



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bolton-on-Swale St Mary's Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Bolton on Swale, Scorton, Richmond, DL10 6AQ

School vision
<p>At Bolton-on-Swale St Mary's Church of England Primary School we welcome everyone to a school community where all can flourish. Underpinned by our Christian values, everyone belongs and is valued as a child of God. We promote academic excellence and the development of character, knowledge and skills to enjoy being our best selves now and in the future. 'To love, live and learn together'</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders, including governors and staff are deeply invested in this as a Church school. Central to all they do is a well-understood Christian vision which is rooted in the teachings of Jesus. This creates a loving culture where all are known and valued as the unique person they are. • Worship is a deeply valued part of each day, providing meaningful moments for all to gather together. The spiritual development of adults and pupils is enhanced through music, time for reflection and opportunities to reflect on Bible stories. • The vision is lived out in deeply nurturing and caring relationships. This is evidenced in exceptional politeness and behaviour throughout the school. • Religious education (RE) is a highly valued subject. Through a carefully constructed curriculum, pupils' religious literacy and understanding of Christianity as a global faith is enhanced. • The curriculum inspires and motivates pupils and ignites their love of learning. Carefully selected extra-curricular activities enrich the breadth of learning that pupils encounter. A culture which celebrates individuals' gifts fosters a sense of pride in their own achievements and the gifts of others in, and beyond, the school.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further explore, with pupils, an understanding of spiritual development. This is to help them in the way they can describe how they flourish spiritually. • Embed the recently revised RE curriculum. This is to develop the breath of pupils' understanding of worldviews and faiths.
Inspection findings
<p>Rooted in the teachings of Jesus, the distinctively Christian vision at Bolton-on-Swale unites the whole school community. Simple in structure, yet profound in impact, the vision is understood by all. It creates a culture of high expectations where deeply nurturing relationships enrich the lives of pupils and adults. The language of 'love, live and learn together' guides and drives decisions by school leaders, including governors. All are known and loved as the unique person they are. This is</p>

evident in decisions by leaders to create personalised extra-curricular clubs to match the interests of pupils. Recently added Lego and drama groups are valued because they provide distinctive additional opportunities for pupils with a particular interest in these areas. This motivates them and enhances the positive approach to learning which runs through the school. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in their learning from each individual starting point. This inspires them to take brave steps, including leading worship in school and church. Such actions come from an understanding, promoted by adults, that it is safe to take risks in learning. At moments like these, the sense of togetherness core to the vision is a living reality which benefits all.

Governors are deeply invested and very active in the school. Monitoring visits include the effectiveness of Bolton-on-Swale as a Church school. Reviews of RE, worship and the impact of the vision strengthen the Christian foundation of the school. Questions from governors about the RE curriculum led to a widening of the study of worldviews, enriching learning for pupils. The distinct needs of the high number of pupils from service families are sensitively met by staff. When pupils' families are posted away on duty, carefully created support plans provide practical help and comfort. Many, accurately, describe how the school 'goes the extra mile' in their meaningful assistance of all families, including those in the military. The words of 'love, live and learn together' are as central to relationships with parents and carers as they are with pupils. Consequently, the vision is at the heart of the whole school community, enriching and enhancing lives.

The curriculum enables pupils to look beyond their local area and extends their understanding of diversity. Trips to Bradford immerse pupils in experiences such as visits to Hindu temples which foster a sense of curiosity and respect. Well-planned resources such as books in the library broaden pupils' knowledge of diversity and widen their horizons beyond the local area. Individual achievements, both in and outside school, are a source of celebration. Through this, adults and pupils are inspired to use their unique gifts and talents knowing these are valued. The impact of this is the creation of a 'can do' culture. This fosters a sense of the importance of trying, resilience and a love of learning where all efforts are celebrated. Within the curriculum, opportunities for spontaneous and planned moments for spiritual reflection are evident. Pupils experience this within the classroom and whilst immersed in the variety of outdoors learning areas. This creates a deep engagement with the natural world. The language of awe and wonder to describe how people develop spiritually is freely spoken by pupils. An understanding of spirituality beyond this is less consistently understood. This limits the way that pupils can describe how they feel about, and understand, the range of spiritual experiences that they encounter.

Worship binds the whole school community together. It enhances pupils' knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus and other figures in the Bible. Stories such as the parable of the Good Samaritan encourage pupils to be kind and compassionate towards each other. This is evident in caring relationships that permeate throughout the school. Opportunities to sing, pray and reflect extend the spiritual growth of adults and pupils. Open to all, through a language of choice and welcome, worship is an inclusive time to gather. Enhanced through the 'open the book' team from the local church, intergenerational story telling brings Bible stories to life. This ensures a high level of engagement from pupils. Members of the local church delight in seeing it filled with families at key times in the Christian year. Parents describe how listening to their children sing brings them 'joy.' These opportunities enrich the spiritual experiences of parents and carers.

Staff model positive relationships. Pupils mirror this, which is evident in exceptional behaviour and a culture of respect. Beyond merely saying sorry, forgiveness is understood and heals when pupils fall out. A mature understanding of the power of reconciliation ensures relationships are rooted in love. This is directly inspired by the words of Jesus to 'love one another.' Year 6 act as buddies for the youngest pupils in the school. This leadership role motivates the oldest pupils to live out the vision.

These additional responsibilities help prepare them for transition to secondary school. Parents acknowledge how positive transition is and describe the support provided by staff as ‘amazing.’ The positive wellbeing of adults and pupils is a priority area for leaders. Staff and leaders work tirelessly, and effectively, to ensure the good mental health of all.

Motivated with a sense of the importance of equality and justice, pupils act as agents for social change. They seek to reduce barriers to learning such as providing a modified bicycle for a friend with SEND. Pupils actively support a range of different local and global organisations seeking to live out the vision of love in their care for others. This is enhanced through their active involvement in groups such as the eco team and school parliament. Pupils understand that injustice happens throughout the world and feel empowered to challenge this.

Pupils, including those who have SEND and those considered disadvantaged, make good progress in RE through a well-structured curriculum and strong teaching. Pupils display an accurate understanding of Christianity as a global faith. Monitoring by leaders, including governors, ensures that RE provides pupils with meaningful opportunities to extend their understanding of worldviews and faiths, including Christianity. Greater breadth in Key Stage 1 is evident with the recent inclusion of Islam within the curriculum. It is, nevertheless, too early to judge the overall impact of the curriculum revision on pupils’ knowledge and understanding of world faiths, more generally. Through close study of Bible passages and stories, pupils demonstrate a deep religious literacy, especially relating to Christianity. The study of the psalms linked to an understanding of the Christian idea that God is omnipotent is just one example of this. Close links with the local church, for example, develop pupils’ understanding of the Christian understanding of marriage and baptism. Close partnerships with Leeds Diocese, including valued staff development and training sessions, strengthen the effectiveness of Bolton-on-Swale as a Church school.

The inspection findings indicate that Bolton-on-Swale Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	13 November 2023	URN	121604
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	108
Diocese	Leeds		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Nicola Dobson		
Chair	Clare White		
Inspector	Paul Rusby	No.	938