

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Thomas Church of England Primary School

Vision

Our vision at St Thomas is to provide a nurturing, inclusive, Christian community, where everyone can flourish and achieve their full potential with confidence. We aim to be the best that we can be, to grow and be a beacon of light and hope for others, in school, in church, in the community and the wider world.

Our vision is inspired by the teachings of Jesus, on the Sermon on the Mount, in the Gospel of Matthew. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16

Let your light shine in the glory of God

St Thomas Church of England Primary School Westthoughton is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- Rooted in the teachings of Jesus, the deeply embedded Christian vision has a profound and transformative impact. It reflects the school's commitment to inclusion and identifying people's strengths. Pupils and adults develop and grow academically, socially and spiritually. As a result, they are enabled to thrive and shine.
- Collective worship is a central and powerful aspect of the school community's spiritual life. It is engaging and carefully planned. Pupils are actively involved in leading and reflecting on the themes explored. This thoughtful and inclusive approach effectively nurtures spiritual growth.
- Leaders' sharp focus on wellbeing ensures pupils and adults are valued, respected and appreciated. This nurturing and supportive environment strengthens self-confidence and resilience, empowering them to flourish.
- The school fosters a culture of justice and responsibility, founded on Christian principles. Through practical initiatives, pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility and agency. They influence and inspire those around them, including their families, to make a positive difference.

Development Points

- Integrate additional opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum. This is in order to enhance current good practice and further promote pupils' spiritual growth.
- Adopt a wider range of assessment strategies in religious education (RE). This is to enable staff to capture more fully the depth of pupils' learning and understanding.



Inspection Findings

The clear Christian vision at St Thomas powerfully shapes its actions, fostering a strong sense of purpose and community. Christian values embody this ethos and have a significant positive impact on behaviour and attitudes. Leaders enable pupils and adults to 'let their light shine.' Dedicated and engaged governors assess and review the impact of leaders' actions. They then identify the next steps together, leading to further improvement. The first thing a visitor sees on entering St Thomas is an impressive mural of a lighthouse, from which the Christian values radiate. This powerful visual representation inspires adults and pupils. It shows how they become beacons of light and hope for the school and its wider community. Staff skilfully identify strengths and talents. For example, there are multiple opportunities for pupils, including those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), to take on leadership roles. This commitment to inclusion makes a positive difference to their personal development. A constantly evolving rewards system recognises those who live out the school's vision. Leaders foster a culture where personal growth and flourishing are celebrated. Consequently, pupils feel valued and appreciated and they thrive both academically and personally.

The school's inspirational vision drives the design of its curriculum and extra-curricular provision. Pupils, including vulnerable individuals and those with SEND, are given tailored support and encouragement to succeed. This inclusive approach ensures they are given a broad range of opportunities to excel. The school's curriculum offers a variety of experiences to enrich spiritual development. Leaders make bold financial decisions to subsidise extra-curricular activities. This removes financial barriers and ensures wide participation. These opportunities significantly enrich personal, creative and spiritual flourishing. Consequently, pupils develop confidence and a sense of belonging. As a result, their wellbeing and engagement in the life of the school community are enhanced. However, a consistent and shared approach to identifying and incorporating these more frequently into lessons is underdeveloped. This results in missed opportunities for furthering pupils' spiritual growth.

Vibrant and inspirational collective worship is at the centre of school life. It is highly valued by both pupils and adults and fosters a profound and lasting influence on wellbeing and spiritual growth. Worship ensures members of the school community reflect on their place in the world. This enables them to strengthen their relationship with God. The school building has a unique dual role as both a church and a school, offering reciprocal benefits. Pupils use the church space for learning, shared worship and events that further enhance spiritual flourishing. An enthusiastic pupils' ethos group effectively contributes to leading and evaluating worship. They also plan opportunities for prayer in and around the school, such as outdoor reflection spaces. The school's commitment to providing prayer spaces, class prayers, quiet moments and opportunities for personal reflection has a positive impact on both pupils and adults. Leaders nurture a reflective and supportive community. As a result, individuals can grow in faith and strengthen their connection to the school's vision and values.

Leaders foster a cohesive, resilient and inclusive community. As a result, individuals feel welcome and empowered to contribute. The behaviour policy supports restorative practices. Consequently, pupils and adults understand and promote forgiveness and reconciliation. The school actively supports and prioritises emotional wellbeing and good mental health. As a result, pupils thrive in this nurturing environment. Anti-bullying ambassadors and playground buddies assist others in regulating behaviour. Consequently, pupils show kindness and consideration both in class and around school. Pupils chosen for these leadership roles also develop an additional sense of responsibility and empathy. Coffee mornings for parents of pupils with SEND provide practical advice alongside mutual support. This empowers families to navigate and overcome challenges and promotes the wellbeing of pupils and parents. The school engages well with the diocesan programme of in-service training. This ensures that the school's Christian vision and values are effectively embedded in teaching and pastoral care. Leaders, including governors, prioritise staff wellbeing. As a result, teaching and non-teaching staff, including those new to the school, feel valued and supported in their roles.



The school's Christian ethos inspires pupils to look beyond themselves and consider how they can contribute to the wider world. Pupils and adults are empowered to advocate for others and serve the community. An emphasis on justice, service and making a positive difference is woven through the curriculum and collective worship. As a result, there are many examples of pupils taking responsibility for their actions and contributing to their community. They show appreciation and gratitude for the school's indoor and outdoor environment. One pupil-led initiative involved raising money for 'parking buddies.' Consequently, road safety around the school site has improved. A strong focus on supporting the local food bank resulted in families making generous donations to help those in need. The deeply embedded Christian vision inspires pupils and adults to act as compassionate and responsible citizens. It fosters a culture where pupils and adults actively live out values of justice and service. This is evident in their meaningful contributions to the community, advocacy for others, and environmental stewardship.

The well-designed RE curriculum is well-structured and aligns with the school's Christian vision. Pupils engage with deep questions about meaning, purpose and their place in the world. This promotes their spiritual growth. The curriculum also helps pupils to understand and appreciate the diversity of their wider community. Pupils demonstrate a strong knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a range of religions and worldviews. This fosters empathy, respect and a strong sense of belonging. Evaluation of RE is regular, rigorous and highly effective. Collaboration within the local RE cluster ensures the sharing of expertise. These practices enhance the subject's impact, supporting pupils in their academic, personal and spiritual development.

The quality of RE teaching has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development. The subject is taught in depth and with enthusiasm, allowing pupils to explore their own beliefs alongside other religions and worldviews. As a result, pupils develop into thoughtful, compassionate individuals. Effectively planned and taught lessons enable pupils to make impressive progress. However, despite RE assessments being in place, they do not always fully reflect the depth of pupils' learning. Effective RE teaching equips them with the knowledge, understanding and values needed to navigate a diverse world with confidence and empathy. Creative and reflective teaching approaches ensure that pupils with differing strengths and abilities can engage meaningfully.

Information

Address	Molyneux Road, Westhoughton, Bolton BL5 3HP		
Date	22 January 2025	URN	105234
Type of school	VA	No. of pupils	236
Diocese/District	Manchester		
Headteacher	Gina Linney		
Chair of Governors	Graham Andrews		
Inspector	Joanne Owen		