

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Brailes Church of England Primary School

Address	Lower Brailes, Banbury, Warwickshire OX15 5AP		
Date of inspection	20/11/2018	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	Coventry	URN	125626

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
Collective worship gives pupils a sense of their place in the world. Prayer and reflection make a major contribution to both adults and pupils. Pupils contribute to acts of worship and are eager to take on greater leadership.		

School context

Brailes Church of England School is a smaller than average rural primary school with 70 pupils roll, and an additional 16 children in the Nursery. Brailes has very low levels of religious and cultural diversity and there are no pupils who 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 above national averages. The school joined the Stour Federation Partnership in September 2015. The associate headteacher is in school for four days a week, and the executive headteacher is there for one day a week.

The school's Christian vision

'Believing in ourselves, each other and the light of God; Belonging and lighting the way for a united family; Aspiring to be the light for ourselves, each other and our world.

'I am the light of the world... Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.'
John 8:12'

Key findings

- The associate headteacher, ably supported by the executive headteacher, is a shining example of Christian leadership in action
- Every child is valued and cherished as a child of God through the compassionate pastoral care generously offered by all members of the school community
- Partnerships between the school and families are highly valued and enable all to flourish in a spirit of mutual respect
- The vision and associated values have a profound impact on the wellbeing of the whole school community, ensuring that all live in the light, have a sense of self-belief and a strong sense of belonging
- RE is accorded a high status and the subject is instrumental in enabling both adults and pupils to live well together

Areas for development

- Apply the theologically rooted vision in policies and curriculum planning so that they more explicitly deliver the vision
- Increase opportunities for pupils of all ages to independently plan and lead acts of collective worship and so strengthen the spiritual development of all ages within this united family
- Increase leadership capacity for RE to develop future leaders of Church schools

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

Rooted in a clear theological Christian narrative the school's vision, together with its associated values, promotes life in all its fullness. Governors are closely involved in its development. Due to this, and diocesan training, the leadership issue from the previous inspection has been addressed. Governors work with leaders in monitoring standards and the spiritual dimension of the school. Courageous advocacy has been displayed in forming a partnership with two non-church schools. It is testament to the governors and leaders that Brailes has nevertheless retained its Christian distinctiveness. This is due to sound strategic thinking around policies and plans that may be shared across the schools, and those that need to be exclusive to Brailes. The associate headteacher is a passionate and inspirational leader. Her deep understanding of Brailes' Christian character lights the path ahead so others are clear where Jesus shines a light on their lives.

The Christian vision and values shape the content of the improvement plan, resulting in a broad, rich curriculum enabling all to flourish. Although policies and curriculum plans refer to the theologically rooted vision, it is not clear how that vision of belonging and believing is delivered through specific actions.

Partnerships with the local church and diocese are strong. The diocesan 'Cross of Nails' pilgrimage promotes forgiveness, reconciliation and living well together. Coventry Cathedral's 'massive mini-church' project strengthens belonging in terms of being part of a wider Christian community. The vicar provides good support and leads weekly worship. Training on school worship has enabled him to develop his role in evaluating its impact. Church and school links are mutually beneficial. This may be seen in the school's St George's club participating in family worship services and making 'welcome' cushions, bringing together school, church and wider community.

Staff actively promote the Christian vision in meeting pupils' needs. Mental health, wellbeing and academic attainment are equally valued. Systems are in place to identify and provide support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. Support is in place from the nursery upwards because 'every single child matters here'. Successful partnerships are forged with families. Parents speak positively about church worship, the caring ethos of the school and the positive impact this has. It is clear that the school seeks to lighten the lives of those experiencing dark times. One parent commented that since transferring to Brailes, her child '... now believes in himself... and has flourished.' Parents feel the school is inclusive, commenting, '... my child is integrating well' and, 'You can approach the school before something becomes a real problem.'

The Christian vision is pivotal in enabling pupils develop hope and aspiration in '... aspiring to be the light for ourselves, each other and our world'. Prayer spaces, class key texts and Christianity in Action awards (which celebrate pupils living out the vision), include ways that pupils are given opportunities to reflect on 'big questions' and make positive choices. Pupils actively instigate charity projects that they feel passionately about. A pupil was motivated to organise an appeal for the Northern Nigeria cataract eye hospital saying, 'It made us really proud to do that.' Moral development is promoted through making connections between Bible stories and pupils' lives. For example, The Good Samaritan '... teaches us you can still help even if you don't like each other'.

The Christian vision and associated values underpin relationships at all levels. Staff are exemplary role models. Pupils are encouraged to live well together through social interactions such as 'democracy votes', where they learn to 'disagree well', and by taking responsibility. Older pupils look after younger ones at lunchtime and playtime. A caring, Christian culture ensures all are treated with dignity and respect, resulting in everyone feeling valued: 'All are welcome here' and there are genuinely 'No outsiders'. Pupils are happy, hardworking and feel safe. As a result, attendance is above average and behaviour is very good. The school's Christian vision extends to staff. The rural dean provides valuable spiritual support for them. Consequently, adults also flourish because they are supported spiritually and emotionally as well as professionally.

Collective worship gives pupils a sense of their place in the world. They value prayer and reflection, 'Prayer helps me feel safe when I'm scared.' They appreciate that worship is invitational, '...I don't believe in God, but can still reflect.' Planning is based around the vision and values, Jesus' teachings and biblical stories. This strengthens pupils' understanding of the vision's relevance to their own lives. Pupils say collective worship teaches them how to 'be faithful and have a good life' and helps them 'think about how others are feeling'. Elements of Anglican worship are embedded, such as responses and appropriately coloured worship cloths. So, too, are opportunities for silence,

prayer and reflection, enabling pupils to appreciate different aspects of Christian worship. Hymns and resources enhance understanding of the vision, for example candles and singing 'Shine, Jesus, Shine' to illustrate Jesus, light of the world. Pupils articulate God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one, showing an understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God. Pupils' understanding of the Eucharist, however, is under-developed. The issue of enhancing the school environment for personal reflection to support pupil's spiritual development has been addressed. An outside reflection area has been constructed. Although this changes throughout the year, pupils are adamant that a cross should always remain to signify the love of God. Extending the role of pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate worship has been partly addressed. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to independently plan and lead it. Staff value the impact worship has on their own spiritual development, saying that it 'lifts' them.

Leadership of religious education is strong and the subject is given high priority. The RE lead undertakes diocesan training and supports staff by delivering in-house training across the partnership. As such, Brailles is shining light on its partner schools. The 'Understanding Christianity' resource is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' deepening knowledge of the Bible and the ability to critically engage with text. Cross-curricular links are made, developing pupils' thinking and reasoning skills when reflecting on 'big' philosophical questions such as how the world was made. They are aware of Christianity as a worldwide faith, 'You can be a Christian anywhere.' Other major world faiths are studied, promoting the school's Christian vision and values in developing understanding and respect for diversity, difference, and living well together. However, pupils have not had many opportunities to visit places of worship of different faiths. The school recognises this and has made plans to address it. Effective assessment processes are in place. Governors monitor RE by liaising with the leader, conducting surveys and speaking with pupils. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met.

Associate headteacher	Heather Childs
Inspector's name and number	Krysia Vickery (Allyson Taylor 768 QA)