

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Barrow Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Colethorpe Lane, Barrow, Bury St Edmunds, IP29 5AU

School vision
<p><i>I have come that they may have life and have it to the full – John 10:10</i></p> <p>INSPIRE learners, CREATE opportunities and DISCOVER the world TOGETHER</p> <p>Providing a positive environment for children to enjoy learning a rich, engaging and carefully planned curriculum to excite and enhance learning, based on our Christian vision of 'abundant life' (John 10:10).</p> <p>Developing children's confidence to persevere and be independent by sharing our successes and embracing our challenges.</p> <p>Giving opportunities for children to make a positive contribution to the community and society through fostering an ethos of understanding and inclusion.</p> <p>Promoting Christian values and guiding children in their spiritual and moral development, whilst giving them an awareness of diversity within Christian practise, other religions and their associated cultures.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders are clear and determined in their purpose to provide opportunities and experiences for all to 'live life to the full.' As a result, the vision drives decision making which ensures that adults and pupils flourish. • The community lives well together, using the 'Barrow Big Ideas' (Christian values) and 'Barrow Boost' as expectations for behaviour. The school is characterised by a calm and purposeful environment where everyone is accepted and appreciated. • Collective worship is seen as an important time when the school community comes together. Pupils and adults learn from Bible stories which reinforce the vision and values and contribute to their spiritual growth. • Religious education (RE), known as beliefs and values (BV), is a strength. A well-structured and creative curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy their learning and develop a high level of skills and knowledge. • Pupils are prepared for the future by fulfilling a range of responsibilities as they grow through the school. This enables them to understand how their actions can make a positive difference to themselves and others.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a deeper understanding of spiritual experiences and how to explain them. This is so that opportunities can be recognised and planned for, and their impact articulated across the curriculum and beyond.

Inspection findings

Leaders are deeply committed to enabling adults and pupils to live life to the full now and in the future. Staff share this ambition. Together, a carefully crafted set of values (Big Ideas), linked with the 'Barrow Boost,' have been established to underpin the vision. These provide the 'drivers' for learning, behaviour and expectations for living well. The names and systems particular to the school create a sense of identity and belonging. Pupils and adults use the language of the vision, and associated drivers, to describe the positive impact it has on their lives. It challenges and encourages them to be the best they can be. The key question posed by leaders when shaping their actions is 'what makes a Barrow child?.' This can be answered specifically and accurately using this shared language. Through this integrated approach, particular to the school, leaders have effectively developed a 'brand,' encapsulating their aspirations for the families they serve. Parents recognise the importance of this shared identity. They understand and value what this brings to them as part of the school and wider community. It nurtures their children and strengthens their relationships with staff, engendering a sense of trust so all live well together. The influence of the vision and 'Big Ideas' continues beyond a pupil's time at the school. Barrow pupils are recognised for their positive attitudes to life during the next stage of their education and beyond.

Governors are supportive of the school. They work with staff to ensure pupils and their families experience life in all its fullness. Leaders focus on the vision when making decisions, ensuring that they specifically support this aim. When allocating resources, for example, they focus on 'the things that matter' within their context. This means that actions have intentional impact. Staff retention is high because adults feel valued. Their workload and mental health is a priority for leaders, so that they feel supported professionally and personally.

Mindful to prepare pupils for their future in a diverse society, leaders plan opportunities to support their understanding of difference. Character building is a key element of this. By developing the 'Barrow Boost' behaviours, pupils live up to the high expectations set by the vision and values. The environment is calm and purposeful as a result. Conflict is rare. Where this occurs, pupils are encouraged to mediate with each other to ensure there is a peaceful resolution. Based on the principle of reconciliation, the behaviour policy offers fresh starts and forgiveness. This promotes a culture of dignity and respect, giving pupils the confidence to move on from previous difficulties. They demonstrate compassion to their friends, encouraging them to succeed, articulating equity where some may need more help than others. Through fulfilling roles and responsibilities, pupils prepare to be citizens of the future who make a positive contribution to society. They thrive on practical opportunities to make the school a better place for everyone. This gives them a greater understanding of how they can make a positive difference to the lives of others.

Trips and visits enrich the curriculum, enhancing pupils' experiences of different subjects. This motivates them to live to the full as successful learners. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those who are vulnerable. Timely support and help are provided to pupils when needed. Activities such as yoga and mindfulness support positive mental health. Opportunities to talk to visitors representing different careers raise their aspirations for the future. The many clubs on offer mean pupils can try out new experiences and develop new skills which may become hobbies for life. Providing further inspiration, the 'young medics' club has determined one pupil to become a doctor. Although there are times in the day when pupils and adults enjoy spiritual moments, these are not consistently recognised. There is no collective understanding of what spirituality means to the school community. Also, a way of

explaining this to others is not in place. As a result, adults and pupils are not able to articulate and share their experiences.

Collective worship is shaped to be set apart from the rest of the school day. It is a time and place where adults and pupils can ‘reflect and relax.’ Characterised by worship through music, prayer and joyful singing, it reinforces the ‘Big Ideas’ through recitation of the ‘Barrow Pledge.’ This keeps the aspirations set by the vision and values in mind. The importance placed on following the Anglican Church calendar is explicit in changes to the cloth on the worship table. Pupils follow the colours of the seasons, understanding the tradition this represents and how this links them to a wider church family. Quiet interludes when those attending can reflect on what they have heard and seen contribute to their spiritual development.

The relationship with the local church is strong. Clergy are an integral part of school life. In addition to leading collective worship and pastoral support, they provide a significant and reciprocal link between community, church and school. This provides access for pupils to take part in authentic activities which improve the locality, engaging in rewilding the churchyard, for example. This provides a ‘real life’ example of active Christian stewardship of God’s world. This important relationship is described as ‘church coming into school,’ living out its own vision to bring ‘more than worship.’ By attending the ‘tots’ group’ in the school building, clergy and church members get to know parents. They support them in times of difficulty and celebrate family events. This enhances the school’s ability to live out its vision and its positive position in the wider community is strengthened. Partnerships with a range of churches also provide opportunities to make a difference to others through collecting for a clothing bank.

RE, known as ‘beliefs and values’ to reflect the widening scope of the subject matter covered, is a strength. It is taught creatively through art, drama and music. Pupils enjoy learning through different mediums and make good progress as a result. Monitoring ensures that high quality provision is sustained. Discussing ‘big questions’ enables pupils to disagree respectfully. Their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of world faiths and views, including Christianity, is strong. They recognise the importance of learning about the beliefs of others so that respect can grow from understanding.

Through its vision and practice, Barrow Church of England VC Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
School	Barrow Church of England VC Primary School	Inspection date	14/2/24
URN	124690	VC/VA/Academy	VC
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	Pupils on roll	212
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Helen Ashe		
Chair of Governors	Sarah Wightman		
Inspector	Rachel Beeson	No.	952