

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

### Carleton St Hilda's Church of England VA Primary School

Address 1 Bispham Road, Carleton, Blackpool, FY6 7PE

#### School vision

'I give you a new commandment. Love one another, as I have loved you.' John 13:34

'Open hearts, open minds. Learning together with God.'

Love and support is at the heart of everything we do at St Hilda's.  
We love one another and help each other to be our very best  
and enable everyone to grow and flourish.

#### School strengths

- A clear Christian vision, rooted in love, shapes the culture of this school. It supports adults and pupils to treat one another extremely well.
- Inspired by the vision and by highly visible, open-hearted leadership, adults ensure that all pupils know that they matter. Personalised support and rigorous nurture create strong foundations from which pupils grow and flourish spiritually.
- Skilful and effective leadership of religious education (RE) ensures that staff are well supported and that the curriculum is relevant and challenging. As a result, pupils learn well.
- Pupils thrive because they have leadership opportunities from a very young age. Knowing that they are loved and supported by other pupils and by adults, they relish having responsibility. This equips them with confidence and experience to take on greater responsibilities as they move through the school.
- Collective worship at St Hilda's enables pupils and adults to flourish spiritually. Pupil worship leaders benefit significantly. They deepen their own understanding of worship whilst leading others and enabling them to flourish.

#### Areas for development

- Develop robust and manageable systems for evaluating the impact of collective worship. This is to ensure that governors have a fuller picture of the strengths of collective worship in enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

#### Inspection findings

Rooted in love, the Christian vision is the driving force of St Hilda's. Relationships are key to the school's success in enabling people to flourish. Pupils and adults know that they are loved unconditionally, following Jesus' command in John's gospel. This in turn motivates them to love and support others. Adults and pupils live this out throughout the

school. 'Open-heartedness' is particularly evident in the school's welcome and nurture of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Inspired by strong adult modelling, pupils' open-heartedness ensures newcomers receive unconditional welcome and acceptance. Pupils' 'open minds', encouraged by the vision and by effective RE, enable them to respond to new pupils with curiosity and friendliness. Underpinned by the Christian vision, school policies are consistent in setting clear expectations of kindness and respect.

Love and support are the cornerstones of the curriculum. Regardless of their role in the school, all adults take the time to get to know all pupils. Consistent care and compassion create a culture where pupils feel secure and can thrive. This equips pupils with a concern for others. Outraged, for example, on learning in geography and science of children without clean water, pupils initiated their own fundraiser for WaterAid. Because adults know pupils well, provision is carefully tailored to individual needs and interests. This can include giving a pupil time on the sensory wall or providing 'lots of love and patience'. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in supporting pupils with SEND. All staff, for example, are trained in using Makaton. The staff team is further strengthened by a pastoral lead and learning mentor. The Christian vision is central to strategic decision-making at St Hilda's. The introduction of daily specialist sports coaching is one example. This was inspired by love and the school's commitment to help everyone 'to be their very best'. As a result, groups of pupils are flourishing through exploring and developing their individual sporting gifts.

Spiritual provision is rich. Together, staff enjoy finding new opportunities to engage pupils. The forest school is one example. Pupils value being outside as, 'You can be yourself'. Leaders' investment of resources and time here reflects their commitment to pupils' spiritual development. They document the ways in which forest school can enrich different subject areas. This includes RE. Older pupils gain confidence through working in the forest school. Some speak of their enjoyment of being outside 'with God'. Well used prayer spaces provide quiet places for reflection inside the school.

There is a spiritual aspect to the school's development of pupils as leaders. Applying for the different roles requires thoughtful reflection. Pupils who are selected demonstrate empathy and a desire to understand and help others. A range of roles exists, including lunchtime leaders, school council and buddies for Reception pupils. Older pupils display love and patience as they nurture little leaders. These very young pupils flourish because they know that adults trust them with responsibility. Pupil worship leaders have particular opportunities to flourish spiritually. As they help to shape worship for others, their own experience is enriched. They like 'teaching people about God'. Some say that they feel closer to God when leading. There is a clear sense of pride in the role and a deepened understanding of what it means to lead others in worship. Pupils and adults benefit from worship led by a number of visitors. Weekly support from local clergy is one example of the effective, mutually beneficial link with the church. A visit from the Bishop provided inspiration and incidental training for the worship leaders. These pupils now have a deeper understanding of how to engage and involve younger pupils in worship.

Gathering together for worship is important for this school community. Reception children are excited by being together with older pupils. They like the familiarity of the simple Anglican pattern for worship. They look forward to joining in with the grace prayer. Adults sensitively provide individualised support to enable all pupils to experience at least part of whole school worship. Pupils are invited to help with many aspects of adult-led worship and they respond enthusiastically. Reflection is a key element and it provides many opportunities for spiritual growth. Leaders' careful prompts, for example to reflect on 'repairing relationships', support pupils and inspire them to forgive others. Adults and pupils often record their reflections on sticky notes which leaders display. Governors' monitoring systems do not always help them to understand the ways in which collective worship is enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually.

Experienced leaders, with a secure understanding of the place of RE in a Church school, ensure it has high priority. They nurture colleagues to develop their skills and confidence. As a result, most pupils achieve well. Assessment systems, both formal and informal, are effective. Staff know pupils well and adapt their teaching in order to include everyone and enable them to flourish. Excellent relationships between staff create a culture where it is easy to ask for help – for adults as well as for pupils. This means that leaders are able to address quickly any misconceptions regarding subject knowledge. Relationships with the diocese are strong and ensure additional support through visits and staff training. Local clergy, current and retired, generously invest their time and specialist knowledge in enriching the school's provision for RE. This has clear benefits for pupils. Leaders' monitoring shows, for instance, that pupils' understanding of the Christian Eucharist is deepening. This is a result of effective partnership working between school staff and clergy. The school's implementation of the diocesan syllabus ensures that RE is challenging, well-sequenced and diverse.

Pupils have a rich knowledge of Christian belief and practice. Leaders constantly review the impact of the curriculum. They are quick to adapt it where necessary. Recent changes have included increasing the time spent studying major world faiths and worldviews. Strengthened by a rich programme of visits and visitors, the school's provision in these areas enables pupils to learn well.

The staff team enjoys very high quality, supportive relationships with one another. This is because leaders have made it a priority to nurture adults' wellbeing as well as that of pupils. Adults speak of the joy of working together. This makes a positive difference for pupils and for families. There is an open-heartedness in the way staff work with parents and carers. Families praise the quality of communication. Included and welcomed, many describe their experience of being able to 'laugh and cry together' as part of this very special community.

The inspection findings indicate that Carleton St Hilda's Voluntary Aided Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

### Information

Inspection date	4 March 2024	URN	119557
VA/VC/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	208
Diocese	Blackburn		
Headteacher	Jane Curl		
Chair	Roger Farley		
Inspector	Penny Burnside	No.	772