



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bishop Aldhelm's Church of England Primary School	
Address	Winston Avenue, Branksome, Poole, BH12 1PG

School vision
<p>Loved by God; United in Learning. 'The Lord is my Shepherd; I have everything I need.' Guidance, Wisdom and Support for Learning and Life in Jesus' name. We are all valued here. We are all welcome here. We are Bishop Aldhelm's. Our vision is also lived out through the spirit of Bishop Aldhelm's which demonstrates an outward working of our school values of love, courage, unity and inspiration. Rooted in Psalm 23.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 23 underpins the school's Christian vision and inspires school leaders to create a welcoming, inclusive, and nurturing environment. As a result, they place a high priority upon the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and staff, enabling them to thrive. • The school's vision has shaped the exciting and creative curriculum which includes a rich extra-curricular offer. Leaders provide pupils with 'everything they need' to develop. The school is well supported by the trust. • The associated school values of love, unity, courage and inspiration enable the vision to be lived out practically. These values are used to inspire and equip pupils to embrace the numerous leadership responsibilities they are given. This empowers them to make positive changes within their school. • The school community enjoys a strong partnership with St Aldhelm's Church. The clergy provide a visible presence within the school, assisting the spiritual flourishing of both pupils and staff. • Religious education (RE) is given high priority within the school and is effectively supported by school leaders. Clear monitoring and assessment procedures keep leaders well informed of pupil progress and helps identify where further support for pupils is needed.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the role of the Governors to enable them to take a more strategic approach so that the Christian character of the school is evaluated in greater depth. • Embed the recently developed shared understanding and language of spiritual development within the context of collective worship. This will provide greater opportunities for the spiritual flourishing of adults and pupils. • Extend the religious vocabulary of pupils so they may deepen their understanding of world religions.

Inspection findings

Leaders and governors use Psalm 23:1 'The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need' as a touchstone when making important decisions for the school. Together they seek to provide the pupils at Bishop Aldhelm's with 'all that they need' so that they can flourish. Every adult and pupil matter here and just as the shepherd looks after his sheep, the leaders at Bishop Aldhelm's care for their 'flock' deeply. High priority is given to supporting the wellbeing and mental health of pupils using a wealth of well-considered programmes, strategies and interventions. This support is further enriched through the work of a full-time pastoral care worker. Parents and carers speak of the positive impact that this level of support has had upon them too, with one parent reporting 'our lives have been transformed'. They describe staff as kind and supportive and view the school as 'genuine and authentic'. It is evident that the strong commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils makes an excellent contribution to this nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils can thrive. The school has successfully created a culture of looking out for one another.

The associated values of love, unity, courage and inspiration enable the vision to be lived out practically by all members of the school community. These values are well understood and embedded in the daily life of the school. One example of this is the 'Bishop Bonds' where pupils are awarded bonds as recognition for the values being lived out. The school is well supported by both governors and the Hamwic Education Trust. They promote the growth of leaders through professional development training and the opportunity to visit and support other schools within the trust. Although governors are supportive, they do not have robust systems in place to evaluate the Christian character of the school.

Shaped by the vision, the curriculum has been designed to provide 'guidance, wisdom and support for learning and life'. Pupils experience enriching and life enhancing opportunities to become confident, resourceful and resilient members of society. This includes forest school and the 'Bishop Aldhelm's Bachelor of Arts'. This weekly programme seeks to develop life skills and provide curriculum enrichment through a focus on areas such as global neighbours, home safety, orienteering, diversity and finance. Leaders are intentional in ensuring that learning at Bishop Aldhelm's is 'an adventure without horizons' and consequently, learning is memorable and fun for pupils. Leaders carefully consider how the curriculum can be used to assist the spiritual flourishing of pupils and as a result have developed a shared understanding and use of language to support this. The spiritual development of pupils is further enhanced through a daily period of reflection led by class teachers, in addition to the use of the reflection garden and chapel. Staff also appreciate being able to use these designated areas for moments of stillness and reflection.

The school enjoys a strong partnership with St Aldhelm's Church. The clergy provide a visible presence within the school, supporting the spiritual flourishing of both pupils and staff through a weekly led act of worship. The school is also well supported by other Christian organisations who contribute to collective worship, such as Open the Book and the Programme for Applied Christian Education (PACE). Pupils enjoy the interactive nature of worship and are enthusiastic in their responses. Worship opportunities are carefully planned and ensure that all pupils feel included and involved, despite the challenges of space presented by a large school. Leaders use technology effectively to ensure that the whole school community can join together once a week. This sense of belonging is reinforced by each class as they mark the beginning of worship by bringing a candle to the altar. This candle is in a holder designed in the shape of a jigsaw puzzle. Pupils in the Faith Council organised the purchase of these holders as a visible reminder that they are 'loved by God, united in learning'. Moments of quiet, stillness and reflection are sometimes missed during collective worship which limits opportunities for spiritual development.

As well as creating a strong and united school community, pupils are nurtured to look beyond

themselves and to support others. They are given numerous opportunities to develop leadership skills and deepen their understanding of justice and responsibility through a variety of different roles. These include eco-councillors, anti-bullying ambassadors and peer mediators. Some are also members of a young carers' charity and a young interpreters scheme, supporting those pupils coming to school with English as an additional language. As a result of this, pupils are developing the confidence to make a difference within their school family. School leaders are committed to developing pupils' understanding of the wider world through the use of Picture News as part of their collective worship programme. This has been further supported through the development of a strong link with a school in China, which has included taking pupils on a visit to China. Pupils are actively encouraged to make positive changes within their school community. Parents and carers recognise and value how effectively this prepares pupils for the diverse world in which they live.

Religious education (RE) is given high priority within the school and is appropriately regarded as an academic subject. It is specifically timetabled to take place in a morning when additional support is more readily available. This ensures that learning is adapted and supported to meet the needs of all pupils. The curriculum is well planned and sequenced, enabling pupils to develop a broad and progressive coverage of religions and worldviews including Christianity. In line with the wider curriculum, RE lessons are creative and practical. For example, pupils keenly recalled eating a slice of apple dipped in honey as part of their work about Rosh Hashanah. Pupils are provided with knowledge organisers to support their learning and introduce them to key religious vocabulary. However, they are not always able to use this vocabulary confidently when discussing their work. The newly appointed RE leader is effectively supported by a senior leader and together they ensure clear monitoring and assessment procedures are implemented. This keeps leaders informed and helps identify where pupils need further support. As a result, they make expected progress within the subject. They develop a healthy respect for one another, and the different faith groups represented within this vibrant and inclusive school community.

The inspection findings indicate that Bishop Aldhelm's Church of England School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	21 November 2023	URN	144873
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	594
Diocese	Salisbury		
MAT/Federation	HAMWIC Education Trust		
Headteacher	Mr Scott Tait		
Chair	Philip Martin and Robyn Golden-Hann		
Inspector	Jayne Pavlou	No.	628