

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Benson Church of England Primary School	
Address	Oxford Road, Benson, OX10 6LX
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

School's vision
'Love one another, as I have loved you' John 13 v34 Our Christian vision underpins our relationships, developing a sense of community. Drawn from Jesus' words, our vision enriches our curriculum fostering respect and a celebration of diversity. Prayer is central to the life of the school enabling all to experience spirituality and reflect upon how we can serve one another with love.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benson Primary school's vision, focused on the Christian understanding of love, is biblically rooted and thoroughly embedded. It drives the strategic and day to day life of the school and is known, valued and embraced by all. • Pupils flourish here socially and emotionally and feel welcome, cared for and heard. Most flourish academically as the vision leads many new developments in teaching and learning. There is increasingly strong provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or considered to be vulnerable. • Pupil voice and opportunities to challenge injustice are strong. Pupils are encouraged to become agents of change in a variety of ways. • Collective worship is valued and impactful in this school. Worship is a priority for leaders and follows a strong Anglican shape. Pupils plan, lead and engage with worship in various ways. • Leaders ensure religious education (RE) is seen by all as a priority in the school curriculum. It is well-led and monitored. Recent developments ensure pupils learn about a range of religions and worldviews. Teachers increasingly use a variety of creative and engaging activities to enhance learning.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed practices and processes that ensure consistent academic flourishing and spiritual development across the curriculum, for all cohorts and pupils. • Develop inclusive and invitational practices for pupils of all faiths and none. This is so all are fully engaged and inspired in both whole school and class based collective worship. • Further embed consistent systems for effective planning, delivery and assessment of RE. This is to ensure positive engagement and good understanding for all pupils, across a range of religions and worldviews.

Inspection findings

The Christian vision and the core value of love are central to life at Benson school. Leaders and governors prioritise the vision in decision making. They regularly monitor the impact of the Christian vision and elements of Christian distinctiveness in the life of the school. Leaders have good relationships with the local church, the diocesan education team and the academy trust education team. As a result of this pupils and adults flourish in a community strategically built around the core value of love.

Relentless love for each other is part of being a member of the Benson community. The vision drives social and emotional flourishing for all, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Pupils are kind and respectful and behaviour is generally good. They show enormous compassion for their peers, such as when new pupils join or those with medical needs require help. Difference is welcomed and embraced. Behaviour management processes are grounded in love and forgiveness. Staff feel supported and understood by leaders, particularly in times of need. Inspired by the vision, wellbeing is a priority for leaders and governors. As a result, staff say they enjoy working in the close 'team' here and the community has a strong family ethos.

Spiritual flourishing is a valued and important part of school life. Pupils enjoy opportunities to be still and reflective, saying how this helps them. Various opportunities for prayer are invitational but offered to all. This provides moments for pupils to experience stillness, reflect deeply and grow spiritually. A shared reflection board, school prayer book and various prayer space activities offer chances to express concerns and worries. Many pupils of different ages and backgrounds share their thoughts here. Curriculum breadth and opportunities for enrichment are important to teachers and leaders. As a result, creative and collaborative activities and outdoor learning take place regularly. Some opportunities for spiritual reflection are evident across the curriculum. The extent to which this is carefully planned and intentionally embedded across all curriculum areas is less consistent. Further development is needed to coherently build spiritual development for all.

Academic improvements in Benson school are centred around the vision for flourishing for all pupils. Staff speak of the importance of showing love for students through high expectations as well as nurture and care. The school has invested in new phonics and maths resources and materials that support pupils with SEND. These work towards the best outcomes for individuals and cohorts that need specific support and reflect vision driven love for every pupil. Strong decisions are often made regards the cost of specific provision. Inclusion is a core part of work at this school. Teaching assistants, a new sensory room and specialist emotional literacy support (ELSA) are available for all pupils. As a result, pupils feel valued and safe and follow this inclusive ethos in giving kindness and support to one another. Staff go over and above to accommodate the needs of all and demonstrate great compassion, patience and kindness in their work.

Pupils at Benson School are growing as 'agents of change' and have many chances to take action for good. Parents say their children are encouraged to 'find their voices', even those who are quiet or less confident. They have various opportunities to express ideas and opinions across the curriculum. Worship leaders, house captains, diversity and science ambassadors have interesting chances to lead others and explore areas which interest them. The curriculum offers opportunities to learn and speak up about disadvantage and injustice, such as environmental issues, anti-bullying and anti-racism. The vision of love is reflected in the way school embraces many projects across the year; particularly those that are important to families and the local community. The

annual ‘race for life’ is a highlight for all. Pupils have recently engaged with learning and fundraising for brain tumour research and talk about how this has inspired them. The ‘families of Benson School’ group funds a sponsored animal for each class every year, through the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) organisation. This engages pupils with worldwide environmental issues. Extending opportunities for pupils to look beyond their own school would enhance their understanding and perspective of global issues.

Collective worship is valued and prioritised. Leaders maintain a clear structure for worship based on Anglican principles of gathering, engagement and response. Pupils regularly plan and lead worship; those involved with the worship council enjoy this and report that it makes them feel proud. Staff express the ways in which worship impacts them and offers them a chance for spiritual engagement. Worship makes relevant links between current events such as the coronation of King Charles and the ‘value of the term’. Pupils think and reflect quietly. Worship explores the school vision, and all show understanding of the core value of love, and other associated Christian values. Some parts of collective worship such as prayer and singing opportunities are invitational. Pupils say all are welcome and can enjoy worship, regardless if they have a faith, or none. Despite this, opportunities exist for pupils of all faiths and none to be fully included and engaged. Further consideration of invitational and inclusive practice is needed to ensure that all members of the community find inspiration through collective worship.

RE has as good profile at this school. There is strong subject leadership; recent monitoring recognises gaps in pupil knowledge and a need to improve creativity and depth of learning. Class RE books and new assessment processes are being implemented but are currently used inconsistently. Pupil enthusiasm for RE varies, not all enjoy it but some find it valuable and say it is ‘important to understand each other’. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of Christianity. They know biblical stories and explain ideas around baptism and Holy Communion confidently. Pupils recall some facts about different worldviews well but lack depth in their knowledge around varied faiths and their impact in the world.

Information			
School	Benson Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	4 May 2023
URN	147507	VC/VA/ Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Oxford	Pupils on roll	277
MAT/Federation	Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust		
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Crolla		
Chair of Governors	Patrick Gilday and Chris O'Donnell		
Inspector	Laura Harris	No.	2202