



# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## Bow Brickhill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address Station Road, Bow Brickhill, Milton Keynes, MK17 9JT

How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

**Overall grade** **Good**

**The impact of collective worship** **Good**

**The effectiveness of religious education (RE)** **Good**

### School’s vision

Growing together in knowledge, love and faith. Our vision is that our school community are inspired by, or grow through faith in God to reach our full potential. Our hope is that we are the best we can be, making a responsible contribution to the world, showing love, patience and kindness.

So now faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13.

### Key findings

- Pupils and adults flourish at Bow Brickhill because of the way the community fully understands and lives out the distinctive Christian vision to ‘grow together in knowledge, love and faith’. Leaders at all levels explain how the vision which is drawn from a shared reflection on the teachings of St Paul, in chapter 13 of his first letter to the Corinthians, equips them to understand the power of love.
- This leadership is epitomised by the dynamic headteacher who leads the school with delight in the growth of every member of the school in knowledge, love and faith and this enables all to flourish. During both the pandemic and the significant staffing challenges of the last year she has worked tirelessly to ensure that the school remains a good Church school.
- Pupils develop high levels of subject knowledge because of the well-planned religious education (RE) curriculum which is taught by a subject specialist. However, at present there are limited opportunities for pupils to engage with those who follow faiths and world views other than Christianity.
- As a result of the vision of the school, leaders have created a nurturing culture in which all are cherished for who they are and feel free to express their individuality. Adults and pupils flourish because they are immersed in patient, kind love.
- Collective worship is a significant moment in each day in which all pupils and adults take part. During COVID this was moved online and the high quality meant that the school shared these as part of the wider diocesan offer. Pupils delight in crafting class worships and using drama to enact stories from the Bible. At present pupils do not routinely evaluate acts of worship or have the opportunity to learn more about how to use different worship styles.

- There are many rich experiences for spiritual reflection. Pupils are enthusiastic about these moments and they add depth to the academic curriculum. However, at present there is not a shared understanding of spiritual development.

### **Areas for development**

- Deepen pupils' understanding of religions by creating opportunities for pupils' to engage with those who follow a range of faiths and world views.
- Ensure that pupils and adults develop a shared language to talk about spiritual development so that all pupils are able to flourish more fully.
- Involve pupils regularly in evaluating whole school worship. Broaden their experience of worship so that they have a wider range of Christian traditions to draw on when planning and leading acts of worship themselves.

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**

Bow Brickhill is a small school with a big heart, which strives to 'grow together in knowledge, love and faith'. Pupils and staff clearly articulate how the teachings of 1 Corinthians 13 impact upon their life in school and beyond. The vision is drawn from a shared knowledge of what it means faithfully to grow in love; remaining hopeful, patient and kind even when life is hard. The core Christian values of respect, responsibility, kindness, courage, honesty and forgiveness underpin the vision and are understood by all. Three concurrent periods of leave in the small teaching team during a time of COVID means that at present the majority of leadership rests exclusively with the Headteacher. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that high standards in every element of school life are maintained and the experience of staff and pupils is good because of her dedication.

Governors articulate the vision with clarity and speak passionately about the way in which it has led them to resource training necessary for the use of the restorative practice approach to behaviour. This allows pupils to flourish by building better relationships and taking the time to ensure that every member of the school community feels listened to, valued and respected. Partnership with the diocese means that the school leaders ensure that a close and rigorous process for review and evaluation of the school as a Church school is maintained. The recent change to the school uniform was inspired by the desire to use the colour purple because it is used in the Anglican tradition as an indication of wisdom and preparation. Partnership with the local church enables the school to share love in the community for example in the village Armistice Day commemorations.

The vision for all pupils to grow in knowledge has led the school to develop a broad and balanced curriculum. All pupils achieve good levels of progress because they are encouraged to be curious. Innovative approaches to learning encourage all pupils to develop their talents and try new things. The extremely popular music, art, drama and dance week activities provide opportunities for pupils to engage with moments of awe though reflection on the wonder of creativity. During partial school closure these moved online to ensure rich spiritual experiences continued. 'Thoughts for the week' encourage pupils to consider a range of 'big questions' and they enjoy opportunities to wrestle with ethical dilemmas.

Pupils and staff flourish because of the opportunities to sing, pray, and reflect upon the teachings of the Bible during collective worship. The use of Makaton signing for many aspects of worship means that those pupils with significant special educational needs and disabilities are fully included. Carefully supported class-based worship mean that from a young age, pupils are involved in planning and delivering worship that provides meaningful opportunities for them to develop spiritually. Pre-pandemic the local church was actively involved in 'Open the Book' and this experience so

enriched the life of the school that classes now run these sessions themselves. Collective worship inspires pupils to act at a range of levels. For example, in a desire for greater social justice pupils are passionate about collecting clothes for the established school link with ‘Banana Box’ a charity in Malawi. At present pupils do not have opportunities to learn about the diversity of liturgical traditions within the UK or evaluate whole school collective worship.

RE has a prominent place within the curriculum because of the vision to grow in knowledge and faith. The school has created its own bespoke scheme of work based upon a locally agreed syllabus. It is taught by one highly skilled subject specialist who has a rich understanding of progression through the increasingly challenging content. The RE curriculum enables pupils to focus upon key religious concepts from multiple perspectives and to compare religions within one unit of learning. Pupils are enthused by RE and talk about how it helps them to think about people of other faiths and none and to consider divergence of religious thought. As a result, pupils speak about different cultures and traditions, and how their knowledge of these promotes understanding and respect of others. Pupils are also able to make and explain their own life choices and find their place in the world in the safe and inclusive space provided. As one Year 6 pupil said “We all feel understood by everyone, even if they disagree with you, they understand”. At present there are limited opportunities for pupils to engage and learn from those who follow a range of faiths and world views. Bow Brickhill is a community where all flourish because they are known as individuals and differences are celebrated. All the adults know all the pupils and the staff model positive and mutually encouraging relationships. Bullying of any kind is not tolerated and pupils are confident in the well documented policies and procedures of the school. Pupils behave well and when things go wrong, they value the opportunity to seek and offer forgiveness. The reflection areas in each classroom are treasured by the pupils and staff. They go there to pray and pause. They love writing and drawing their reflections and this supports their spiritual growth. However, due to current staffing changes there is not a clear understanding of spiritual development.

Pupils flourish during their time at Bow Brickhill because of the carefully considered range of opportunities for pupils’ character development. In Year 6 every pupil has a significant role of responsibility. These allow them to be powerful advocates for change within the school community by organising fundraising and awareness-raising campaigns for example dressing up for ‘Down Syndrome Day’ and the MacMillan Coffee Morning.

It is the vision of ‘growing together in knowledge love and faith’ that inspires these acts and makes Bow Brickhill a thriving community where all flourish.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

Teaching is consistently good and pupils recall and make links between their prior and current learning. As a result of this pupils develop high levels of biblical and wider religious literacy. The extent to which all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities know and remember more is systematically assessed through careful questioning. This is closely monitored by governors and supported by specialists from the Diocese of Oxford.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	25 March 2022	URN	134423
Date of previous inspection	25 March 2015		
School status	Voluntary aided primary school	NOR	88
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Pam McBurnie		

Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Elizabeth Jeanes	No.	981