



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Matthew’s Church of England VA Primary School

Address South Street, Ponders End, Enfield, EN3 4LA

How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School’s vision

Witnessing to Christ with our lives and our learning
‘We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete.’ Hebrews 12: 1-2

Key findings

- The headteacher’s Christian witness is an inspirational example of St Matthew’s vision. This shines through the rich curriculum grown from big questions, where the vision is woven through like a golden thread.
- Pupil’s behaviour is exemplary. It is developed around the Christian vision, that effectively supports the character and moral development of pupils. Pupils are passionate about tackling injustice in society and being witnesses to Christ, but opportunities to engage in social action projects are limited.
- St Matthew’s Christian vision is fully inclusive. Pastoral care for vulnerable pupils enables them to flourish. Provision for wellbeing and mental health ensures no child is left behind.
- Collective worship is a rich expression of the Christian vision at St Matthew’s. Inspiring worship enables pupils and adults to make connections between their lives, learning and the teaching of Jesus Christ. Not all pupils are involved in planning and leading collective worship.
- Strong religious education (RE) leadership, coupled with effective teaching, ensures that pupils flourish in RE. As a result, pupils understand Christianity as a living world faith. There are missed opportunities to harness spiritual growth as there is not a securely shared understanding of spirituality.

Areas for development

- Develop opportunities for pupils to engage in social action projects, so that they reflect on the Christian vision by becoming advocates for change.
- Enable pupils to plan and lead collective worship, so that they are actively involved in developing engaging acts of worship.
- Embed a secure and shared understanding of spirituality, so that more opportunities for spiritual growth are harnessed throughout the curriculum.

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

The whole school community is proud to live by the Christian vision, which is inclusive of everyone. Pupils speak confidently about being witnesses to Jesus and having him as a role model. The whole community share a clear understanding of the biblical roots of the vision and make many links with a variety of Bible stories. Governors know the school well. They engage in training to support the monitoring of the school as a Church school. As a result, governors have a clear understanding of how effective St Matthew's is at enabling pupils and adults to flourish. Leaders know the needs of pupils and families that they serve. Subsequently, the individual needs of pupils are effectively met. Vulnerable pupils have access to highly skilled staff, which ensures pupils are well cared for. The headteacher's Christian witness is fundamental to this success. The headteacher models the Christian vision to staff and pupils in all she does, ensuring that staff are also role models of the witnessing to Christ.

The curriculum is built on the framework of big questions. This is developed from the model of the RE curriculum. It enables the school's vision to be woven into every subject. Revisions to the curriculum are made to reflect the context of the school. For example, Black role models are celebrated in learning. The curriculum gives access to a rich learning journey, that enables pupils to flourish academically. During the pandemic, the school's sense of community was prioritised by leaders. The school ensured that pupils were well cared for, both in school and at home. Parents talk of the, 'close knit family feel', at St Matthew's. This approach confirms that the school is central to the diverse community it serves.

Parents value the care and dedication of staff in achieving the best for pupils. One parent said, 'I believe that witnessing to Christ is at the heart of the family feel here'. The pastoral care of pupils is exceptional. Every pupil is truly known and understood by staff. A highly skilled team ensure that no pupil is left behind and that timely interventions are put in place to address gaps in learning. Pupils who transfer to St Matthew's from other schools, are wrapped in this environment of care. They soon make good progress. Parents recognise that leaders act as witnesses to Christ in supporting their children academically, spirituality and socially. Provision for wellbeing and mental health is prioritised. As a result, pupils and adults benefit from a wide range of supporting strategies enabling them to flourish.

The parish church is currently closed. Pupils, staff and parents share a sense of sadness as they feel the loss of this sacred space. Clergy support the school effectively by regularly leading times of worship and supporting teaching in RE. Collective worship is at the heart of school life. Pupils and staff value times of reflection and calm in the busy day. Reflection spaces in classrooms are invitational and well used. As a result, pupils often write prayers. St Matthew's is a prayerful community that share in a passion for inclusive worship. Staff confirm that worship reinforces Christian values and enables them to develop teaching that reflects and lives out the vision. An assortment of hymns and worship songs ensure a range of Anglican traditions are included in worship. Liturgy is often read by pupils and explored in inspiring and thought-provoking ways by adults, that express the Christian vision. Exploration of the Christian understanding of the trinitarian nature of God is meaningful and ensures that pupils appreciate its significance. Collective worship is planned by the headteacher and pupils are enabled to evaluate a range of worship styles. However, pupils do not regularly plan or lead acts of worship.

Pupil behaviour is exceptional. This is rooted in the embedded vision and associated values that underpin policies and procedures. Staff are role models of the witnessing to Christ. As a result, the safe and secure learning environment enables the pupils to ask the big questions of life, in the knowledge that they will be listened to and respected. Good attendance is valued by the school community and celebrated in collective worship. Pupils can disagree well, by making connections to the vision when there is a disagreement. One pupil said, 'Like Jesus, I should be a peace-maker not an argument-maker'. Leaders ensure that the school is informed about trauma through thorough training. Consequently, support for trauma and bereavement is highly effective.

Pupils and their families explain that leaders skillfully incorporate faith and worldviews into the life and learning at St Matthew's. Many pupils attend church in a variety of local Christian denominations. Pupils apply the vision to their lives and say that they, 'take what we have learnt from school, and this helps us to be a witness to Jesus and a good person'. St Matthew's ensures that all pupils are valued as children of God. Hindu and Muslim pupils appreciate how they are invited to share their faith in lessons and at key festivals. Parents also echo their pleasure in the school's values. This adds to the sense of cohesion at the heart of St Matthew's. Pupils confirm that everyone is treated with respect in school.

Pupils have a strong sense of justice and equality. While pupils support a range of charities, there are missed opportunities to engage with and learn from social action projects. Pupils have a sense of compassion, but do not go beyond this as advocates for change.

The subject leadership of RE is strong. Skilled leaders weave the vision throughout the ambitious RE curriculum. This gives clarity of vision and supports pupils' exploration of theology, philosophy and the human social sciences. Theological concepts are effectively unpicked and explored at age-appropriate levels. As a result, pupils' conversations about beliefs within faiths and worldviews, are well articulated. Consequently, pupils have developed age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation. Moderation of pupils' work with local Church schools ensures consistency. Pupils enjoy learning about the global aspect of Christianity. The diverse faith communities at St Matthew's are celebrated and shared effectively in thoughtful RE lessons. Older pupils explain how they, 'value learning about Hinduism, as this helps us to understand the culture and religion of our friends'. Pupils demonstrate an informed and respectful understanding of a range of religions and worldviews. RE displays around the school showcase pupils' work, while celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the community.

The whole school community is enabled to flourish, as pupils and adults become stronger witnesses to Christ within the context of a fully inclusive vision at St Matthew's. Successful outcomes for pupils are driven by a determined staff, who are guided by the school's vision and associated values.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Through regular monitoring, leaders' assessment of RE teaching and learning is accurate. In lessons pupils make good progress and work is of a high standard. All groups flourish academically in RE, and the subject has a high priority across the school. Teachers utilise Diocesan training and support to teach a rich curriculum in RE. Engaging and active learning approaches, such as the use of drama, ensures that the impact of learning is long-lasting.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	03 December 2021	URN	102054
Date of previous inspection	12 March 2015		
School status	Voluntary aided primary school	NOR	201
Diocese	London		
Headteacher	Louise Whitaker		
Pupil profile	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.		
Additional significant information	Since the previous SIAMS inspection a new headteacher has been appointed. A large proportion of pupils are of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage. A significant proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The parish Church of St Matthew's, located adjacent to the school, is currently closed.		
Inspector's name	Toby Long	No.	896