

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Hilda's Church of England High School

Vision

Christ Jesus as our cornerstone. Ephesians 2:18-20

We are the St Hilda's family, with Jesus Christ as our cornerstone. Building on foundations of wisdom, hope, community, dignity and equality, we nurture and support one another to be our very best. We rejoice in our diversity and celebrate our many achievements.

St Hilda's Church of England High 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

- St Hilda's family is deeply devoted to its vision. It is underpinned by a carefully crafted set of Christian values. These are the cornerstone of every aspect of this inclusive school community and enable pupils and adults to thrive together.
- Highly positive and productive relationships throughout the school nourish and affirm individuals enabling them to be the best that they can be. This is pivotal in transforming lives and encouraging an atmosphere of aspiration, hope and dignity.
- Religious education (RE) has a high status and is a significant strength of St Hilda's. Known throughout the school as 'the core of the core', it has a strong and challenging curriculum. Pupils flourish in the subject and make strong progress in their studies at all levels.
- Visionary leadership of collective worship inspires the school community and provides a key focus for its daily life. These times of gathering bring opportunities for reflection. They promote spiritual flourishing and strongly support the development of an understanding about how to live well.
- The vision passionately drives a culture that includes and nurtures every individual. Therefore, leaders ensure that provision for pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), is of the highest quality.

Development Point

- Extend the cultivation of a shared language for spirituality. This is to enable the school to more deeply explore and articulate spiritual experiences.



Inspection Findings

St Hilda's biblically rooted Christian vision is the cornerstone and lifeblood of this school family. It is strongly proclaimed and confidently embraced, sustaining and nourishing the school's work and mission. Along with its compelling Christian values, the vision drives this exceptional school. Through them, there is profound enrichment and transformation. This enables pupils and adults to flourish together. Vibrant displays throughout the school ensure that the language of the vision and values are naturally immersed in daily life. Consequently, pupils and adults understand their biblical foundation and the positive guidance it constantly provides. Passionate, highly effective leaders are supported by a dedicated staff team. They understand and own the significance of the vision and its image of 'Christ Jesus as our cornerstone'. Well informed governors are firmly invested in the work and future of the school. Their robust evaluation of the impact of the vision supports and guides leaders' work and direction. Diocesan training helps to equip and staff through programmes of development and encouragement.

The vision and values infuse each element of the curriculum which highly motivates pupils in their studies. Leaders at all levels have engaged with and incorporated ways in which subjects can enable pupils to encounter and explore spirituality. Supporting and extending this is the school's passionately led, high profile Cornerstone Curriculum. Focusing on relationships with self, others, the world and spiritual or religious dimensions, this successfully promotes curiosity and deep thinking. As a result, pupils have rich opportunities for spiritual development. The foundations to enable the school community to discuss spirituality are in place. However, the shared language needed to express and explore this in greater depth is at an early stage. Positive, supportive learning environments and excellent behaviour are the norm at St Hilda's. An extensive range of extracurricular activities and visits extend skills and experience, widen horizons and boost confidence. Some of these are pupil-led, giving opportunities for service to the school and community and responding to matters of injustice and inequality. Because of the vision, the school is generous in its extensive provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Deep care and determination ensures that the school lives up to its vision to 'support one another to be their very best'.

Worship is a highly valued part of the daily rhythm of St Hilda's. In larger settings, uplifting music and singing by the choir and band enhance these times. Those of faith, or none, feel welcome and included through invitations to join and respond in ways that they find comfortable. Bible passages, other readings and prayers are frequently led by pupils and provide a clear focus for each week's theme. Supporting and exploring school values, they are engaging inspiring and relevant. They encourage and promote an understanding of faith and how to live well. Meticulous, planning and preparation means that worship is open and accessible to everyone. A wide variety of meaningful opportunities to respond ensures that pupils and adults can flourish spiritually. 'Gratitude jars' and 'wonderwalls' in every classroom record written and visual responses to worship. The impact of these gathered times is effectively monitored by staff and pupils. This ensures that they are engaging and shaped by the vision and the school's Anglican foundation. Greatly valued relationships with local churches result in the provision of highly effective chaplaincy, youth workers and clergy. They provide and assist with clubs and mentoring and support key festivals, regular Eucharist and celebrations events. The inspiring annual carol services in Liverpool Cathedral are much-appreciated events that help to enrich the school community.



The vision inspires a calm, life-enhancing culture that infuses the school, enriching and nourishing relationships. Diversity and difference are embraced, giving dignity and allowing this community to live well together. Pupils are highly respectful and supportive, enabling them to appreciate and support one another to be who they are. This includes those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or who have SEND. Such policies as the skilfully implemented 'Chance to Change', guide pupils' decisions on occasions when things go wrong. Pupils and adults understand biblically inspired teaching on restorative approaches and new beginnings. Through their effective use at St Hilda's, they encourage positive behaviour choices and changes. Leaders relate a Bible passage about branches bearing good fruit to a passionate belief that the flourishing of staff is paramount. Consequently, their wellbeing has a high profile, and this distinctly benefits pupils and adults. The skilled and committed pastoral team works zealously to know and nurture pupils and families. Through this, those in their charges are supported to overcome barriers to their flourishing. Pupils rightly speak positively of the high priority given to the mental health and wellbeing for all. Lessons, awareness-raising and signposting are augmented by staff specialists and trained pupil mentors. External agencies are used as appropriate. Together this promotes an environment in which no one who is struggling or in difficulty will go unnoticed or unsupported.

The vision promotes productive and meaningful partnerships. They abound at St Hilda's and have a positive impact. Ranging from sporting links to organisations and charities involved with a range of causes, they inspire and challenge pupils. In considering matters of justice, rights and responsibilities, pupils work with high profile local people, charities and foundations. Through these, awareness is raised and pupils respond, often becoming advocates and agents of change. Extensive links with local churches and the diocese are mutually beneficial and include opportunities for service and partnership. A myriad of pupil leadership roles provide individuals and groups with the responsibility to speak and act for others.

Throughout the school, RE is known as 'the core of the core'. This is because it is valued so strongly and has such a positive influence on school life. Passionately and skilfully led, the rich and balanced RE curriculum provides opportunities to explore faiths and worldviews in depth. Studies about diversity of belief and practice help pupils to learn about the influence and relevance of religion in today's world. Because leaders and governors attach great importance to RE, they invest in quality resources and well-qualified teachers. All pupils study for full GCSE at Key Stage 4 (KS) and can take optional examination courses in KS5. Sixth form students all follow an interesting and relevant course that extends the scope of their learning. Active engagement with diocesan training and networks ensures that teachers are effective in their work.

Many pupils clearly love their RE studies and find lessons interesting, varied, engaging and challenging. Teachers revisit and recap themes and topics previously studied. This ensures that pupils' foundations and vocabulary for future work is secure. Pupils enjoy the intellectual challenge of discussion, for example through debating big questions, ethics and philosophy. RE is successful in helping them to value the importance of developing an understanding of a range of faith practices and worldviews. Learners make very good progress because teaching is of a high quality, and they enjoy and are encouraged in their work. The atmosphere and ethos in classrooms is notably safe, inclusive and respectful. This promotes interesting debate, deep thinking and successful learning. Teachers ensure that effective interactive and formal assessment helps pupils to be clear about their progress and how to improve.

Information

Address	Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool, L17 3AL		
Date	6 & 7 February 2025	URN	104721
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	1126
Diocese	Liverpool		
Headteacher	Jo Code		
Chair of Governors	Joan Stein		
Inspector	Peter Coates		