

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic and Church of England Academy	
Address	Grangeway, Halton Lodge, WA7 5YH

School vision

Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic and Church of England Academy is a fully inclusive, faith centred, welcoming Christian community guided by the example of Jesus Christ

At Blessed Carlo Acutis we are nurtured to be originals, to have respect for all and flourish to be the best that we can be.

'For we are all one in Christ Jesus'

'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' John 10:10

School strengths

- Lives are transformed as a result of the embedded, well-understood, biblically based vision. It permeates all aspects of school life and is effectively supported by core values. The positive relationships in place at all levels are key in enabling everyone to flourish in love and learning.
- Spirituality is a natural part of everyday life at Blessed Carlos Acutis Catholic and Church of England Academy. It is readily recognised and expressed through relationships. Both students and adults see themselves as supported by the academy on their own individual spiritual journey.
- Blessed Carlos Acutis maximises every opportunity to care for members of their community. Support for wellbeing, mental health, charity work and social action is developing students' expertise as agents of change.
- Collective worship is joyful. Carefully planned, by staff and the chaplaincy team, it celebrates, both the Anglican and Catholic worship traditions. It is central to this vibrant worshipping community. Spontaneous prayer, opportunities for reflection and happy singing contribute to students' and adults' spiritual flourishing.
- Consistently high-quality religious education (RE) with an empowering and inspirational curriculum. It is crafted to reflect the expectations of two dioceses and St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust. It skilfully encourages the knowledge and understanding of worldviews and world religions including Christianity, and has created pupils who are passionate about RE.

Areas for development

- Enhance governors' understanding of their role in the evaluation of the school as a Church school. This is to support the school in its drive for excellence.
- Further utilise the enthusiasm of the pupils in the chaplaincy team to enable them to plan and lead worship. This is to grow in their understanding of the variety of Christian traditions of worship.

Inspection findings

Blessed Carlos Acutis, renamed by students and staff, is on a journey, supporting all to be individuals and use God's gifts. The school's Christian vision and values are well-established and biblically-rooted. They nurture and enrich the daily experiences of all who attend. This enables them to flourish by considering what God would want for each unique member of the community. The intention of every policy, action and practice is to empower individuals in reaching their potential. This includes developing adults in their roles so that they are fulfilled professionally and personally. The impact of the Christian vision is known because it is at the heart of robust and regular self-evaluation. Committed governors provide support and take pride in being the guardians of the school's Christian character. They conscientiously monitor the effectiveness of the school as a Church school but are less confident in evaluating the impact of this.

The aspiration to enable all to thrive academically, socially, professionally, and emotionally as God intends, shapes curriculum decisions. Outstanding formal and informal pastoral care contributes to admirable relationships and support. This includes those who may be vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Individuals are cared for as unique children of God. The dedicated nurture provision supports students through challenging times and provides a safe place for them to grow. As a result, lives are transformed. A culture of openness and trust ensures that students feel safe and their voices heard. Good behaviour and positive attitudes maximise students' opportunities in all aspects of school life. Adults quickly recognise and respond to the needs of students and each other through actively supporting good mental health and wellbeing. Learning activities build self-esteem, balanced with humility, and integrity and prepare students as future citizens. Senior students act as role models and contribute to school leadership.

Blessed Carlos Acutis nurtures a deep culture of self-reflection. The spiritual life of the school is both a part of everyday life and the still centre from which everything grows. Students and adults speak with confidence about spirituality and their experience of it. The 'mindfulness club' has further developed this, with students reinforcing that this allows them time to reflect on their spirituality. Students recognise that their spirituality does not exist in isolation but is informed through relationships throughout school. Within worship and the curriculum careful attention is given to spiritual development. This ensures that no opportunity for spontaneous reflection is overlooked. Personal contemplation is continued outside of worship using carefully constructed spaces around the school to reflect or pray. The retreat programme allows worship, spirituality and wellbeing activities to be explored in greater depth and to complement one another. Students and families can see the positive benefit of retreats in helping recognise the importance of faith in daily life,

At the heart of the distinctiveness of Blessed Carlos Acutis is the worship life of the school. Collective worship provides a deep well of encouragement and reflection for all members of the community. This is expertly developed by the head of collective worship and the chaplaincy team. Central to worship is Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is effectively communicated through words, Bible readings, prayers and music. In this way worship is inclusive and inviting and represents the breadth of the Christian tradition. Mass is regularly celebrated in both the Anglican and Catholic traditions. Students of all ages contribute well to class worship, discussing issues and offering prayers eagerly. Similarly, staff regularly meet in the chapel for prayer and reflection, emphasising the place of God at the heart of the school. The role of the student chaplaincy team is innovative and extremely effective in enabling student involvement and leadership in worship. Student chaplaincy leaders are ready to share their expertise even further both within school and the wider community. All who engage in leading worship receive appropriate training, support, and provision of resources, including time. Members of the school community identify that worship time is essential to them whatever their background. Relationships between local clergy and the school are mutually beneficial in supporting each other in prayer. Everyone responds flexibly to ensure that

worship is accessible to all. As a result, students value worship, seeing it as a chance to share their thoughts with God and ‘strengthening their bond with God.’ Others simply enjoy the quiet time to think.

The celebration of individuality is life-affirming. Each person is uniquely cherished and their contribution to the life of the school, as ‘originals’, is inspirational. This linked with the school’s quote that ‘we are all born as originals, but many die as photocopies.’ This suggests that they are all free to be their unique selves and can change. The student council is an effective vehicle of change, resulting in action to develop environmental awareness as well as supporting local charities. There is a wide range of ways in which pupils enhance their local community and campaign for those in need. For example, all students have an opportunity to give to local food banks, to litter pick, and to raise money for charities. This also directly enhances the vibrancy of the school community, such as the outside spaces, developing a school wellbeing day and plans for a prayer garden. The curriculum also contains numerous carefully planned opportunities for students to become agents of change at a global level, for example sanitation support. As a student reported, ‘faith without deeds is dead’. These structures and planned opportunities mean that students are confident that their ideas for student led social action will be facilitated by the school.

The school has created a religious education (RE) curriculum that meets both Anglican and Roman Catholic expectations. As a result, students approach RE lessons with exceptionally positive attitudes and are thoroughly engaged with their learning. All students feel safe to explore their personal convictions within RE lessons. Students know that they will be able to do so in a mutually respectful environment. The curriculum is constantly under review to ensure that it meets the needs of all. Visits and speakers are used to help students understand that religious beliefs are not static and introduce them to a variety of worldviews. Assessment procedures are well understood by students, who then improve their work precisely. This makes a significant contribution to maintaining consistently high examination standards. The carefully created curriculum meets the needs of students, two dioceses and the Trust. It produces consistently strong academic progress and the excitement of students in RE. Expert teaching, deep subject knowledge, rigorous improvement and focussed monitoring ensure all students regardless of age, ability or background are flourishing in RE. Outside of the school members of the RE department contribute to a wide range of diocesan and exam board RE networks. Staff are always willing to learn from others and share their expertise.

The inspection findings indicate that Blessed Carlos Acutis Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	19 June 2024 - 20 June 2024	URN	149032
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	368
Diocese	Chester		
MAT/Federation	St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Alicia Freeman		
Chair	John Wilbraham		
Inspector	Elaine Bowers	No.	960