

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Bentley Heath Church of England Primary Academy | | | |
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| Address | Widney Close, Bentley Heath, Solihull, Birmingham B93 9AS | | |
| Date of inspection | 10 February 2020 | Status of school | Stand-alone Academy inspected as VC |
| Diocese | Birmingham | URN | 140462 |

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| 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 | Excellent |

School context

Bentley Heath is a primary school with 440 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 below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. Bentley Heath is a stand-alone academy. St James Church shares its buildings. At the time of the inspection an acting headteacher was in post, due to the ill-health of the headteacher.

The school's Christian vision

Our school vision, 'Rooted in Jesus and Fruitful in Mission and Service', has a living, Christian foundation, following the teaching of Jesus. Our school values are at the core of everything we do. They underpin daily life and help us to live out Jesus' command to 'Love one another'. (John 15:12)

Key findings

- Worship is a vital part of school life. As the links with the Church are very strong, the school vision has closely developed from the Church vision. Consequently, the vision and values are central to worship. They are making a difference to the school family, effectively tending and feeding their spiritual lives..
- Trustees are committed to driving the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Systems and structures are in place to regularly monitor school improvement. Monitoring of religious education (RE) and worship has recently been formalised to strengthen provision. However, these approaches are not yet fully rooted.
- The strong, Christian leadership of the acting headteacher in partnership with the staff and trustees, has built a united team approach. Together, they have successfully formulated an effective school vision, which has built on the well-established Christian values, previously introduced by the headteacher. Priorities are clearly in place to further grow the vision. However, there has been insufficient time to firmly plant these.
- Pupils feel loved and nurtured by the school. They are keen to engage with all aspects of school life, proudly celebrating the ways they support others less fortunate than themselves, through their projects. They are very excited to expand their responsibilities through the newly formed worship council.
- The school actively networks with the diocese and the 'Faith and Belief Forum' to explore diversity, culture and religion. This is effectively enabling pupils to develop an understanding of global faiths.

Areas for development

- Grow the work that has been done to firmly plant the vision so that, in partnership with the school values, it empowers all to live out Jesus' command to 'love one another'.
- Facilitate the work of the pupils as a worship council and worship leaders to enable them to be fruitful in living out the Christian vision and values, through the service they provide.
- Review the monitoring timetable to ensure foundation trustees regularly monitor RE, worship and the impact of the vision and values, to enable all members of the school to flourish and grow.

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 has been on a very challenging journey over the past year. Through the recent strong, Christian leadership of the acting headteacher, in partnership with the Trustees and staff the team spirit has prevailed. The sense of unity of purpose grows out of the shared vision and values, which commission all to 'love one another', rooted in Jesus (John 15:12). Everything is in place to enable the previous preparation work, which established the roots, to be fed and to grow. The vision has developed, grafted from the Church vision. All members of the school family are celebrated as unique children of God, to be nurtured and tended, enabling them to flourish. As a result, pupils and staff enjoy belonging to this school. Relationships are close and sustained through clear Christian values, strengthened through the vision. This effectively binds all aspects of the school's curriculum together in support of the whole child. 'Star of the week' awards celebrate pupils whose behaviour reflects the Christian values in action. 'ACE pupil' awards are given to one of the pupils, selected by their peers, for 'always' living out those values. In these ways, school leaders reinforce how, in the words of one of the pupils, 'Jesus was good and if we follow our values we will get more like him.' Standards of behaviour and attendance are high. Staff are supported in keeping work and life in balance. Consequently, through a focus on sustaining good mental health there is a sense of joy and positivity underpinning daily life. Partnerships with parents are appreciated, together with the open-door invitations to be closely involved with all aspects of school. As a result, they are very positive about the school and the ways its vision and values are influencing their children.

This school is unique in having St James' Church on site. Consequently, the link between the Church and the vicar is very strong. Collective worship is at its heart, inclusively reinforcing the importance of the school vision and values daily. Worship experiences offered are rich and varied. The vicar leads worship every Monday. Parents are also invited to participate in Friday worship, led by the acting headteacher. Worship is fun and thought provoking. Pupils emphasise how much they enjoy worship. The pupil worship leaders and worship council members are new to their roles. They are being challenged to lead, to pray and to guide their friends spiritually. 'We are growing in confidence since our training in the Summer. When we lead the whole school, we have to act as teachers helping everyone to learn more about Jesus.' School leaders are committed to growing the work of the pupils as a worship council and worship leaders. Plans are in place to enable them to be fruitful in living out the Christian vision and values in worship. However, their roles are not yet embedded and need time to flourish. Prayer and reflection during worship challenges everyone to apply the focus value throughout the day. Singing, the school choir and learning from the Bible are strengths. Consequently, worship is very effective in enabling pupils to grow in their understanding of Anglican tradition. There are prayer stations in each classroom and a 'prayer week' to reinforce the importance of this focus in their spiritual journey. Trustees are committed to driving the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Systems and structures are in place to regularly monitor school improvement. Monitoring of RE and worship has recently been formalised to strengthen provision. However, these approaches are not yet fully rooted to ensure the impact of RE, worship and vision and values is understood.

RE is well led and a popular subject in school which follows the Solihull Agreed Syllabus. There are close links with the diocese. Currently, the shared priority is to review assessment procedures in RE, to refine and strengthen current practice. Learning outcomes in RE are in line with other subjects. The school has also established effective networks with the 'Faith and Belief Forum'. Pairs of schools come together to explore diversity, culture, faith and religion. Through these relationships the school is enabling pupils to grow an understanding of world faiths. Visits and visitors enrich these experiences, providing wider sources of information to understand Christianity as a global faith. As a result, pupils of all faiths are inspired to talk about their belief and share their hopes for the future.

The curriculum is rich and vibrant. It effectively enables pupils to grow holistically in all aspects of their lives. Inspirational experiences broaden the pupils' horizons. For example, the 'Prayer Garden', which was dedicated by the Bishop, is the setting for special times, such as Remembrance. Jesus' family tree and individual prayer stones enrich these spiritual experiences. Outdoor learning activities also take place focusing on God as the creator. Pupils are empowered through the curriculum to live out their vision and values, to serve by loving one another. They do this through fund raising activities, to support charities locally and globally. They are being

guided to look closely, 'to see God in the ordinary of our lives'. Pupils of all abilities are experiencing success through being part of this caring, Christian school. The school knows them and enables them to accelerate their progress through targeted support and quality teaching. As a result, their learning achievements place them in the top 20% of schools nationally. Their awareness of others less fortunate than themselves is just one example of how they are raising their social awareness. They are learning to break down barriers and grow as responsible young citizens following in the footsteps of Jesus.

The acting headteacher and vicar know the school well. They have worked closely together with the staff and other trustees to establish the vision and to promote its distinctiveness. Growing partnerships with other schools and the wider community highlights the vision and values in action. They are striving together to be, 'Rooted in Jesus and Fruitful in Mission and Service', to others locally and globally. Their distinctive Christian foundation underpins daily life and helps them to flourish, whilst living out Jesus' teaching to 'Love one another'.

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| Headteacher Acting Headteacher | Andrew Williams Stephen Hawke |
| Inspector's name and number | Marianne Phillips 586 |