

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bethany Church of England junior school.			
Address	Knole Road, Bournemouth. BH1 4DJ		
Date of inspection	18 November 2019	Status of school	Junior academy inspected as VA. Ocean Learning Trust (MAT)
Diocese / Methodist District	Winchester	URN	142100

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Bethany is a junior school with 360 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average and many of them speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above the national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities is above national averages. The school became an academy school in July 2015, joining the Ocean Learning Trust. There are six schools in the trust. The present headteacher has been in post for three years.

The school's Christian vision

Our vision: God's hope in us to make a difference: For ourselves, For each other, For the world.

Our Mission: 'Inspiring Learning for life – Hope for the future.'

'I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord, 'plans to give you hope for the future.' Jeremiah 29:11

Key findings

- The passion, determination and commitment of Bethany's leaders ensures the Christian vision is highly effective. This impacts positively on the lives of the pupils in their care.
- Governors are rigorous in their support and monitoring of the school's work. They take decisive action when development needs are identified, leading to rapid improvement.
- The school champions and prioritises the worth of every member of the school's community. Each pupil's uniqueness is recognised and this ensures individual needs are provided for.
- High quality religious education (RE) provision strongly contributes to pupils' understanding of world faiths, supporting an appreciation of the importance of faith to believers.
- Collective worship is inclusive and invitational. It is placed at the heart of the school and the enthusiastic participation of the whole school community makes it a joyful experience.

Areas for development

- Develop further opportunities for pupils to explore the differences that exist between global communities and the role of Christianity worldwide.
- Seek more opportunities to support other Church schools with their Christian development, to allow Bethany's excellent practice to be shared and also develop teachers' leadership skills.
- The school and church should continue their work in establishing a community space in St. Clement's Hall, so children and families within the local area are supported within a safe and nurturing environment.

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

Bethany's Christian vision is rooted in Christian narrative, and is the driving force in all it does. It permeates every aspect of school life and is clearly articulated by all stakeholders. The 4 'C' values of confidence, compassion, creativity and curiosity provide a framework for guiding pupil learning and behaviour. The school's governors significantly support the school with a strong sense of purpose. They are willing to take decisive action when necessary, keeping pupils at the heart of decision making. The vision supports them when difficult decisions have to be made. However, the impact of these actions has led to raised academic achievement with pupils reaching standards at least in line with national expectations. Rigorous monitoring accurately identifies future development needs, ensuring the school's continued development. The MAT's three Church school headteachers work closely together, strengthening the challenge and support for Church school improvement.

The curriculum is well planned, broad and exciting and pupils enjoy talking about their learning. They have a heartfelt respect for different cultures and beliefs. Probing questioning by skilled RE teachers pushes pupils to explore deeper into their learning, considering aspects they may not initially have thought of. For example, 'How do we define a hero?' Pupils saw Jesus' actions in touching leprosy victims as a heroic act that was an example for others.

Pupils are able to discuss serious issues thoughtfully and respectfully, with an awareness that individual views do not necessarily have to agree. A growing sense of Christian compassion and social responsibility has led to their support for local and national charities. Involvement in the Christian Aid charity supports their awareness of global communities, including examples of injustice and poverty. Pupils' courageous advocacy is shown by their beach litter picks, support for the Bournemouth Foodbank and a Toilet Twinning link with a school in Malawi.

A piece of wasteland has been gifted to the school by the local church and the gardener has worked closely with pupils and school leaders in developing its purpose within the school's community. For example, pupils and their families growing vegetables in the 'Soil to Plate' initiative and the creation of a Spiritual Space.

Pupils with complex special needs are well supported. Barriers to learning are addressed with well thought out interventions. Most pupils make expected progress from their starting points, including the significant numbers of pupils where English is not their first language. Diversity is celebrated within the school and pupils from other countries feel very proud of where they are from. The 'Young Interpreters' group supports pupils new to English, including translating for adults. This makes Bethany school a thriving community where everyone feels valued and listened to.

Parents are extremely complimentary and appreciative of the safe, nurturing environment the school provides. They feel very welcome and included in their children's education. They say the school deals with issues, however small, quickly and efficiently, including the school giving them significant time and support when vulnerable situations arise. Pupils say friendship issues are dealt with by talking and they know what actions they would take if they ever felt bullied, explaining that discrimination should not be tolerated. The school is ambitious for all its pupils and the drive to be the 'best that you can be' is felt by the pupils. They see challenge as a positive thing, even though initially it may feel uncomfortable, explaining that it helps you to improve.

Professional development has been undertaken with the diocese and diocesan advisors work with the school, supporting its Christian development. Strong partnerships are very well established between the school and church community. This close working relationship has been pivotal in joint supportive actions for their community, where there are high levels of significant vulnerability. The school and church have successfully submitted a bid for funds to develop the local church hall which will provide a safe and supportive space for all members of the community, including pre-school activities, holiday clubs, family worship and youth facilities. The headteacher keeps in touch with past pupils as they pass through their senior school education, aiming to ensure

that Bethany's love and care follows them through their teenage years. Out-reach support for families takes place in the Joy Café organised by the church.

Pupil behaviour is strongly influenced by the school's Christian vision that teaches respect and support for each other. This has led to calm classrooms, without disruption, where every pupil has the best atmosphere for learning. Classroom relationships between adults and pupils are mutually respectful. Pupils are supported in their own personal development, however challenging, with parents saying the school never gives up on them. Specialist coaching programmes train pupils to support each other. One pupil explained, 'I know that this pupil wants to build up her confidence so I am going to choose her.'

A Graduation Scheme booklet follows pupils through their time at Bethany. Each year pupils have to fulfil social, academic and cultural experiences to graduate, such as visiting a museum, taking part in a sporting competition or leading an act of worship. One pupil proudly explained his growing confidence saying, 'I've got this thing inside me saying I can do it.'

Pupils say Christian worship is a special time each day when everybody comes together to sing, pray and learn about being better people. They especially enjoy their weekly visit to the church for worship services, saying it feels calm and special.

Older pupils diligently carry out their worship responsibilities, such as managing worship technology. The school's vision and values underpin worship themes and these, together with Bible stories, allow pupils to understand how Christian teaching relates to their daily life. Themes are delivered in age appropriate ways that are meaningful and interesting and adults continue to refer to these themes throughout the school day. A range of visiting leaders provide a rich variety of worship styles. Worship tables designed by each class provide additional spaces for personal reflection and prayer. Pupils are asked for their thoughts on worship and feedback is listened to and acted upon.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

RE standards are excellent due to teachers' high levels of subject knowledge and good quality resources. The RE subject leadership team is highly skilled and committed, regularly monitoring RE standards. Leaders provide effective professional development for the school's teachers, both in school and in partnership with the Diocese. RE leadership is being passed over to a new lead as the present lead undertakes increased involvement over the MAT's six schools. Pupils devise and consider 'Big Questions of Life, and they are very aware that there can be many valid answers to each of these questions. External validation for high quality RE provision has been recognised by the RE leader's completion of a Farmington Scholarship.

Headteacher

Lawrence Woodward

Inspector's name and number

Lorraine Pugh 819