



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bitterne Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Brownlow Avenue, Southampton, SO19 7BX

School vision
<p>Through our core Christian values of Love, Trust and Forgiveness, we celebrate, nurture and challenge each unique child in order that they are inspired by the world around them, have confidence to believe in themselves and in others and achieve the best they possibly can. Everyone at Bitterne CE Primary is determined to ensure that each child is safe, happy and learning well, without exception.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust systems are in place to monitor Church school effectiveness. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate, and the vision is used to drive improvement. • Leaders clearly articulate how biblical teachings on love, trust and forgiveness support the Christian vision. This is lived through both strategic decision making and day to day management. • The vision inspires a deeply nourishing culture where wellbeing is a priority. Consequently, people feel loved and flourish. • Collective worship is profoundly meaningful with opportunities for pupils to actively participate, lead, reflect and develop spiritually. • Effective leadership in religious education (RE) has revitalised the subject using an enquiry-based approach. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and demonstrate an impressive depth of understanding, particularly regarding Christianity.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance opportunities for pupils to learn about a breadth of diverse beliefs. This is to enrich their understanding of cultures which they may not otherwise encounter in their daily lives. • Deepen opportunities for pupils to explore Christian perspectives on poverty, injustice and disadvantage. This is to make the connection between the vision and global issues. • Embed opportunities for exploring spirituality more widely in learning. This is to enable pupils to flourish spiritually and to express this at an age-appropriate level.
Inspection findings
<p>Leaders confidently articulate the deeply embedded Christian vision and its biblical underpinning. It is lived out through long established values and integrated into every aspect of school life. The impact of the vision is seen in carefully considered decision making over key leadership appointments and curriculum choices. Accurate self-evaluation has given staff fresh aspirations to drive improvement. A strong relationship with the local diocese and parish church reinforces and enhances the school's Christian tradition. This fosters an environment where people are motivated by the vision and values. Pupils exhibit a deep understanding of this. They relate Bible stories to the</p>

concepts of love, trust, and forgiveness. As a result, they are inspired to make good choices. Displays further reinforce the vision, providing a clear sense of direction and unity.

Leaders are committed to providing rich and diverse learning experiences. Pupils reflect, question and show resilience. For example, a 'no room for racism' display portrays learning in this area. Pupils spontaneously write prayers to express their thoughts. There is a long-term project to create an outdoor area for spiritual contemplation. This is well underway, incorporating ideas from pupils. However, identified opportunities for both planned and spontaneous moments of spirituality are not embedded in the curriculum.

Worship serves as a cornerstone of spiritual flourishing. For example, the carrying of class lanterns promotes a real sense of reverence. Pupils appreciate the symbolism of bringing their lights together. They understand that they are part of a community where Jesus is the light of the world. Pupils are aware of the trinitarian nature of God. A worshipful atmosphere is created with joyful and inspiring singing. A strong culture of pupil-led worship exists which their peers find inspiring. They talk with enthusiasm about their role and spiritual growth. Empowered by ownership, pupils champion how this promotes their independence, confidence and resilience. Therefore, worship is made deeply meaningful and relevant. There is a thoughtful integration of the vision and Christian themes. Sign language ensures inclusion. Furthermore, there is active reflection on the impact of worship. Pupils consider its meaning to them and give examples of acting upon it. For example, in following the example of Jesus in treating others how they would like to be treated. Time is given to consider global issues affecting the environment and communities. This enhances pupils' spirituality and empathy. Leaders monitor the impact of collective worship through observation and conferencing. Effective evaluation identifies actions such as a recently formed pupil monitoring group. Parents appreciate the opportunity to share the experience of collective worship due to its impact on them. As an example, a group of parents are inspired to meet regularly to pray for the school. Due to renovations in the local church, services currently take place in school on a weekly basis. Thus, the school serves members of the local congregation and is at the heart of the worshipping community.

A culture where individuals are treated with respect and care is inspired by the vision. Leaders embrace restorative practices as part of the recently reviewed behaviour policy. As a result, individuals take responsibility for their actions and learn from their mistakes. This promotes a sense of fairness and equity. The alignment of school rules with Christian values reinforces the importance of treating others with love, trust and forgiveness. Leaders demonstrate a proactive approach to addressing the wellbeing of all. Regular surveys offer valuable insights into the needs of the school community. As a result, targeted adjustments are successfully implemented. This fosters trust and shows a genuine commitment to the welfare of all individuals. There is a palpable sense of pride and fulfilment amongst staff. This cultivates a positive atmosphere that translates into enhanced care. Leaders actively champion staff development, setting a positive example. Nurture groups provide targeted support for pupils, addressing their social and emotional needs in an inclusive environment.

The vision inspires a welcoming and caring atmosphere, both within the school and in the local community. This is demonstrated by its designation as a 'school of sanctuary'. A food bank highlights this commitment to supporting those in need. By actively engaging in initiatives that promote social justice, pupils learn and understand the importance of compassion. Special roles including the school council, planning worship, play leaders and prefects, empower pupils. By entrusting them with responsibilities, leaders cultivate a sense of ownership and agency. Consequently, pupils effect positive change within their immediate surroundings. For example, the play leaders resolve any occasional, minor disputes, fostering empathy and understanding. Actions extend into the community. One such example is the school council's 'Clean Air Project,' in

collaboration with the local authority. This exemplifies pupils' awareness of environmental issues. They take a proactive stance in addressing road safety and pollution concerns. They articulate the dangers posed by idling traffic and champion the importance of clean air. By leading initiatives on conservation, energy efficiency and recycling, pupils show a commitment to sustainability and responsibility. The school's link with a community abroad exemplifies its dedication to global citizenship. Pupils are engaged in a long-term fundraising project for a health centre in Rwanda. However, emphasis on exploring social challenges, with a Christian perspective, is at an early stage of development.

Leaders demonstrate a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to curriculum planning in RE. Effective monitoring ensures alignment with the agreed syllabus. This leads to actions such as the change to a specific RE book from a general topic book. This enhances the profile of RE as a core subject. There is a clear focus on teaching key Christian beliefs such as incarnation and the Trinity. Pupils ably engage in enquiry-based learning. In line with the vision for ambition, this fosters higher-level thinking skills. Additionally, artistic representations, such as the timeline of key biblical events, provide visual cues for concepts. Consequently, pupils articulate their understanding of these with confidence. Partnerships with external organisations, enrich the teaching of Christianity in lessons. This provides valuable resources and expertise, enhancing the depth and authenticity of RE. Curriculum planning effectively addresses Christian teachings and a balance of world faiths. However, pupils' experience of visitors or visits representing a variety of faith traditions, is at an early stage of development.

This very caring school is evidently much valued in its local community for living out its Christian vision and values. A recent change in leadership, combined with accurate self-evaluation has led to many positive developments. Leaders are consistently guided by their vision and are clear about their priorities going forward.

These inspection findings indicate that Bitterne Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	6 February 2024	URN	116339
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	414
Diocese	Portsmouth;Winchester		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Jen Johnson		
Chair	Amanda Humby		
Inspector	Amanda Brockway	No.	2214