

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bickerstaffe Voluntary Controlled Church of England School			
Address	Hall Lane, Bickerstaffe, Ormskirk, Lancashire. L39 0EH		
Date of inspection	14 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Liverpool	URN	119381

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

Bickerstaffe is a primary school with 82 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2017.

The school's Christian vision

'Love life, love learning, love each other.' We ensure today's children embrace and share God's love, in order to live life in all its fullness, so that they can blossom in tomorrow's world. 'Love each other as I have loved you.' John 15:12

Key findings

- The clear Christian vision permeates all aspects of the school's daily life and is understood by all members of the community. This vision, driven through the passionate leadership of the headteacher, provides impressive support for mental health and wellbeing. Consequently pupils and staff feel they are cared for well. The inclusive nature of the school enables its pupils to flourish.
- A strong partnership exists between school and the local church. This enables its vision to be reflected in the community it serves. The partnership is mutually beneficial for pupils and adults.
- Collective worship is a key way in which the inclusive vision is shared. It enables all members of the school community to develop spiritually through spontaneous prayer and time for reflection.
- The effective leadership of collective worship and religious education (RE) enables all members of the school community to develop their skills of enquiry. The RE curriculum supports pupils in asking big questions.
- The committed governing body support the school well. However, they have not received training for their roles in a church school. This means that they do not always contribute fully to evaluating the school as a church school.

Areas for development

- To provide training for governors regarding their role in a church school. This is to enable them to monitor and evaluate the school as a church school more effectively.
- To develop teaching of diverse faiths in RE. This is to ensure that pupils revisit and build on prior learning, in order to enhance their understanding of diversity.
- To continue to support staff in embedding the recently developed curriculum for RE, in order to enhance pupils' understanding of important Christian beliefs.

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

Bickerstaffe is an inclusive school where staff, pupils, parents and governors feel supported through the application of the clear Christian vision. It is known in the community as 'a small school with a big heart'. The school has recently revisited its vision and values. These clearly express the way the school seeks to serve its community. The vision expresses the determination to offer love, encouragement and support to everyone. There is a powerful sense of community within the school. There is a very strong partnership with the church which is seen as mutually beneficial. Many children feel part of the local church community and support events with enthusiasm. This includes attending special Sunday services throughout the year. Members of the church love supporting school, for example, through the 'knit and natter' club.

The school's support for the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is a strength. It relates directly to the school's Christian vision and its commitment to love all members of the community. A rich variety of creative strategies are in place to support vulnerable pupils, many of whom find it difficult, at times, to access learning. The sensory tent offers pupils experiencing stress a place of security. They say that the darkness helps them to relax and be ready to go back to class. Meditation is used daily and pupils report that 'it helps them to calm down'. Some say they can 'ask God to help put things right'. The school dog is a valuable resource to support well-being. He is appreciated by pupils and staff alike. Pupils are able to spend time with him as a reward or when they need some time away from the classroom.

The Christian vision shapes the way decisions are made regarding the curriculum, extended learning and the nurture of all stakeholders. The Christian vision for a school where pupils love learning has a positive impact on progress. All pupils make demonstrable progress despite high levels of mobility. Provision for those with additional learning or personal needs and those who are vulnerable is strong. The Christian vision for a loving community drives investment in this area. The caring and supportive work of the school ensures that the needs of families and individuals are quickly identified and met. Parents feel very much included in their child's education and therefore feel welcomed in school.

The school involves itself in a variety of charity work. This valuable work supports pupils in developing a global perspective through the variety of charities that they support. Pupils who have left the school continue to support charities as a result of what they have learnt in previous years.

The leaders and staff of the school demonstrate commitment to their vision by attending relevant, diocesan-led training. The headteacher and RE leader have utilised learning from recently completed courses. This training drives further improvements that benefit both pupils and staff. Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the school, taking into account the views of groups across the community. Although self-evaluation informs school improvement, monitoring of collective worship is not yet systematic or rigorous. The governors have yet to complete relevant training for church school education and therefore do not always monitor with rigour and understanding.

Collective worship is invitational and reflects the school's Christian vision. It provides a place for all to consider their lives and the needs of others. One staff member said collective worship 'helps them to know that God loves you whatever'. Pupils participate in collective worship and the Worship Wonders group are involved in planning, monitoring and evaluation. Worship helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of important Christian beliefs about God. The strong partnership with the local church enriches worship through the contribution of clergy and the congregation. Church members say they enjoy celebrating the Eucharist each month with the school community. The peace garden supports pupils' spiritual development effectively as pupils use this area to reflect and pray.

The lighting of a candle provides a focus for collective worship. This allows the community time to reflect on beliefs about the presence of God as worship begins. Many pupils are able to explain its symbolism as 'representing Jesus, the light of the world.' Invitational prayer and reflection play an important part in the life of the school. Pupils understand the value and importance of prayer, which enhances their spiritual development. As a result, many pupils appreciate opportunities to write their own prayers and make good use of reflection

areas in classrooms.

The new RE curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation. Pupils are able to express their ideas creatively through art and responded thoughtfully during an RE lesson exploring Jesus as the light of the world. The creative approach to RE allows all pupils, including those with individual needs, to have a safe place to discuss and debate big questions. RE is given a high profile within the school. A recently developed assessment system is providing sound support for pupils' progress.

The RE leader has shared good practice and pedagogy within the school. Statutory obligations for RE are met and RE is in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Recent developments have greatly improved the quality of teaching about Christianity, although these are not yet embedded. The school makes good use of visitors to enhance learning about different faiths and cultures. A parent and member of staff have both shared aspects of their own religion with pupils. However, the depth of knowledge and understanding of other religions is limited. Teaching about different faiths does not make sufficient impact on pupils to be memorable. Planning does not support coherent progression in the teaching of faiths other than Christianity.

This inclusive school strives to exemplify their Christian vision daily. They are clearly driven to 'ensure that today's children embrace and share God's love in order to live life in all its fullness, so that they can blossom in tomorrow's world'.

Headteacher	Maggie Teachen
Inspector	Anna Brooksbank
Quality Assurance	Carol Berry (inspector number 324)