

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bryn Offa Church of England Primary School

Address	Rockwell Lane, Pant, Oswestry, Shropshire. SY10 9QR		
Date of inspection	24 October 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	Lichfield	URN	123528

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

School context

Bryn Offa is a primary school with 140 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 well below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. There has been a significant change of staff and governors since the last inspection due to a variety of usual organisational reasons such as promotion.

The school's Christian vision

Excellence and Enjoyment. We aim to be the best we can be while always encouraging others.
We show care and respect to all in our local and wider community.
'Whatever you do, do it whole heartedly,' (Colossians 3:23).
'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,' (Philippians 4:13).

Key findings

- Pupils and adults flourish because the Christian vision and values drive the work of school leaders. Relationships are, therefore, strong and positive at all levels.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education (RE) because the skilful RE leader and thoughtful staff ensure a curriculum that is engaging and creative and which promotes pupils' respect for diversity.
- New governors and staff are not trained quickly enough to use the SIAMS schedule to drive school improvement and so the pace of improvement as a church school is not always as rapid as it should be.
- Pupils grow well spiritually through a range of quality experiences, especially those in the outdoors. However, approaches to spiritual growth are not sufficiently joined up limiting some of their potential.
- Prayer gives pupils and adults the strength to approach life whole heartedly. It successfully builds an understanding that their success is grounded in Christ who strengthens them.

Areas for development

- Ensure that all governors and staff are regularly trained to use the SIAMS schedule to drive school improvement and consider an aspect of the schedule at each governors' meeting as a priority.
- Shape all the school's environmental work into one joined up Christian, ethical and spiritual Bryn Offa approach that demonstrably prospers each of the seven strands of the SIAMS schedule.
- Work with the diocese to develop creative ways to express the school's approach to spirituality and its progression so that pupils and adults can articulate their own deepening spiritual journey.

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

Bryn Offa is a delightful school that lives its Christian foundation through a daily application of its vision and values. The school's twelve Christian values are held in high regard by all. The biblical verses central to the school's vision alongside values such as honesty and forgiveness shape school life.

The appointment of the new RE leader has re-focussed the school's efforts, supported by all staff and the effective diocesan advisor. The school's Christian vision is clearly embedded. Its ready articulation is now motivating the work of the school once more. Although the school has maintained many strengths since the last inspection, its development as a church school has lacked rigour and pace until last year. This is because the school has not trained new governors and staff with sufficient urgency in using the SIAMS schedule to drive the work of the school. With renewed energy in the last year, the school has worked hard on the areas for development from the last inspection, resulting in progress. Policies increasingly reflect the unique role of the school's vision and values in ensuring children and adults thrive. However, awareness of wider Church of England expectations such as, 'Valuing All God's Children' is not as high profile as they ought to be.

Bryn Offa's broad and balanced curriculum, both in the classroom and outside, ensures that pupils are developing a 'have a go' mentality, enhanced by specific 'growth mindset' strategies used in some classrooms. Arising from the Christian vision, these can-do expectations are developing pupils' positive approaches to learning and relationships. Consequently, most pupils accept the challenge of new things and are persevering whole-heartedly towards realising their aspirations. Pupils interpret the biblical verses from Colossians and Philippians as showing anyone can achieve anything. The strong focus on the arts unfolds pupils' creativity and expression, significantly enhancing spiritual development. Further, as one pupil commented, the arts along with RE helps them to think out of the box and manage situations that are not well defined. The curriculum enables pupils to feel safe when disagreeing. They are willing to explore each other's points of view with respect and honesty and treat each other with dignity. Consequently, pupil behaviour is considerate and of a high standard. Pupils attain well at Bryn Offa. Most pupils make appropriate progress. Accelerating progress is now happening because staff are clear that the Christian vision of the school really does nurture potential. Excellence and enjoyment go hand-in-hand so that pupils flourish.

Staff intentionally place spiritual growth at the heart of learning experiences. This is resulting in pupils whose confidence and talents are ever-growing. They are attuned to awe and wonder. Utilising the school's stunning rural setting and the skills of the deputy headteacher, the school has a strong focus on environmental matters. It is involved in a range of projects such as The John Muir Project, forest schools and Arthog sky-gazing. However, these hugely positive environmental experiences are not as aligned as they might be with Christian ethical and biblical standpoints focussed on the Creator God. Similarly, despite positive outcomes, the school's work in spirituality is not sufficiently refined so that all involved with the school understand the progression of spiritual development.

RE is taught most effectively using both the locally agreed syllabus and the Understanding Christianity resource. Understanding Christianity has significantly raised the standards and expectations in RE. Consequently, lessons increasingly enable pupils to explore difficult concepts with clarity, appropriate technical vocabulary and with a deepening understanding. Their learning about the Bible helps them to relate the teachings of Jesus to their own lives and to live out the school vision. Pupils have a good understanding of several religions including Hinduism and Islam alongside Christianity. RE reflects the school's vision resulting in pupils who are excited about the subject. This is shown, for example, by their overwhelmingly enthusiastic responses to the Hindu temple visit. Standards in RE are good and rising, underpinned by the highly effective leadership of the RE leader.

The school is acutely aware of the emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of pupils and staff. Recent training in supporting mental health and bereavement is illustrative of this. Staff, pupils and parents are clear that when need arises, people and structures are there to help, extending the school's friendly Christian approach. Safeguarding procedures are effective, Staff feel well supported by the headteacher who carefully ensures that their professional development raises their skills and aspirations. However, an understanding by middle leaders of how church school needs should shape their leadership is underdeveloped.

The school's vision is shown well in that pupils understand that, if everyone is to achieve their potential, then a wholehearted support of others is needed. Consequently, pupils engage in charitable concerns including supporting the Oswestry foodbank and partnering with a school in Ethiopia. They also support each other's learning as 'Gurus.' Commendably, pupils make visits to Pant residential care home. Although not as frequent as they might be, these visits result in mutual social benefits.

Collective worship is inclusive and invitational in approach. It focuses regularly on Christian values and how they influence the school vision. For example, pupils used the treatment of the woman at the well by Jesus to illustrate fairness and respect and so strengthens her in her personal faith journey. Collective worship reflects the close partnership with the local group of churches. The vicar and Christian youth worker are frequent visitors. They enable pupils to experience Anglican traditions, such as the cycle of the church year. Reflection time, the following day, helps pupils and staff to internalise the key messages and symbols of church-led worship. Festivals, such as harvest, are celebrated in church broadening pupils' experience of worship. Links with Pant Methodist Church to broaden pupils' understanding of local Christianity are under-developed. Collective worship reflects the Christian faith through the use of Bible stories such as the feeding of the 5000. Older pupils have an age appropriate understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, although this is not so for younger ones. The collective worship creation club are tenacious advocates for collective worship because they are actively involved. With enthusiasm they regularly lead acts of collective worship. Prayer is inclusive taking a variety of forms including pupils' own compositions in the school prayer box. Prayer gives pupils and adults the strength to approach life whole heartedly. It successfully builds an understanding that their success is grounded in Christ who strengthens them.

Bryn Offa is a school that is now focused upon living its vision and values. It is a vibrant Christian community ready to embrace wholeheartedly the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Headteacher	Paul Thompson
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598