

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ainsdale St John's Church of England Primary School

Vision

At ASJ, we 'aspire to shine for Jesus.' Rooted in Jesus' words, 'let your light shine' (Matthew 5:16), we believe that with God's help we can achieve anything and aspire to be the best that we can be. We shine like a beacon of light within our community with an open door so that all feel welcome. Our special family of school, church and community follows in the footsteps of Jesus. Guided by the values of courage, community and compassion, we encourage one another to discover and develop our talents, serve others and make a positive difference.

Ainsdale St John'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.

Notable Strengths

- The school's Christian vision is well embedded and fosters a deep sense of belonging. It challenges leaders to reflect and take brave decisions and inspires pupils and staff to have high aspirations. Consequently, people are empowered to 'shine brightly.'
- Collective worship plays an important part in promoting an understanding of the school's vision. The highly inclusive and joyful way in which collective worship is delivered means that it inspires individual spiritual growth.
- Partnerships between the local church and within the Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust (LDST) are strong. These support the Christian vision through extending the range of learning experiences available. As a result, people feel that they belong to Christian communities beyond Ainsdale St John's.
- Underpinned by the values of courage and compassion, the school prioritises positive mental health and wellbeing. This means that adults and pupils flourish because they know they are valued as individuals.

Development Points

- Create more opportunities to support spiritual development across the curriculum. This is to help pupils understand what spirituality means to them and the impact that it can have on their lives.
- Strengthen pupils' understanding about the range of world religions that are studied other than Christianity. This is to support them to develop an accurate understanding of the traditions and beliefs held by people of different faiths.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of justice and responsibility. This is so they can understand how their voices can be heard and the ways in which they can make a difference beyond their local community.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

The vision of 'let your light shine' is lived out in the way people encourage one another. There is a shared aspiration that staff and pupils achieve well; academically, socially and emotionally. This aligns with the trust vision to 'learn, love and achieve with Jesus.' Staff value the support and training they receive from leaders, the trust and the diocese. This enables them to grow professionally. Governors know the school exceptionally well and provide support and challenge. This enables them to play an active part in identifying the strengths of the school and areas to develop. The vision acts as a beacon in supporting leaders to make bold decisions. Examples include increased monitoring which leads to improvements, such as changes to the curriculum. This supports a cycle of continuous improvement. The associated values of courage, community and compassion support the vision. They are evident across many areas of school life, such as the positive relationships and behaviour policy. This helps pupils to be brave, to live their lives to the fullest and to behave well. Attitudes to learning are therefore excellent and pupils enjoy being part of this nurturing Church school community.

Vision and Curriculum

Leaders design the curriculum to support pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to succeed. Lessons follow the 'LIGHT' model (look back, introduce new vocabulary, guided teaching, have a go and tie it together). This links directly to the vision and provides a consistent approach for staff and pupils. Driven by this inclusive vision, leaders provide pupils with tailored support. This helps them overcome a variety of barriers to learning. Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' engagement with the wide range of clubs on offer leads to improvements. For example, new clubs are added based on pupils' requests. These cater for different talents, thus reflecting the inclusive vision. Through training, staff are clear about the school's approach to spirituality. Pupils can explain the meaning of the shared language of mirrors, windows and doors. Leaders have begun to identify explicit opportunities for spiritual development. However, this is only in some areas of the curriculum. The impact on spiritual flourishing is consequently underdeveloped.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship plays a vital role in supporting spiritual development. The impressive way that leaders collaborate with local clergy and governors results in a vibrant programme. Worship is highly inclusive. Through joyful singing, reflection and links to the modern-day world, it inspires people. This enables pupils, including those who have SEND, to participate with confidence and enthusiasm. Year 6 pupils are each gifted a Bible. Throughout their final year they take turns reading relevant extracts in collective worship. Furthermore, members of the pupil led 'VIP' (values in practice) group receive training in how to deliver class worship. They also look after the well-used prayer spaces in classrooms and the entrance hall. These leadership opportunities allow pupils to 'shine' and 'make a difference.' The strong links with the parish church enhance worship. Staff not only value the expertise of local clergy but also the pastoral support they generously offer. A special service for staff at the beginning of the academic year provides time for personal reflection. This supports spiritual flourishing. Worship, led by local clergy and church members takes place weekly in the church building. Parents and carers are invited to join on a regular basis. This, along with trust-wide worship, links to the value of community and enhances the spiritual life of the school. Leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of worship and have made appropriate improvements as a result. This includes broadening the range of songs. Pupils identify the positive impact worship has on them, such as helping them 'to get through difficult times.'

Vision and School Culture

Positive relationships built on dignity and mutual respect mean that people are valued. School leaders are supported by the trust and governors to create a culture where individuals are nurtured. Reflecting the aspirational vision, opportunities for staff training are plentiful. This supports professional development and



growth. Impactful training and coaching in areas such as curriculum leadership enable staff to grow in confidence and expertise. Trusted adults and a wealth of resources are available to support pupils' wellbeing and mental health. Practical examples include books, soft toys and calm spaces in classrooms. Thus, pupils are empowered to support themselves and one another. Leaders access external agencies for specialist support and therefore families receive bespoke help when necessary. Consequently, pupils are happy in school because they know that staff care about and value them.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Pupils know what it means 'to walk in Jesus' footsteps' by being generous and helping others. They demonstrate this in a variety of ways, such as fund raising for local charities and litter picking. Leaders ensure that pupils have a voice through a variety of leadership responsibilities. The eco, ethos and newspaper groups offer pupils the opportunity to consider how they can become involved in school improvement. This mirrors the vision of making a positive difference. The LDST 'promise' identifies trust wide initiatives to deepen pupils' understanding of justice. However, the impact of this is at an early stage. Therefore, pupils' understanding of the ways in which they can make a difference by making ethical choices or challenging injustice is limited.

Religious Education

The religious education (RE) curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to explore a range of world religions. Pupils understand Christianity as a living, global faith and know that followers practise their faith in different ways. They recognise that for Christians in some parts of the world, having a faith is challenging. The highly effective link with the parish church enhances RE by providing access to artefacts and practical experiences. This increases engagement for pupils and supports professional development for staff. Pupils clearly explain the importance of learning about a variety of world religions and link this to the value of respect. However, they are less confident when recalling what they have learned about the range of faiths they study. Therefore, their knowledge about the similarities and differences between religions is not secure. Pupils recognise that not everyone has a faith and older pupils explain the beliefs of some Humanists. Staff access relevant training from the diocese and trust which enhances teaching and learning.

RE teaching is creative and interesting. Pupils are encouraged to learn through drama, artwork and debate. Furthermore, opportunities which support spiritual development are interwoven into lessons. This, along with skilful questioning, encourages pupils to express their own viewpoints. Leaders have developed robust systems for assessment and pupils understand the ways in which teachers provide support and challenge. Hence, pupils, including those deemed vulnerable and/or disadvantaged, make good progress in RE.

Information

Address	Sandbrook Road, Ainsdale, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 3JE		
Date	18 June 2026	URN	150557
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	185
Diocese	Liverpool		
MAT	Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust		
MAT Chair	Margaret Swinson		
Headteacher	Lorna O'Brien		
Chair of Governors	John Forshaw		
Inspector	Joanne Hyslop		