

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bisham Church of England Primary Academy

Vision

Encourage one another and build each other up 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Together we learn, love, achieve and succeed. Within our school family, each individual is encouraged to flourish by discovering and growing their God-given talents to their full potential. We believe by encouraging, inspiring, and building each other up, we secure the best outcomes for every member of our community.

Strengths

- The Christian vision is embraced by the community. It underpins strategic decision making and is clearly lived out daily. Leaders at all levels share a common goal that adults and pupils should flourish.
- Driven by the school's Christian vision, collective worship is central to the spiritual flourishing of adults and pupils. The close relationship between the local church and the academy strengthens the development of this inclusive spiritual community.
- Plentiful extra-curricular activities, visits and activities enrich pupils' learning and personal development.
- A strong culture of encouragement and support enables pupils to thrive. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) enables them to succeed in their learning and personal development.
- Rooted in the spirit of encouragement and God's love, relationships are harmonious across the school. Pupils' behaviour is courteous and respectful in class and they play together well.

Development Points

- Improve the quality of the Religious Education (RE) curriculum. This is to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of world religions and worldviews, including Christianity as a global faith.
- Strengthen the impact of the Christian vision on the curriculum, ensuring that spiritual development is an intrinsic element. This is to enhance pupils' spiritual flourishing.
- Enhance opportunities for pupils to learn about justice and responsibility beyond the school community. This is to equip them with understanding and skills to make a difference to the lives of others.



Inspection Findings

The clear and compelling Christian vision to ‘encourage one another and build each other up’ infuses Bisham Academy. Led by the Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust (AHMAT), the vision is embraced by its three small schools, cementing their collaboration. The roles of AHMAT trustees and school governors are interwoven, ensuring that the vision impacts strategic decisions and school implementation. As a result, they work effectively and in harmony with the vision, sharing the common goal for all to flourish. The thoughtfully chosen Bible verse drives their decisions and is understood well by pupils, staff and parents. The vision out is lived daily through a culture of self-improvement and loving determination that pupils and adults should flourish.

Rooted in the vision, the curriculum inclusively nurtures pupils’ academic, social and personal development. Leaders collaborate across AHMAT to strengthen the curriculum by devising pupil workbooks for many subjects. Pupils benefit from the consistent quality of these resources and being able to see their personal progress. Leaders show care equally for staff workload in this initiative. Enriching activities build depth and breadth in pupils’ learning, social and personal development. There are plentiful and varied extra-curricular opportunities before and after school. The uptake is high and financial support is provided discreetly where needed. Workshops in school include creating a seaside, a novelty for some pupils. Older pupils attend an immersive World War 1 residential, enabling them to consider how people live through wartime, so building empathy. However, spiritual development is not planned as an intrinsic part of the curriculum. As a result, opportunities for spiritual inspiration or reflection may be missed. Pupils with SEND are cherished and included alongside their classmates. Specialist provision is planned carefully for each individual to boost their learning or social development. Parents of pupils with SEND appreciate this nurturing approach and expert provision. Leaders make bold decisions, for example funding a sensory room. This is transformational for some pupils, meeting their specific needs, while enabling them to be included in lessons.

Coming together for collective worship is integral to the academy’s daily Christian life. Pupils and adults benefit from times of stillness and prayer as well as the opportunity to participate joyfully and give thanks to God. Rooted in Bible teaching, leaders focus each half term on one of twelve Christian values. Exploring these in depth through storytelling, prayers and songs engages pupils personally and spiritually. They speak confidently about generosity and what it means to them, for example. Worship leaders value their role, assisting with arrangements and writing and sharing their own prayers. Opportunities for spiritual flourishing are built into the school day. Pupils are invited to offer thankful prayer before lunch for example. The afternoon starts with structured reflective activities, providing opportunity for prayer, contemplation or simple calming. This dedicated time has a positive impact on pupils’ wellbeing and provides a good start to their learning. The powerful partnership with the local church is mutually enriching. Weekly contributions from clergy foster a deeper understanding of the Bible and Anglican traditions. Services are held regularly in church, which parents also enjoy attending. Together with the church’s ‘friends’ group, this creates a socially connected spiritual community, welcoming to all.

Pupils and adults flourish because the culture of encouragement and building each other up is deeply embedded. Leaders welcome pupils by name at the morning drop-off and notice how they are. They ensure that extra help is given to any pupils, who need it to start their day well. Pupils work harmoniously in class, showing good concentration and effort. Standing desks offer a choice for those who work better this way. Outdoor play has organised options, including stations of activities. This provides social support as well as helping children develop their imagination, creativity and problem solving. These strategies combine to maximise pupils’ wellbeing, which impacts positively on behaviour. Staff are treated well and supported personally and professionally. They model kind and courteous behaviour, which is reflected in pupils’ conduct in class and at play. When difficulties arise, pupils are supported to reflect on their differences, and to channel their feelings



appropriately. The Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation enable them to move on and resume their day well.

Pupils are encouraged to take individual responsibility, and are taught explicitly about the importance of justice. They are praised for standing up for others as a way to 'build each other up'. Opportunities for leadership are based on Christian values. Through roles such as the school council or as emotional wellbeing champions, pupils learn to take care of each other. The green team focuses on God's creation. Pupils are rightly proud of their charitable fundraising. One being sponsored to cut off her hair raises awareness as well as funds for a cancer charity. Such activities foster pupils' consideration of others' needs and their sense of compassion. Leaders' commitment to an outward looking culture of justice and responsibility is evident. Linking with a school in Kenya sparks pupils' curiosity about justice in a global context. While pupils are interested, these initiatives are currently led by adults. Opportunities for pupils to engage meaningfully and independently with issues of justice are at an early stage of development. As a result, they do not necessarily connect making ethical choices with their ability to bring about change.

The recently appointed RE subject leader is supported well by the academy's leaders and by the diocese. Effective training is in place for the various aspects of RE leadership. The Berkshire RE syllabus provides an effective curriculum, ensuring that world religions and worldviews are taught. However, it is not detailed. The school's RE planning for each class expands guidance to meet the requirements of a Church school. Nonetheless, the RE curriculum is somewhat dated and does not always engage pupils in deep learning. Leaders therefore welcome the diocese's current work on curriculum development and forthcoming training. School leaders source meaningful experiences in RE to support pupils' understanding of world religions and worldviews. The study of Christianity is enhanced by links with the local church. Regular visits hosted by the vicar bring authenticity to pupils' learning. Similarly trips to a mosque, synagogue, temple and gurdwara provide context to their learning about world religions. A prominent display celebrates these visits. Pupils seeing photos of their friends with commentary about their attendance at diverse places of worship brings learning to life.

Information

Address	Church Lane, Bisham, Marlow SL7 1RW		
Date	01 October 2024	URN	144249
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	94
Diocese/District	Oxford		
MAT/Federation	Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Emma Brookman		
Chair of Governors	Sheila Featherstone-Clark		
Inspector	Rachel A Jones		