

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bywell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School			
Address	Bendigo Road, Dewsbury, WF12 7LX		
Date of inspection	13 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled
Diocese	Leeds	URN	107706

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

Bywell is a junior school with 370 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. There has been a significant change in staff and governors since the last inspection. None of the nearby infant schools are church schools.

The school's Christian vision

The kingdom of God is like the mustard seed. The smallest when sown gives the largest tree so all can dwell in its' branches. Matthew 13:31-32

We are an inclusive school where the Christian ethos encourages thoughtfulness and humanity. We learn and grow together, aiming high and striving to be the best we can be. Our ethos is underpinned through the teachings of the parable of the mustard seed.

Key findings

- Strong and inspirational leadership by the headteacher is well supported by dedicated staff. This enables all to flourish in an inclusive Christian community. The relatively inexperienced governing body has not fully established effective monitoring and evaluation of Christian distinctiveness.
- Deeply embedded Christian values have a clear impact on the highly positive relationships in school. This is evidenced by pupils' exemplary behaviour and their positive attitudes to each other, learning and to life.
- The vision drives the highly effective pastoral support. This, together with quality individual programmes, supports pupils to develop their potential emotionally, socially, and academically. Staff generously give of their time for this.
- Collective worship is inspirational, inclusive and engaging, recognized by the whole school community for its influence as the heart of the school. The role of pupils as leaders of worship is not developed.
- High quality Religious Education (RE) provision facilitates excellent links with worship, supporting and enhancing the impact of the vision and values. Pupil knowledge and understanding of world faiths, including Christianity, and global injustice and inequality is developing.

Areas for development

- Give greater prominence to the Biblical root to the vision to ensure its impact on school development in all areas, including governance, is more explicit and effective.
- Mentor and develop pupils as worship leaders to extend personal spirituality and their role in independently planning, leading and evaluating whole school worship.
- Continue to enhance pupils' understanding of world faiths including Christianity, thereby supporting and developing their awareness of global issues, including injustice and inequality.

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

Inspirational leadership by the headteacher has led to a highly inclusive school community where all are accepted for themselves. The core values of friendship, compassion, peace, justice and endurance link with the established motto of 'Learning together, Growing together.' The vision of the parable of the mustard seed was chosen by the whole school community to enhance the established motto. This showcases the growth of children and adults within this inclusive community. Pastoral support is a strength of the school allowing pupils to live out the values. This provision and a wide range of therapeutic support is enabling vulnerable and high need pupils towards fulfilling their potential. Pupils are appreciative of school as a church school and say that the core values help them behave. Older pupils speak of the vision as their motivation to grow and do their best. Attainment is high and pupils make better than expected progress, reflecting the focus on each child as an individual. Behaviour is exemplary, due to the embedded restorative practice, based on reconciliation and forgiveness. Respect for all has a high profile. The majority of pupils who join the school in year 3 come from two community infant schools. The school has in place extensive transition arrangements including effective communication with and visits by families. Arrangements include visits by past pupils and support for RE and worship, provided by pupils and subject leaders. New pupils focus on the core values and the parable of the mustard seed to support their understanding of what it means to be part of a church school.

The majority of governors are new to the role. Governors regularly visit the school and they always a focus on the Christian ethos. However, they do not evaluate the impact of distinctiveness in a systematic way. All subject leaders report to the governing body, but the impact of this on development is not clear. The profile of the meaning of the vision is being raised, as policies increasingly reflect the biblical roots of the vision as well as the core values. However, it is not shaping all school development. Local churches are considered partners in the Christian life of the school.

Staff provide exceptional care for vulnerable pupils, daily reflecting the school's Christian vision and values. The vision is expressed through the staffs' positive relationships with pupils. Class worship enables them to support pupil understanding of the vision and values, through relating these to their daily lives. An embedded system of shared leadership is part of the well-established wellbeing support. Leaders have a clear sense of their role in living out the vision and values. Parents are very supportive of school and appreciate all it does for their children. They are positive about the impact of the Christian ethos 'helping them become good humans'. Parents respect that the school values what each child has to offer, helping each other to grow. They appreciate the broadening of their children's awareness of diversity through links to the local community. Their children are encouraged to be charitable and to be aware of social injustice, explaining the meaning of justice. They are welcome in school and into worship, feeling that they and their children have a strong voice.

The curriculum is based on providing richness and opportunities to explore the values in a wider context. A unit on Crime and Punishment allows pupils to explore the meaning of justice. 'Justice is fairness not equality. Outdoor learning supports pupil spirituality, although there is no designated spiritual and reflection area outside. Values such as compassion are integrated into the PHSE curriculum. This clearly supports respect for difference and diversity. 'Young leaders' is a part of this programme that enabled disengaged pupils to reconnect with their local community through litter picking. A kindness calendar enhances the curriculum, reminding pupils of their physical and mental wellbeing; how to live out the core values. Pupils have a range of opportunities to take a leadership role. 'Bywell buddies' provide a friend when needed and support children at social times. School council provides a strong voice organising pupil voice boxes on a variety of issues, including playtimes and friendships. Social action projects such as animal welfare are led by pupils, however their awareness of global issues and the wider community is underdeveloped. They visit a local care home and pupils led a project on Dementia awareness, reaching out into their local community.

Collective Worship is engaging and inspirational with links made to prior worship. It is led by a variety of leaders including the incumbent. Pupils see it as 'all coming together'. Pupils sing their 'motto' song with joy; written by a member of staff, enhancing their understanding. Pupils speak of the candle as focus for their thoughts. Pupils show respect through placing their fingers together when they enter and leave worship. Many pupils continue this throughout worship. They have a good understanding of Bible stories including parables and their meanings.

Pupils say the unique design of each class candle, presented in worship, illustrates the differences between them but the candles and jars are also the same. Messages from worship are followed up in class worship led by pupils. There are few opportunities for pupils to become familiar with Anglican rituals. Their knowledge and understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not well established. Neither is their understanding of the Eucharist and its place in Anglican liturgy. Pupils have a good understanding of reasons for prayer, summarised as being close to God. Prayer and reflection spaces are in all classes and pupil prayer books are prominent and shared in class worship.

Pupils enjoy and appreciate RE, 'it helps us understand what other people believe'. It has a high status in school, on a par with other core subjects. It is well led by knowledgeable, enthusiastic subject leaders who engage with a local RE network and the Diocese. Effective staff development and support ensures consistently good subject knowledge across the school. RE is beginning to develop deeper thinking through big questions, including a debate of the purpose of pilgrimage in different faiths. Other pupils could explain the Covenant as a promise to God and relate it to their own lives. These show deepening pupil capacity to reflect and share their thoughts and opinions. Peace ambassadors in each class support RE and personal spirituality. Ethical and moral questions encourage respect for difference and diversity, 'My faith tells me to be grateful for what I have so I don't mind less'. Their understanding and knowledge of world faiths is developing, alongside their awareness of Christianity as a world-wide faith.

Headteacher	Zaheda Adam
Inspector's name and number	Pat George 845