

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bathwick St Mary Church School

Address	Darlington Road, Bath, BA2 6NN		
Date of inspection	27 February 2019	Status of school	Primary Academy Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust
Diocese	Bath and Wells	URN	145515

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	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Bathwick St Mary's is a primary school with 223 pupils. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. The school became part of the diocese of Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust (BWMAT) in March 2018, along with other local schools. Currently there are pupils from 19 different countries at the school.

The school's Christian vision

'Achieving excellence through the pursuit of good.' This is linked to John 10:10 'I have come that all may have life, life in all its fullness.'

Pupils develop an understanding of the vision and associated values through exploring the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10

Key findings

- The school's highly distinctive Christian vision has created an inspirational culture of very high aspirations which has enabled pupils to flourish and achieve exceptional standards of attainment.
- The vision and associated values have shaped a strong sense of being a family. The vision has transformed pupils' attitudes so they treat one another with a high degree of dignity and respect.
- The school has created an innovative curriculum which excites pupils in their learning. The school shares their excellent practice with others in the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust. However, opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of global issues are less well established.
- Pupils are inspired by religious education (RE) and achieve outstanding standards and understand the relevance that Christianity can have for their daily lives.
- High quality resources are expertly used to develop pupils' emotional and social skills, raising aspirations of vulnerable pupils so they make similar progress to their peers and achieving excellence.

Areas for development

- Deepen the relationship with the school's link church in Zambia so pupils have greater opportunities to explore disadvantage and exploitation in global communities.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship so they can develop their talents and increase their sense of ownership in worship.

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

The distinctive Christian vision has been fundamental in creating an inspirational culture of aspiration which has enabled pupils to flourish. Leaders confidently articulate a deep understanding of biblical principles underpinning the vision. They explain how each pupil is special and made in the image of God. Leaders perceive their role as showing God's love through providing a rich curriculum so each, 'can have life in all its fullness'. The community has high expectations for pupils to succeed academically. The school's vision mirrors this and pupils' talents are fully nurtured and celebrated. Pupils' attainment is impressive, with the vast majority of pupils achieving consistently above national averages. Able pupils excel. Vulnerable pupils, excellently supported and championed make similar progress to their peers. Expert use of high quality resources enable gaps to be identified in pupils' social and emotional development. Leaders are fervent and dedicated to the work of a church school. The vision inspires leaders to make bold decisions, for example, prioritising admission places for vulnerable pupils. This rich affirming culture raises pupils' self-confidence enabling them to overcome barriers. Skilled staff make a transformational difference to pupils' attitudes and self-confidence. Pupils understand the significance of the vision as it is creatively woven into learning so pupils talk about how the vision inspires them. Pupils make informed links to the parable of the Good Samaritan which represents the vision. They talk about how the vision makes a difference to their thinking and provides a model for their actions. Pupils are passionate about making a difference for others. A rich diversity of clubs encourages pupils to try new activities and develop all of their God-given talents. Music flourishes at the school which raises pupils' self-esteem.

Leaders made bold decisions to create an innovative curriculum which inspires and enthuses learners. Teachers give pupils freedom to take greater responsibility for their learning and pupils relish this. They present their learning in creative ways using videos, photos, drama and dance. Staff know pupils' talents well and successfully challenge them to consider more demanding questions enabling them to make greater progress. Big questions, drawn from the RE topic, are explored across different subjects so the relevance of RE to daily life is extended. Pupils articulate how these discussions transform their thinking. Subject leaders have reviewed their curriculum in the light of the vision and made astute changes. For example, the PE leader has developed sessions for exercise linked to times of calm which promotes spirituality. This encourages pupils to think how they can achieve excellence. A high quality relationship with the diocese and BWMAT means they recognise the excellent practice and use the school to model it.

The vision makes a tangible difference to the school community and the sense of being a family. Pupils attribute the quality of their behaviour to the vision and values. Older pupils recognise their role as models for the vision. Most older pupils volunteer to become 'Blue Hats' and write letters to explain what this means for them. These pupils support peers at break-times resolving minor disputes. Pupils understand the importance of forgiveness and how it allows them to make a fresh start. The degree of respect and dignity pupils show one another is a particular strength. The school's work has had a transformational impact on pupils' attitudes to those of different races, belief and gender. This has enabled pupils to feel valued and important, reflecting leaders' exceptional understanding of Valuing all God's children report. Innovative International weeks, led by pupils who come from these 19 different countries, deepen pupils' understanding of other cultures. The vision inspires pupils to show their compassion as excellent advocates for change. An outstanding example is where pupils creatively produced experiences for peers so they could understand what it was like to sleep outdoors during winter. This is linked to their ongoing work with the Bath homeless project. Links with a church in Zambia have extended pupils' understanding of disadvantage and exploitation globally. However, this work is not fully developed.

Staff have a well-developed understanding of spirituality which has a prominent role in school life. Pupils have a rich variety of opportunities to reflect. The addition of a spiritual garden has enhanced this, enabling pupils to work collaboratively and consider the wonders of God's world. 'Relax' times allow pupils to be calm and make a valuable contribution to mental health. Governors are knowledgeable and dedicated to the vision and work of a church school. An exceptionally detailed monitoring plan ensures all aspects are regularly considered and action taken for improvements. Governors have shared their expertise by working in partnership and supporting other governors. This has developed governors' practice in other schools, enabling excellent practice to be introduced. Staff are highly valued and enabled to flourish. Teacher professional development is strongly fostered by support for local members of the community to acquire qualified teacher status in this strongly nurturing school.

Collective worship is characterised by the invitational approach which enables pupils with a range of faiths and beliefs to respond with integrity. Worship is central to the daily life of the school. Some pupils plan, lead or contribute to worship. However, this opportunity is not given to all, so they do not feel they have ownership and responsibility. The school council evaluates worship providing feedback to leaders. This has led to improvements such as more opportunities for drama. Pupils have designed class reflection spaces which some find helpful. There are a number of opportunities to write prayers, shared in school and church and many pupils find prayer helpful to be calm, reflect or think through problems. The Eucharist is celebrated in school each term. Pupils have a good understanding of its importance for Christians and participate in different ways. The church makes a substantial contribution to school life and worship notably through celebrating the main Christian festivals and dedicated governors. The school enriches the worship in church through drama and music.

The innovative approaches to RE enable pupils to explore questions of meaning and purpose which inspires them. They excel in discussions using the higher order thinking skills confidently. They articulate ideas with exceptional clarity and show a depth of understanding of religious vocabulary which is well beyond what is expected for their age. Pupils who claim to have no religious affiliation recognise the contribution which Christianity can have for their daily lives. They perceive how RE challenges them, yet provides a safe space to verbalise and refine ideas. Assessment procedures are very rigorous and well established with agreed criteria which enables judgements to be internally moderated and by the diocese.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

Religious education is excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is very high with quality experiences consistently provided. Teachers' questioning is a strength and challenges pupils to deepen their understanding. All pupils explore aspects of RE related to the theme that interests them. Standards of attainment have been consistently high for a number of years. Last year over 70% of pupils achieved the higher levels, comparable to attainment in the other core subjects. The RE leader tracks the progress of vulnerable pupils enabling them to make similar progress and achieve the highest standards.

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