

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School, Middleton</b>	
Address	Aspinall Street, Middleton, Manchester, M24 2BE
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

School's vision
<p>Our St Gabriel's family nurtures children to develop a sense of self belief, building courage to take risks. They develop friendship and respect, surrounded by God's love, steering them to forgiveness. They do this with Jesus by their side, guiding them to flourish.</p> <p>Philippians 4: 13 'I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.'</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported by its work with the diocese, the school is now distinctively Christian in character. The Christian vision is clear in its aspirational aims for every member of the school community. Systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a Church school are less well developed.</li> <li>Nurturing and loving relationships, underpinned by the vision and associated values, enable pupils and adults to flourish as cherished individuals. These relationships reflect the care that staff have for one another as well as for pupils and their families.</li> <li>Reflecting the school's Christian vision, the new curriculum is engaging and ambitious. However, opportunities to support pupils' spiritual development are not always taken.</li> <li>Inclusive and invitational collective worship unites the school community and reinforces understanding of the vision and values. The teachings of Jesus are made relevant and helpful to all pupils, whatever their faith or none. Opportunities for pupils to lead collective worship are emerging.</li> <li>Pupils value the safe space that religious education (RE) creates for them to reflect on their own convictions and those of others. However, pupils' understanding of faiths and worldviews other than Christianity is not secure.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the RE curriculum to deepen pupils' understanding of a range of faiths and worldviews, including Christianity as a living world faith.</li> <li>Establish formal systems for monitoring by governors to help drive continuous improvement in worship and RE.</li> <li>Develop an agreed whole-school approach to planning for spiritual development and ensure that this further enriches all aspects of the curriculum.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

The highly aspirational vision impacts positively on the lives of all members of the school family. It empowers leaders to make courageous decisions, including setting high expectations for all adults as well as pupils. As a result, the culture at St Gabriel's is markedly improved. Leaders describe the school as being on a journey. Collaboration with Manchester Diocese is enhancing the school's Christian distinctiveness. Leaders are supported to respond to priorities which the Diocese helps them to identify. Leaders strive to ensure that everyone is supported to be able to 'do all things'. They prioritise building self-esteem and overcoming barriers to learning to make this vision a reality. Staff are inspired by leaders who live out the vision and the Christian values of love and respect. This results in a highly inclusive and nurturing environment in which every pupil and adult is cherished. It is evident in the warm and loving relationships staff have with one another. It is equally apparent in the good behaviour, based on mutual respect, across the school. Pupils understand the importance of forgiveness. They describe how it is linked to Bible stories they encounter in collective worship. Pupils and adults celebrate achievements together and delight in the success of others. This gives everyone, including the most vulnerable, a sense of personal aspiration.

Leaders, including governors, are clear that their vision for the flourishing of all stems from the school's Christian foundation. However, a lack of formal monitoring of the impact of the vision is hindering the school's development in some areas. Systems are not in place to ensure that robust evaluation of collective worship and RE by governors feeds into the school's improvement planning. Leaders have insufficient training in current expectations in relation to collective worship and RE. As a result, potential for further improvement is not always recognised.

The wellbeing of staff is prioritised and they are exceptionally well supported in their roles. They consider themselves 'very lucky' and 'proud to work here'. In many areas of school life, carefully chosen training equips staff members to live out the school's vision. For example, circus skills training, such as juggling and balancing, is currently aiding one staff member to develop the confidence of pupils in her care. Pupils are learning to take risks, challenge themselves to try new experiences and perform for their peers. Staff report how opportunities to work with colleagues in other schools via the informal collaboration, 'Partners in Raising Achievement in Middleton' (PiraMidd), 'boosts your confidence'. There is a strong track record of the school empowering staff and supporting them during difficult times. One staff member describes finding 'a love of teaching again at this school'. Another explains how the 'real friendship and respect' from leaders 'allows me to succeed'.

Staff invest significant time in building trusting relationships with all families. They draw insightfully on the support of the local church to do so where appropriate. The school's commitment to overcoming obstacles to flourishing is transformational for many pupils. Parents and carers value the 'extra mile' which staff travel to help them, for example with paperwork, appointments and language barriers. Staff work closely with families to provide personalised support for pupils with special and additional needs. This enables all pupils to benefit from everything the school offers, including after school clubs and confidence building off-site visits. It also makes the engaging and ambitious curriculum accessible to all learners. Reflecting the vision, expectations are now high across the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 explain that 'you just have to be brave and keep on trying'. Opportunities are created for pupils to develop as leaders and to have their voice heard. For example, the eco club's proposals are readily adopted by staff, including a recent litter picking project. Via the school council's suggestion box, all pupils are encouraged to share their ideas for initiatives. Pupils



are consulted in relation to their learning. One pupil proudly describes how her suggestion, in science, was implemented by her teacher. The use of weekly 'big questions' helps pupils to think deeply about global issues. Opportunities for pupils to challenge injustice and to act as agents of change are emerging.

Inclusive, invitational collective worship provides pupils and adults with meaningful time together. Although worship is distinctively Christian in nature, the school ensures that pupils of all faiths and none enjoy taking part. Worship expresses and reinforces the message of the school's Christian vision. The headteacher uses worship to help pupils and adults respond to local, national and global events. Pupils and adults both explain how collective worship helps the school community to heal during difficult times. The strong partnership with the church enriches worship. The vicar's weekly visits are a highlight of the week for some pupils. They describe how he brings 'Bible stories alive'. Regular opportunities for prayer and reflection are offered during collective worship and at key points during the school day. Prayer and reflection spaces are available in each classroom. They are used purposefully by some pupils. Pupils are beginning to become involved in leading worship. Leaders recognise the positive impact this is having on their confidence. However, pupils' spirituality is not currently being developed by planning and evaluating worship. There are regular moments of spiritual development at St Gabriel's, especially during outdoor learning. However, some opportunities are missed. This is because there is not yet consistent, whole-school, planning for intentional spiritual development in all subjects. Leaders acknowledge that enriching spirituality further is an important next step in their development journey.

RE is contributing to pupils' flourishing. They speak positively about RE lessons as a safe space to discuss questions to which there is no definite answer. Pupils are knowledgeable about Christianity. In particular, they give a thoughtful account of Jesus' teachings and how these inform the way Christians live. Half termly reviews are used to monitor pupils' key knowledge and understanding. However, there has been no recent RE training for staff. This means that they do not always understand current expectations to fully equip pupils with high level RE skills. There are some missed opportunities for character development in the RE curriculum. Pupils do not understand Christianity as a global faith. Their knowledge of world faiths and worldviews other than Christianity is limited. Therefore, opportunities to explore and celebrate difference are underdeveloped.

Leaders' determination to continue the school's development journey is a significant strength of the school. Their vision that, with courage, 'all things' are possible is making a significant impact. Their willingness to work in partnership, seek advice and implement change makes St Gabriel's the loving school family it now is.



Information			
School	St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School, Middleton	Inspection date	5 May 2023
URN	105808	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Manchester	Pupils on roll	222
Headteacher	Linzy Brown		
Chair of Governors	Janet Bailey		
Inspector	Charlotte Tudway	No.	2115