

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

### St Leonard's Church of England First School

#### Vision

'From a tiny spark to a bright flame.'

Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Let us shine as lights.

I am a beacon.

I have many talents.

I can learn to shine my light.

I can see other's lights.

I can lead the way and because of this I am fulfilled.

St Leonard's Church of England First 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

- Aspirational leaders, supported by active governors, ensure that the Christian vision underpins the life of the school. This encourages a commitment to making a positive difference in the world by living out Christian values in daily actions.
- Inspirational collective worship and a strong partnership with the local church enriches lives at St Leonard's. Time is given for thoughtful questioning and reflection. Consequently, pupils and adults flourish spiritually.
- The vision inspires a celebration and recognition of each person's God given talents and uniqueness. Because of this, teachers use their detailed understanding of vulnerable pupils to provide tailored support and nurture. This upholds them as highly valued members of this supportive community, enabling them to flourish.
- Driven by the school's Christian vision to grow into a bright flame, a bespoke curriculum has been designed. Together with an extensive range of enrichment opportunities, pupils are motivated to become successful learners.
- Religious education (RE) is enthusiastically and knowledgeably led. This curriculum is progressive, fosters curiosity and enables pupils to develop an understanding of a range of faiths and worldviews.

#### Development Points

- Embed a rigorous assessment system throughout the RE curriculum. This is to enable pupils and teachers to know how greater progress with learning can be made.
- Develop a shared language for spirituality so that the school community are more confident to articulate their spiritual growth.



## Inspection Findings

The Christian vision is at the heart of this joyful Church school. Leaders are committed to making the vision a reality for members of the school community to 'let their light shine.' Pupils fully embrace St Leonard's vision and it's underpinning biblical values. They confidently explain that the knowledge they gain allows them to grow from a 'tiny spark' to a 'big flame.' Furthermore, adults encourage them to recognise their God given talents. Dedicated leaders and governors are clear about what a Church school should be. Their regular and effective monitoring of the impact of the vision guides and directs their planning and policies. Leaders recognise and prioritise the success of pupils, both academically and personally. This commitment is reflected in the strategic decisions they make to enable people to flourish.

Collective worship is integral to St Leonard's and, because everybody is invited to join in, they feel welcome and valued. Strong partnerships with local churches enhances their worship. Having these gathered times at the beginning of every school day creates a sense of calm. Pupils are given the chance to pause, reflect and share their feelings with God. Wild Worship and Welly Wednesdays take place outside. These opportunities provide meaningful experiences for spiritual growth and pupils are aware of the Christian teaching that God is all around. For example, the pupils read a story about diversity and created their own clay creatures to explain the message. This inspires them to embrace people's differences and stand up for what is right. The school community visit the local chapel weekly for their celebration worship. Staff praise the pupils for their talents and reflect upon how they can 'shine a light' on the talents of others. This creates an atmosphere of appreciation and support. Pupils are invited to pray freely at the end of worship. This provides them with the opportunity to connect spiritually in a personal and meaningful way. However, there is no shared language for spirituality. This limits the extent to which the school community can articulate how worship influences their sense of spiritual wellbeing.

St Leonard's vision promotes love, respect and good relationships within the school. This inspires the community to treat each other well, which can be seen in the positive interactions between pupils. They respect one another and learn well together, including the most vulnerable and those with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). As a result, the playground and classrooms feel peaceful and nurturing. There is a strong system of pastoral support within the school. This ensures that pupils know that they are safe and valued. Church leaders take time to nurture members of the school community. Parents are given somebody to turn to, especially in times of need. This creates a sense of reassurance that strengthens families and promotes the wellbeing of parents and their children. Leaders take strategic decisions in their approach to staff workload, good mental health and wellbeing, in line with their Christian vision. For example, there is a staff mental health lead that they can go to for help. As a result, staff morale is high because they feel cared for and appreciated. The school dog fosters a welcoming environment. Pupils enjoy taking him for walks during break times, enhancing their sense of joy and responsibility.

Leaders have created a bespoke, engaging curriculum that is inspired by the vision. It motivates pupils in their learning and gives them the opportunity to flourish. Learning is linked to their local environment. For example, in Geography they study rocks in the Ipstones area. This encourages real world connections to what they are learning, whilst fostering a sense of curiosity. A rich extracurricular programme includes the chance to learn a musical instrument including piano and ukelele. This enables pupils to develop their talents as their vision states 'shine their light before others'. Skilled SEND specialists provide well targeted advice and support for specific pupils. This ensures tailored interventions, helping them to overcome challenges and thrive. As a result, pupils feel valued and develop confidence in their learning and social interactions. Subject leaders have created opportunities for spiritual



development across the curriculum. Teachers are given the flexibility to take a pause in a sequence of lessons to focus on spirituality. For example, whilst learning about the Parable of the Sower, the lesson took place outside to discover different types of soil. Such occasions allow the school community the time to appreciate the awe and wonder in their learning.

The school vision encourages the members of its community to 'let their light shine' by helping those in need. This has impacted positively on the lives of others by, completing a charity bike ride and collecting food for their harvest festival. Big Questions Worship empowers pupils to identify which areas of social action they are passionate about. Half termly global goals are integrated into the curriculum. This results in a deeper understanding of global issues. Pupils have a clear sense of fairness. They demonstrate this in their daily interactions, both within the school and in the wider community. Through discussions in collective worship and RE lessons they engage deeply with moral and ethical issues. This helps to develop a well-rounded understanding of justice. Adults encourage them to speak out and take action to challenge injustice. They take on roles of responsibility within the school. These include community carers and the health and safety council. The variety of roles empower them to contribute positively, encouraging a sense of leadership and ownership in their environment. This creates strong partnerships between pupils, staff, and the wider community to support collective growth and development.

RE is enthusiastically and knowledgeably led. Leaders work closely with the diocese to ensure that the curriculum is progressive and well balanced. Staff attend RE network meetings in conjunction with other local schools. Best practice and innovative teaching strategies are shared between them. This creates continuous professional growth, allowing staff to draw from diverse perspectives and high-quality resources. Understanding around Christianity as a global living faith is strong. Visits, such as the Derby Faith Trail, enrich pupils' knowledge through real-life experiences. This encourages respect, curiosity, and rich conversations about a range of faiths within school and at home, with their families.

Pupils enjoy RE in a safe space where they can discuss their views. This supportive environment builds confidence and spiritual growth. Previous learning is often recapped to reinforce understanding. Each pupil has a beliefs and values journal to record RE work. This helps them to reflect on their learning. When their work is challenging, they feel supported by both their teachers and peers. They refer to their teachers giving them 'a superpower' to understand. The use of talk partners allows pupils to engage in meaningful discussions in RE. They enjoy exploring big questions and comparing a range of worldviews. Lessons are highly valued by parents as they promote a strong respect for a range of faiths and worldviews. The collaboration with the diocese has enhanced the quality of teaching and deepened pupils' understanding in RE. However, assessment in RE is not yet embedded. This means that pupils and teachers are not sufficiently clear about how greater progress can be made by pupils.

## Information

|                    |                                                                     |               |        |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| Address            | Brookfields Road, Ipstones, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST10 2LY |               |        |
| Date               | 10 February 2025                                                    | URN           | 124381 |
| Type of school     | Voluntary Aided                                                     | No. of pupils | 44     |
| Diocese            | Lichfield                                                           |               |        |
| Headteacher        | Kelly Stanesby                                                      |               |        |
| Chair of Governors | Sue Hey and Jane Held (Co-chairs)                                   |               |        |
| Inspector          | Emma Fern                                                           |               |        |