

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Blakedown VC Church of England Primary School

Vision

'I will praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made' Psalm 139:14.

Our vision is derived from the fact we are all unique and made in God's image with individual talents and dreams. We want our children to be happy, to have a deep-rooted sense of joy in their lives and to be content and comfortable with who they are. We want our children to recognize their individuality and to use their talents and abilities in service of others. We want our children to be equipped with a love of learning and the skills and resilience to flourish in the face of life's challenges to achieve and be the best version of themselves.

Strengths

- The Christian vision is effective in ensuring the academic and personal flourishing of pupils and adults.
- Leaders and staff create a culture of inclusion where those who have different needs are very well supported to play a full part in school life.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities nurture pupils' gifts and talents so that they experience joy and achieve well.
- Promoting good mental health and wellbeing is central to the work of the school. This results in a supportive and caring environment where pupils and adults flourish.
- High quality support provided by leaders enables staff to deliver a religious education (RE) curriculum that enriches pupils' knowledge and understanding of our diverse world.

Development Points

- Embed systems for monitoring the impact of the Christian vision, so that this explicitly informs the development of the school as a distinctive church school.
- Extend work on spirituality so it has a greater impact on curriculum development and the worship life of the school.
- Enable pupils to deepen their understanding of justice so that they can make a difference to the lives of others within and beyond the local community.



Inspection Findings

School leaders have developed a Christian vision with clear biblical roots and the staff team works diligently to ensure that this vision is a living reality for the community. Clear policies and daily practices, underpinned by the vision and values, create a welcoming and inclusive environment where both pupils and adults feel at home. Priority is given to fostering a loving and supportive culture that enables pupils to explore their God-given gifts and develop their unique talents. Staff provide nurturing care, helping individuals find joy in life and encouraging them to achieve their best. As a result, pupils are happy to come to school, confident in their uniqueness and aware that they have something special to offer. Parents appreciate the school's holistic focus, valuing the emphasis placed upon nurturing 'happy, well-rounded individuals' and fostering an understanding of what is important in life. Leaders ensure that school improvement plans focus on the development of the Christian vision. However, these are not centred on a cycle of rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation so are not as effective in driving continuous improvement as they could be.

The curriculum is underpinned by the Christian values of respect, trust, forgiveness, perseverance and peace and reflects the school vision. A flexible approach to planning allows staff to make appropriate choices to meet the needs of their pupils. They know that leaders trust them and appreciate the freedom to use their gifts and talents to enhance learning experiences for pupils. Timetables and lessons are thoughtfully adapted and bespoke support is provided for those who need it. This results in a classroom environment where individuals feel valued and capable of success. Pupils and parents value the impressive range of additional experiences which enrich the curriculum offer. Sports activities, arts projects and visits to places both locally and further afield encourage pupils to develop their own gifts and talents and widen their horizons. As a result, pupils flourish in their learning. Moments of awe and wonder support spiritual development and allow pupils to find a sense of enjoyment and fascination in the world around them. However, opportunities for spiritual growth are not identified in curriculum plans. This limits the potential for deeper spiritual development.

Collective worship is an important and valued part of the day. Centred around Christian values and biblical texts, worship is an expression of the school's Christian foundation. It is an inclusive experience, where everyone is invited to participate without obligation. Pupils value worship as a time where they 'feel calm and peaceful' and can close their eyes 'and think'. Staff too appreciate time to reflect and pause from their busy day. The worship space is a place of comfort for those of faith and none. Pupils know they may join in with prayers or may reflect respectfully if they prefer to do so. The exploration of Christian values, linked to real life situations, supports pupils in their understanding of justice and inspires them to take action locally. However, pupils do not challenge injustice beyond the local community. Pupils' understanding of the life of Jesus is strengthened through visits from the parish church Open the Book team who in turn feel spiritually enriched by the experience. There is a genuine sense of joy and community as pupils and adults sing and reflect together, promoting strong relationships and a sense of belonging. These shared experiences enhance spiritual growth and promote the wellbeing of participants, enabling everyone to flourish within a supportive and nurturing atmosphere.

Leaders ensure that the wellbeing of the community is at the centre of their decisions. A culture of inclusion permeates school life and staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to removing barriers to learning for pupils. As a result, those who have different needs are very well supported to play a full part in school life. By identifying and nurturing strengths and talents, pupils develop confidence and are empowered in their learning. Provision to support good mental health and provide effective pastoral care for pupils and adults is seen as high priority within school. This is reflected in leaders' actions, such as the open-door policy and approach to flexible working. As a result, staff feeling supported in their wellbeing. Pupils are supported in their emotional and social development through an active 'Thrive' program, which improves their resilience in the face of challenges. The comprehensive 'Supporting families' resources provide timely guidance for parents and carers and strengthens



relationships between home and school. This results in an environment where people feel loved, treat each other with respect and everyone can thrive.

Great care is taken to nurture and strengthen relationships beyond the Blakedown walls in order to enrich the learning experience for pupils. The partnership with the Diocese has been instrumental in shaping the distinctive nature of the school as a Church school and is highly valued by leaders. Rooted in a shared love for pupils, school and the parish church benefit from a strong and mutually supportive relationship. The church provides consistent support for leaders during times of challenge. Church members cherish opportunities to engage in school life, through visits to school and charity projects. Partnerships with local primary schools extend the range of experiences offered to pupils and deepen their understanding of the wider world. These partnerships are also an outworking of the vision, allowing pupils and adults to use their gifts to serve others and function as a reminder that they are 'fearfully and wonderfully made'.

A strong commitment to RE is expressed by the headteacher and leaders who actively promote its importance within the school. The support and expertise of the diocese is valued and has deepened staff knowledge and improved confidence. The resulting curriculum is rich, varied and well sequenced and provides opportunities for pupils to engage with religious texts. Big questions encourage pupils to dig deeper and support them in their understanding of Christianity as a living, diverse faith. Pupils value RE and recognise its relevance to their daily lives. Lessons provide a safe space where pupils feel empowered to share their ideas and learn from others. Visits to places of worship inspire pupils, enrich their understanding and appreciation of world faiths and promote a spirit of respect and curiosity toward different beliefs and practices.

Information

Address	Birmingham Road, Blakedown, Kidderminster DY10 3JN		
Date	1 October 2024	URN	116784
Type of school	Voluntary controlled	No. of pupils	186
Diocese/District	Worcester		
MAT/Federation	-		
Headteacher	Helen Beckford- Bond		
Chair of Governors	Freda Griffith		
Inspector	Marcia Harris		