THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

The Methodist Church

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Birkenshaw Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School				
Address	Station Lane, Birkenshaw, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD11 2JE			
Date of inspection	13 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary	
Diocese	Leeds		URN	107703

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**

Birkenshaw Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a primary school with 468 pupils on roll including the nursery. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. 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.

The school's Christian vision

"At Birkenshaw CE (C) Primary School, we care."

The Christian value of caring underpins all that we do at Birkenshaw CE (C) Primary School. All people involved within our school community feel cared for, while, at the same time, being caring themselves.

Inspired by Colossians 3, Verses 12 -17

'With great love and care, God chose you to be his people. So, live like God's people and show these qualities in your lives.'

Key findings

- The new Christian vision has been carefully chosen and refined to fully reflect the school's individuality and the community it serves. Although it is well known and lived out, it is not yet deeply embedded into all aspects of school life.
- The impact of the vision is a caring community which lives well together.
- The emphasis on the mental health and wellbeing of all and the opportunities for pupils to be courageous advocates through charitable giving are strengths of the school.
- Collective worship is valued by all members of the school community and impacts upon the spiritual development of adults and pupils. Pupil participation in collective worship is not well developed, however.
- Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) and achieve well, although the new RE curriculum has not been in place long enough for pupils to deepen their knowledge of Christianity and other faiths.

Areas for development

- Fully embed the vision in all areas of school life including policies and procedures.
- Further develop pupil involvement in collective worship so that they are routinely involved in planning, delivering and evaluating.
- Build on current provision in RE so that pupils are able to explore Christianity and other faiths at greater depth.

© The National Society (Church of England and Church in Wales) for the Promotion of Education 2018 // Updated August 2019

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 new Christian vision, introduced in September 2019, was meticulously chosen to reflect the Christian ethos already in place within the school and its relationships with the wider community. The Bible verses (Colossians 3: v 12 -17) which underpin the vision statement 'at Birkenshaw we care' were selected because they can be understood on many levels, interpreted in a way that is appropriate to the age of each child and applied to all aspects of the school. Leaders, including governors, have worked hard over a short period of time to ensure that the vision is implemented in this manner. The impact of this is a strong school community which lives well together. All care for each other and feel cared for. Parents hold the school in high regard and value the concern which is shown to them as well as to their children. The caring characteristics which their children develop provide a sound basis for their behaviour in later life. They attribute this to the Christian vision statement. Visual prompts around the school reinforce the message. A display board, referred to by pupils, provides clear examples of how the vision statement links to aspects of school life. An older pupil explained that caring about safety means making sure younger pupils wear high viz jackets when walking to church, for example. As a result, parents, pupils and adults know and understand the vision statement and what it means to them. The Bible verses and how they link to the vision statement are not as well known. As a result, the importance of the theological underpinning to the school's Christian distinctiveness is not yet fully understood. The school values, though clearly on display, are not widely referenced and have not been cohesively linked to the new vision.

School leaders are supported by committed governors who know the needs of the school and local community well. The SIAMS committee ensures that the school's Christian distinctiveness is regularly discussed. Foundation governors undertake joint monitoring of RE and collective worship with school leaders. Some joint evaluation has also taken place. Governors have taken strategic decisions which reflect the vision, including allocating funding for resources to assist with implementing the new RE curriculum. Staff development is prioritised, enabling adults to flourish in their professional roles. Some policies, particularly the behaviour policy, reflect the vision and values of the school. This is not so for all policies, however.

Although there has not been a member of the clergy in post for some time, the relationship between the church and the school has been sustained and developed. Members of the church, who share the school's vision, provide information, support and access to church resources. Regular school services held in church are enjoyed by parents, staff and pupils. They provide opportunities for those families who do not usually attend church to 'join in with thought provoking worship' and be part of the school and church family. The appointment of a new Priest in Charge has brought positive changes and new ways to show care to the local community. These have been enthusiastically welcomed.

The focus on wellbeing for adults and pupils, as an outworking of the vision, is a strength of the school. Leaders including governors have taken the strategic decision to employ a learning mentor. Their role is to remove barriers for pupils and their families and enable them to flourish emotionally as well as academically. As a result, achievement and progress, including for vulnerable pupils and those with special needs and disabilities (SEND), are improving and are at least in line with national standards. All are encouraged to be open about any mental health issues or anxieties they may be facing. Pupils, parents and staff value support and care they receive from others especially in times of difficulty.

RE is well led. The new RE curriculum is designed for pupils to take part through art, drama and music as well as written activities. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths has improved, but this is not yet secure. Pupils understand and respect the ideas of others through discussions of big questions. Diversity is celebrated. It is planned into the curriculum including RE and reinforced through displays around the school. Trips to places of worship, special events and visitors enrich pupils' experience of Christianity and other faiths.

Collective worship is important as a time when the school gathers as a family to enjoy the same worship experience. Pupils take part by writing and reading prayers and helping to tell Bible stories. Their involvement is

© The National Society (Church of England and Church in Wales) for the Promotion of Education 2019// Updated October 2019

not routine, however. Planning does not always make clear that collective worship is, although invitational, explicitly Christian in content. There is no formal way of gathering views and evaluating its impact. There is a shared understanding of spiritual development. Regular times for prayer and reflection through the day are welcomed by staff and pupils as a time to refresh mind and body. Opportunities for spiritual development - both planned and unplanned - are recognised and exploited. As a result, pupils have a greater awareness of themselves and their place in the world.

Pupils have many opportunities to demonstrate courageous advocacy. Their roles within the school, such as the care crew, demonstrate the vision and make a positive difference to the lives of others. The weekly 'care day bun sale' raises money for local, national and international causes. Charities are often personal to the school. Pupils sponsor a child in Tanzania through a church link, for example. Involvement with the local food bank, from making donations to packing food parcels, provides pupils with an understanding into the needs of others and how they can contribute to making a fairer world. Most significantly, the link with the Leeds Homeless Street Angels scheme through a member of staff is a powerful way in which they challenge injustice. Pupils and staff receive regular updates on how their actions have made a difference and are moved to raise money, donate goods and volunteer to help both through the school and independently of it. The scheme's Sunday outreach programme involves pupils and their families handing out hot meals. This is a practical example of the school's vision of caring for others.

Headteacher	Rebecca Martin
Inspector's name and number	Rachel Beeson 952

© The National Society (Church of England and Church in Wales) for the Promotion of Education 2019// Updated October 2019