

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bathford Church School			
Address	Dovers Park, Bathford, Somerset, BA1 7UB		
Date of inspection	06/February/2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary academy part of Bath and Wells Multi Academy trust.
Diocese / Methodist District	Bath and Wells	URN	145582

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

School context

Bathford Church school is a primary academy with 190 students on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and very 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 is in line with national averages. The school became part of the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust in April 2018. There has been a new governing board since September 2018.

The school's Christian vision

'Grow, Care, Serve, Share'

This vision is underpinned by biblical teaching consisting of four quote from the Gospels, for example 'love one another (John 13:34). This vision is shared with the local church underlining the strength of their relationship.

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision clearly frames the way that it lives and works. It is a school where all pupils flourish. The impact of this is in an exceptionally strong sense of inclusion and welcome.
- The vision and its associated values create deep and mutually beneficial relationships between children, staff, and parents. Pupils leave the school with an ability to be resilient and develop positive, respectful relationships with others. Parents stress the invitational nature of the school and all adults and children can talk about the impact the vision and values have on their lives. Whilst this unites the local community, there is potential for the vision to enable pupils to develop a wider global awareness.
- The church has provided good support for governors to unpack the vision and, as a result, governors also have a good understanding of what it means to be a church school. Most of the governors are new in post, and therefore have not fully developed systems to monitor the school's Christian character.
- Collective worship is valued by all members of the school community. It benefits from very practical support from the local church. However, the work of the ethos committee is still at an early stage and pupils are not yet playing a full role in planning and leading worship.

Areas for development

- Provide more opportunities for children to be worship leaders actively planning and delivering acts of collective worship and by exploring different structures for worship.
- Review the monitoring and evaluation schedule to ensure that governors are actively engaged in monitoring the effectiveness of the school as a church school.
- Develop a coherent shared understanding of spirituality across the school looking at planned opportunities for 'big questions' in order for pupils to develop a wider global awareness.

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 school's distinctive vision 'Grow, Care, Serve, Share' permeates every aspect of school life. The vision clearly frames the purpose of the school, is explicitly mentioned in most school policies, and is well understood by everyone. Pupils can describe why it is important to 'care' or 'share' using examples from biblical teaching. Members of the school's eco council clearly link their work with how they are helping the school to 'grow' and 'care' for the world. Leaders are passionate in their belief that everyone in the school should flourish, and as a result, adults and pupils thrive at the school. Behaviour is excellent and underpinned by the school's vision. Parents describe the impact of this when discussing how behaviour points are allocated when a pupil displays an aspect of the vision. Academic standards are consistently high, and the school has an exceptionally good understanding of its vulnerable pupils. Flowing from its vision, the school makes bold and highly effective choices to target its resources towards those with additional needs. Leaders are unwavering in their ambition to see every child included in the life of the school, and to succeed. The result is a culture of welcome and inclusion where relationships are extremely strong. A recent collective worship clearly made this link when the head teacher washed the feet of a pupil to bring to life the biblical underpinning of 'serve', where Jesus washed the feet of a disciple. Parents speak warmly of how Year six pupils care for their 'reading partners' and develop a sense of care and responsibility that lasts beyond the school gate. Staff and governors describe how pupils leave the school 'living out the values' and with a highly developed sense of compassion and empathy for others. The school's recent transition to being part of the local Diocesan academy trust was managed with support from governors, staff and the local church. As a result it has been highly successful, with the trust clearly recognising the school's distinctive vision and its strengths in relationships.

The school's vision develops a strong moral sense in both pupils and adults. Parents highly value the recent development of questions linked to the values in the school newsletter. They speak of powerful conversations at home about 'peace' and can see an impact in children's behaviour out of school. Members of the ethos committee make clear links between values and Christian teaching. They described being peaceful as 'seeing both sides of the story – not taking sides.' Further, they could ground this in the teaching of Jesus to 'love your enemy'. The school is deeply linked into the surrounding village community. Relationships with the local church are extremely strong. Governors and parents spoke about the impact of the harvest festival where pupils go to homes of older people in the village to distribute food as living out the vision and cementing the school as a pivotal part of the community. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to look at global issues of disadvantage and see themselves as agents of change.

The curriculum excites pupils and enables them to flourish academically. Opportunities are given for them to reflect deeply. For example, Year six pupils produced thoughtful work on Martin Luther King and his call to peaceful protest which was shared with parents in a Friday assembly. A recent discussion about the role of social media showed children are able to explore ethical issues and disagree well. A recent service in the local church led by a Rabbi commemorating the burial of Jewish refugees enabled children to reflect on questions of war and peace. Religious Education is well taught, and the school reflects the statement of entitlement by following the locally agreed syllabus and beginning to embed the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to support its teaching. As a result, pupils have opportunities to follow enquiries and develop their own opinions. This was seen in a Year one lesson where children were familiar with the terms 'Old' and 'New' Testament. Further, in Year six, pupils debated gender stereotyping and Hindu goddesses. However, the school does not yet have a consistently shared understanding of spirituality. As a result, opportunities are missed within the curriculum for pupils to look globally. This means they do not consistently think beyond the natural world to issues of disadvantage and injustice in other countries.

The wellbeing of staff and pupils is fundamental to the life of the school and a key way in which its vision is lived out. The school has invested in staff to become trained in mental health and wellbeing, and the 'Thrive' programme is used throughout the school and for any child the school feels could have extra support. Leaders listen and act on feedback. Teaching assistants speak extremely positively about recent changes the school has made to ensure good communication. The school is committed to developing future leaders and creatively utilises the academy trusts resources to do this. The school enacts its vision to serve in its generosity to another local school by providing it with staff expertise and time to assist its improvement plans. Pupils feel safe in school, and ethos committee members could describe how their anti-bullying charter is underpinned by the teaching of Jesus to 'treat each other as you would like to be treated'. It is a school where children understand that they can all be different, but all have dignity and value. This can be seen in lessons where children with additional needs are an integral part of the class.

The governing board is relatively new, but thanks to support from leaders and the local church, has begun to develop its understanding of leading a church school. The vicar has assisted in this by leading a series of reflections based on the vision. As a result, governors feel that the vision gives them grounding and focus by which to monitor the effectiveness of the school. They have a clear sense of where the school is going. However, monitoring systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's Christian vision not yet embedded. The school development plan does not explicitly link priorities to the vision. Consequently, governors do not have a robust process to monitor the school as a church school.

Collective worship or 'koinonia' is highly valued by all. Parents speak enthusiastically about its impact on their children. Parental attendance at the 'Friday assembly' is always high. The annual 're-live Easter' event is exceptionally powerful, described by the vicar as 'heart stoppingly moving'. The entire school and church community come together to re-enact the Easter events. Pupils and parents spoke enthusiastically of its impact on them. The local parish church has a very strong commitment to the school, with members coming in weekly to lead worship. The ethos committee has had some impact and is working with the school to create a tree in the school foyer with leaves representing the school values. However, although pupils read prayers and lead dances in collective worship, their opportunities to participate further are limited. Pupils are not consistently planning and leading acts of worship themselves.

All members of the school community agree that the school's vision is lived out daily. They strongly feel that, although distinctively Christian, this vision is inclusive of all faiths and none.

Headteacher/Executive principal/Head of school	Karen Sykes
Inspector's name and number	Adam Robertson