

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bilston Church of England Primary			
Address	Albany Crescent, Bilston, Wolverhampton, WV14 0HU		
Date of inspection	30 January 2020	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	Lichfield	URN	I30305

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Bilston CE is a primary school with 425 pupils on roll. Almost half of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above the national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities is in line with national averages. A significant number of pupils are either Sikh or Hindu. The headteacher has been in post for twelve years during which time there has been an extensive building programme resulting in a substantial increase in pupil numbers.

The school's Christian vision

We will aspire through our Christian beliefs and attitudes for all children in our care to flourish academically, personally and spiritually; develop respect for others and to reach out to their local and global communities, so hand in hand together with faith, we will strive to achieve all things.

'I am able to do all things through him [Jesus] who strengthens me.' Philippians 4:13

Key findings

- The reviewed Christian vision is being embedded by the dedicated staff team so that all are able to flourish. However, the impact of the reviewed Christian vision needs to be evidenced in school documentation in a more consistent manner.
- School leaders, including governors, provide effective support and have a very good understanding of the needs of the school including interfaith aspects.
- An effective relationship with the local Christian community enhances biblical knowledge and the collective worship experience which encourage all to thrive spiritually. Whilst the role of pupil worship leaders is growing, their involvement in planning and developing collective worship is currently limited.
- Pupils are confident in expressing how a relationship with Jesus can impact on the lives of those who choose to follow him. However, their current experiences do not yet deepen their understanding of Anglican traditions.

Areas for development

- Ensure the governors' strategy for monitoring include evaluation of the new creative curriculum, together with assessment processes, ensuring that links to religious education (RE) and personal social health education (PSHE) are explicit and fully reflect the school's Christian vision and core values.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to experience Anglican celebrations to enrich their understanding and knowledge.
- Allow more pupils to develop their spiritual confidence by supporting them to take a more active role in planning, leading and evaluating whole school worship.
- Build upon established relationships with parents to develop further their understanding and knowledge of the Christian vision and core values.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Bilston CE Primary School is a distinctively Christian Church school. Guided by key leaders, the school has co-ordinated a thoughtful review of the school's vision. The resulting vision is being embedded in policies and shared with parents. It is embraced by the wider school community enabling all to fully engage with the core values of love, faith and peace. Creative works of art and thought-provoking displays, throughout the school environment, celebrate the ways in which pupils show their understanding of its Christian ethos. 'Positive Trees' are an integral part of each class reflection area, ensuring the school vision is consistently affirmed and all have the opportunity to proclaim that they believe in themselves and each other. School staff live out the school's vision and values explaining clearly how these lie at the heart of the school. Leaders state, 'Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common.' This is impacting positively upon the Church school experience and culture allowing both pupils and adults to flourish. Areas of development from the previous inspection have been addressed.

Partnerships within the diocese effectively guide Church school improvement. This allows all to flourish. Pupils in the worship group, aided by members from the Christian community, drive improvements in worship. They support the Church school development agenda, including the review of the vision statement. Evaluation systems used by governors to monitor the impact and challenge the effectiveness of this Church school are still developing. Parents speak positively about the school and the care and attention their children receive. The school has exceeded their expectations.

Leaders are acutely aware of the needs of individuals. Inspired by the Christian vision, staff strive to enrich the lives of all, enabling them to thrive within an engaging learning community. However, school documentation does not always reflect this. Pupils are proud of the contribution they make to decision making. This means that they take their responsibility roles as school council members, worship group members and peer supporters seriously. The positive impact of these groups shows that wellbeing and mental health is a key school priority. As a result, pupils feel safe, happy and valued. Their behaviour is excellent and deserves praise. Relationships, a sense of belonging and the exemplary behaviour by pupils are influenced by its Christian values and promoted through the effective behaviour policy. Creative curriculum planning, underpinned by the vision, ensures that all are valued and supported. Enrichment activities, including residential opportunities, widen pupils' horizons and life experiences, fostering positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils have their learning and personal needs met so that many make good progress from their starting points. Vulnerable pupils and those with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are extremely well supported. This is because all staff believe that every child is loved by God and worthy of their very best efforts.

The vision inspires pupils to recognise their ability to make a difference to the lives of others. Fundraising projects are many and include support for local and global charities. These opportunities enable pupils to see Christian action as an important commitment. Leaders have rightly identified the need to re-establish global partnerships and empower pupils to become more knowledgeable as global citizens. Leaders ensure RE has an increasing high profile in school. It reflects the school's Christian vision and contributes to its Christian distinctiveness. Pupils gain much from their RE lessons and develop a good understanding and deep respect for Christianity and other world faiths. Key Stage 1 pupils can debate in a mature way the reasoning behind the label 'Good Friday'; the day when Christians learn that, 'a good man died.' Aspects such as this are explored through effective use of the Understanding Christianity resource and Discovery RE. As a result, pupils can articulate key Christian concepts, including the Trinity. They are encouraged to memorise verses from the Bible. This connects their thoughts to the school vision and values. Pupils' knowledge of the parables and how they link to the school values is exceptional. Assessment processes in RE are currently under review. Learning is further enhanced by visits to places of worship and celebration of key festivals exploring the diversity within school and within God's world.

Collective worship is a much-valued part of the day. Pupils are very positive about its impact. They state that, 'worship brings us together, we are excited to learn about God.' They appreciate this special time to reflect spiritually, allowing them the opportunity to 'learn about and think about how to follow God's rules.' Other responses from pupils point to 'being at one with God.' They worship in a variety of ways through art, drama,

music and song. Worship through song is a strength of the school. Pupils respond well to different leaders. Whilst the role of pupil worship leaders is growing, their involvement in planning and developing collective worship is currently limited. All these aspects, together with careful planning, ensure links are made to the core Christian values, vision and specific church festivals. In addition, worship themes inspire social action. Pupils understand why people pray and value formal and informal opportunities to pray. The Lord's Prayer and class prayers, based on the vision of God strengthening them, are prayed regularly. Pupils are highly skilled at making purposeful links between worship and their topics in RE. There is a strong focus on the teachings of Jesus Christ. This allows pupils to appreciate the impact of God's Son in the world and their lives and supports spiritual growth. However, pupils have little experience of the meaning of the Holy Communion as the Lord's Supper. Experiences for parents to develop further their understanding of the Christian vision and values through community worship require development. Worship is well supported by members from the Christian community. A seamless partnership with the church supports spiritual development and impacts well upon this mutually beneficial link. This helps all leaders to share Anglican traditions and Christian teaching. Pupils' appreciation of Christian diversity and worldwide Anglican traditions of worship are developing well. The church is utilised as a space for worship and a resource for learning linking with whole school themes. This facilitates working together and mutual support.

Bilston CE is a school community which enables all to flourish as they seek to follow Christ's teaching. The underpinning Christian vision and associated values uphold the dignity and value of pupils as unique individuals. As a result, pupils of all faiths, backgrounds and abilities have hope, aspirations and feel welcomed into this Christian community.

Headteacher	Gary Gentle
Inspector's name and number	R Mary Gale 337