

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Vision

Matthew chapter 5, verses 14-16. 'You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, 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 who is in heaven.

The vision for St Matthew's is encapsulated in our school motto: 'Let Your Light Shine'. We are always working to build a community in which everyone is empowered to know the best of themselves and to have the confidence to use their talents for the good of themselves and their communities. We help all members of our community to become resilient to the challenges that they face and to live a life that is rooted in the value of the Gospels.

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School 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

- The firmly embedded Christian vision is clearly at the centre of every aspect of the school. Leaders are relentless in their drive to implement the vision. The 'SHINE' acronym, (succeed, hope, inspire, nurture, empower), successfully enables pupils in expressing the vision of the school. They describe how the vision impacts on their life and actions.
- As a result of the vision to enable people to 'shine', pupils and adults are deeply valued and well cared for. The supportive and community-focussed ethos is key to the school's success, both as a learning community and as a Church school.
- Collective worship is valued and has a positive impact on wellbeing. Pupils and adults feel empowered by the messages they hear. They value the opportunity to reflect on the relevance of the vision for their own lives. The involvement of the church community enriches worship and is a strength.
- Led by the vision, the school makes effective use of strong partnerships. This leads to enrichment for pupils and adults alike, empowering them to 'shine'. High quality professional development from the trust enables staff to grow and develop in their role.

Development Points

- Ensure that governors' evaluation of their monitoring of the impact of the school vision is robust. This is to enable governors' monitoring activities to contribute more directly towards improvement at the school.
- Ensure there are planned opportunities for high quality spiritual experiences across the curriculum. This is to allow for deeper reflective learning and to develop pupils' confidence in expressing their own ideas about spirituality.
- Enable a culture where pupils are supported to identify opportunities to seek justice and take action. This is to develop pupils' awareness of how they can use their voice to effect change for others.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision at St Matthew's Church of England Primary School is a driving force for school life. The shared commitment to enable all to 'shine' results in adults and pupils working together in strong and effective partnership. There is a high level of respect which leads to a tangible sense of community and support. The pupils are proud of their school and talk with confidence about how it enables them to learn. They understand the gospel-rooted values of the school and use the SHINE acronym to demonstrate this. Pupils describe how the core values of 'nurture' and 'inspire' enable them to become good friends and people. This is evident in the way they support each other and in the positive relationships across school. The trust's vision is closely aligned with that of the school, sharing a strong Christian ethos. Their purpose of preparing pupils for a fulfilling life results in a partnership which is key in the school's success. The vision of 'letting your light shine' is also demonstrated through the effective use of external partnerships. The school has effectively led networks and projects to develop staff and curriculum.

The carefully considered curriculum is rooted in the vision. The needs of the pupils and the characteristics of the community inform decisions on the curriculum. Aspects of the curriculum have been used specifically to further develop a welcoming culture in the school. This has resulted in positive relationships. The most vulnerable learners, including those with special educational needs (SEND), are well supported. Driven by the school vision of enabling all to shine, leaders have made brave decisions to introduce intervention rooms. These are used to provide support for groups of pupils with specific needs which enables them to access school successfully. The impact of the curriculum is evident in pupils' work and in their articulation of their learning and understanding. There are unplanned opportunities for spiritual development, for example pupils enjoy time in the 'quad'. They describe enjoying 'thinking about nature' when they are there. However, there are no planned opportunities for spiritual development across the whole curriculum. As a result, opportunities for reflective learning and spiritual flourishing are missed.

The daily act of collective worship is inspiring to adults and pupils alike. They feel enriched by the opportunity to worship together. Pupils describe how it helps them with a positive mental attitude. It helps them reflect on their feelings and actions towards others. Pupils are invited to take an active role in worship and engage enthusiastically. Pupils of different faiths enjoy the opportunity to access reflection in collective worship. At festival times, worship takes place in church, strengthening the partnership between school and church. Pupils enjoy the services and describe how the worship feels special and different when in church. Parents value the opportunity to join to worship with the school community. The involvement of the church community is appreciated and brings a richness to worship.

As a result of the firmly embedded Christian vision there is an inclusive and supportive culture at the school. Pupils and adults feel well cared for. There are effective policies and systems which ensure wellbeing is a priority and every individual is nurtured. This is evident in how pupils speak about feeling special and important. Parents talk about how the school 'brings children to life' and values their individuality. There is an 'open door' approach to support and 'there is always someone at school who can give support'. Examples include practical help with uniform or help with translation for external agencies. Robust policies from the trust support the school in creating the culture and ethos where all can shine. The church community is instrumental in this ethos of support. Members of the church contribute to pupils and adults being treated well through personal involvement in school life.



Pupils are encouraged to exercise responsibility first hand by taking on roles of responsibility in school. They value the opportunity and are keen to take part in this aspect of school life. The roles of ambassadors, play leaders or members of the SHINE club are held in high esteem by the pupils. The roles enable pupils to develop positive relationships and take actions to support others. Pupils understand the rules and systems of democracy through the system of nominating and voting for candidates for the role of play leader. Some pupils can describe how they act in support of others. They talk about raising money for the Macmillan cake sale. However, there is little evidence of pupils understanding how they can use their individual voice to effect change on a wider scale.

Religious education (RE) has a high priority and is a key area of learning for the pupils. It is considered to be important by adults and pupils alike. Leaders know the curriculum and the outcomes of assessment well. The school uses pupil voice effectively to evaluate the impact of the RE curriculum. The leader for RE reports to governors in line with leaders for other core subjects. There are informal governor monitoring activities. When governors visit the school, they spend time talking with staff and pupils about the daily life of school. They listen to any concerns which staff or pupils raise for discussion. There is not however a robust system for governors to evaluate the information gathered in order to help the school to improve. The curriculum for RE is well balanced and is specific to the community the school serves. The curriculum is effective in its design. It supports pupils to recall learning from previous year groups. Older pupils speak with confidence about their learning of Judaism. For example, pupils explain the elements of the Passover meal and the use of a Seder plate. Pupils are able to make links between Christianity and other world religions. There are opportunities for pupils to contribute from their own faith background which enriches the understanding of their peers. Pupils' work in books and in the 'SHINE books' demonstrates a well-designed curriculum. The curriculum promotes the acquisition of knowledge and an understanding and appreciation of the beliefs of others. The school benefits from partnerships with the diocese and the trust. Training and advice are accessed through these partnerships resulting in increased staff confidence and subject knowledge.

Assessment of RE is used effectively, accurately capturing pupil achievement. As a result, teaching is adapted well to meet the needs of learners. Monitoring and evaluation confirm that RE is taught well and pupils make at least expected progress.

Information

Address	Bowden Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9EA		
Date	6 February 2025	URN	140417
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	200
Diocese	Chester		
MAT	Chester Diocesan Academies Trust		
Headteacher	Stephen Murphy		
Chair of Governors	Alan Hodgkinson		
Inspector	Jill Stratford		