

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School				
Address	Sedgley Road, Penn, Wolverhampton WV4 5LG			
Date of inspection	16 July 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary St Bartholomew's CE Multi Academy Trust	
Diocese	Lichfield	URN	104359	

Overall Judgement	Grade	Excellent
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

St Bartholomew's is a primary school within the St Bartholomew's Church of England academy trust (MAT). It has 403 pupils on roll. About half of pupils are of White British heritage with about a third of Indian background and a significant proportion of mixed White-Asian or mixed White-Caribbean backgrounds. 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

'Through faith we all learn and achieve together' For we 'walk by faith and not by sight' 2 Cor 5.7

Key findings

- The highly productive relationship between school and trust enables each to be Christ-centred, serving the common good. Leaders are transformational in raising expectations and standards across schools.
- Academic progress is consistently high and vulnerable pupils are given the best possible chances, due to the holistic and passionate promotion of the vision by inspirational staff.
- Due to the steadfast Christian leadership of the headteacher and assistant heads, the school vision results in a wonderfully caring and nurturing Christian environment where pastoral care is outstanding.
- Highly effective leadership of religious education (RE) results in excellent teaching, which enhances other aspects of the curriculum whilst promoting a deep understanding of diversity and respect.
- Spirituality is intrinsic to enabling pupils and adults to flourish. However, a shared understanding of spiritual growth is not understood by all members of the school community.

Area for development

- Extend the school's work in spirituality by developing ways to structure learners' spiritual experiences including in collective worship. Communicate this in a range of ways to the whole school community so everyone fully understands how spiritual growth is enabled and its impact upon the school community.

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

This school is a real treasure, significantly extending the mission of Lichfield Diocese. It is deeply Christian and foremost in serving the common good. The relationship with the MAT is mutually beneficial and precious, supporting local innovation. It enables each to take the strengths of a church school approach and expertly shape them to other school communities. The impact is rising standards and broadening opportunities on a wide scale. The appointment of a MAT-wide distinctive Christian character worker exemplifies their innovative work. Through their holistic Christ-centred approach, the school and MAT are hugely transformational in living the school's Christian vision and disseminating excellent practice.

The governors are exceptionally rigorous and effective. They ensure targeted improvements through evaluating practice, gathering pupil perceptions and in robust challenge and support. Strategic decision making is immersed in prayer so that discernment from a church school perspective is foremost. The school makes effective use of a diocesan adviser, deployed MAT-wide. His robust challenge ensures pupil opportunities are enhanced. St. Bartholomew's is highly responsive to evaluations and new methodology such as Christian mindfulness. It is extremely effective as a self-improving school.

As a priority, the headteacher successfully develops her staff as skilful church school leaders. Consequently, they influence schools significantly within and beyond the MAT. An example of this is utilising values to promote positive behaviour. Additionally, the school actively supports trainee teachers in understanding the distinctiveness of church schools. This inspires many trainees to seek out church school career opportunities, benefitting from best practice learned at St Bartholomew's.

Behaviour at the school is exemplary and rooted in Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation. The school's anti-bullying and safeguarding practices are proactive and most effective. They reflect the Church of England's guidance, 'Valuing All God's Children.' In faith, everyone learns and achieves together from a foundation where the example of Jesus is central. Each person is treated with dignity, care and respect. Leaders prioritise pupil and staff wellbeing ensuring pastoral care is outstanding. This is clearly evident in the way everyone enfolds members of the school with compassion and support in periods of grief, for example. The pastoral care of the gifted parish priest in such circumstances is also exceptional, impacting positively on the school. Families from a range of backgrounds and faiths readily turn to the school when support is needed. The immensely dedicated staff go the 'extra mile' to ensure each pupil is cherished as an individual child of God. This is reciprocal; staff feel embraced by the pupils who live out the example of Christ's unconditional love for all. This demonstrates the vision in action, as adults and pupils walk together in faith.

The physical learning environment is a shining example of a creative learning culture. It honours RE and the rich blessings of the church school dimension. The ethical, values-based curriculum allows pupils to explore themselves and their world by navigating the big questions of life. Pupils are inspired by the staff to be the best they can be, learning and achieving together. Consequently, academic progress and attainment are consistently high and for many pupils exceptional. Pupils with additional learning needs are well supported by highly skilled staff. They are flourishing and included in the life of the school. The school actively and commendably admits some pupils specifically in order to support their learning needs again living out its vision.

Pupils develop socially, morally, culturally and spiritually extremely well through wide curricular and extra-curricular provision. Consequently, their confidence and talents are ever-growing. Mindfulness approaches encourage attentiveness to self and others, often recorded in class reflection books. Pupils are attuned to instances of awe and wonder. Despite hugely positive outcomes, the school's spirituality work is not sufficiently refined so that all involved with the school understand the indicators of spiritual development.

Pupils are excited and challenged by highly effective RE. It reflects the Christian vision particularly well by giving pupils an awareness of how faiths can contribute to mutual flourishing. An example of this is the topic on Saint Nicholas where the Christian value of compassion is thoroughly considered. The inspirational and highly qualified RE leader ensures teachers' theological knowledge is robust. This means the high expectations of the school and of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource that they utilise, results in lessons of the highest standard. Further, the 'walk through the Bible' sessions enthrals pupils resulting in an impressive awareness of biblical accounts. Topics to widen multicultural understanding of Christianity, such as Christianity in Spain, represent good progress since the last inspection. As RE provision reflects the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement, pupils' religious literacy and RE skills are developing extremely well. Consequently, pupils speak with remarkable confidence, responding with maturity to ideas such as the feminine nature of God. Whilst pupils have a commendable awareness of Christianity, they do not explore all the world faiths studied with the same rigour. This limits for some a depth of understanding. The RE lead supports other schools to disseminate best practice ensuring pupils in various localities benefit from high quality RE and impacting positively upon community cohesion.

Collective worship contributes significantly to an understanding of the place of faith in learning and achieving together. This is because collective worship is inclusive and invitational. The lightening of the Trinity candle signals the invitation to this valued shared experience, that is central to the school's identity. The attitude of pupils to collective worship is mainly positive because high quality experiences enhances their spiritual development. However, collective worship is not yet excellent because differing spiritual approaches are insufficiently explored. Adults and pupils encounter the divine through experiences of music, prayer, stillness and reflection. They especially appreciate being led in song by the guitar, lifting their spirits. Anglican practices and an understanding of the church's year are significantly developed since the last inspection, so that children appreciate the rhythm of the church's seasons and festivals. Engagement in church in Pentecost and Remembrance experience days exemplify this. Further, starting each school year with a Eucharist highlights positive links between church and school. Pupils greatly value prayer. They are adept at extemporary prayer, skilfully drawing out key themes of the act of worship. There is a definite focus on Jesus' teaching in the Bible. Pupils and adults speak most convincingly how this focus shapes their lives for the good. The committed collective worship coordinator works with children, staff and governors to improve collective worship. She is well-trained and skilful working across the MAT to raise standards of collective worship in many schools and extending the invitation to walk by faith.

The school's Christian vision inspires the whole school community to engage in social action in their local, national and global communities. Pupils are encouraged to realise, in their relatively advantageous social context, their responsibility is to contribute positively to society. This is evident in the way pupils act as advocates for change in their support of the Wolverhampton refugee centre and of Christian Aid. The school's immensely productive work with the global neighbours' scheme means pupils are aware of worldwide social issues. With a strength of character to step out in faith, pupils leave this school highly motivated to make a positive difference to their world.

Headteacher	Rachael Kilmister
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598