanding of Christianity as a global faith and draw links to their learning and charitable work as examples.

Information

Address	Bunbury Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2DJ		
Date	08 October 2024	URN	103416
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	359
Diocese	Birmingham		
Headteacher	Andrew Murphy		
Chair of Governors	Jill Saunders		
Inspector	Jeremy Piper		