

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

Betley Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Church Lane, Betley, Crewe, CW3 9AX

School vision
<p>With wisdom, respect and love, we flourish and shine. 'We shine like bright stars in the sky.'</p> <p>At Betley, we will provide a loving, trusting and engaging environment rooted in wisdom, respect and love, where everyone is encouraged to flourish and fully achieve their God-given potential. We want all members of our school community to thrive and be a light in our world.</p> <p>'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'</p> <p>Matthew 5:14-16 – City on a Hill.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Christian vision is understood and lived out in everything that the school undertakes. It is strongly underpinned by Christian teachings. Through its associated values it is clearly understood by each member of the school community. Consequently, the vision enables pupils and adults to flourish.</li> <li>• Relationships within the school are a significant strength. Because the vision is central, the school recognises, embraces and develops each person's unique talent. There is a tangible sense of Christian love. All who come to the school are welcomed and treated kindly.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is skilfully led to create a well-balanced, engaging curriculum which is well sequenced. Pupils enjoy the subject and have a particularly strong command of religious vocabulary.</li> <li>• The school's distinctive Christian vision and values are explored in collective worship. These inclusive, gathered times are enjoyed by all and are a key element of the daily rhythm of school life. Pupils are keen to be involved in many aspects of its leadership.</li> <li>• The vision actively drives a curriculum that supports each person's learning needs. Leaders ensure that there is targeted intervention for vulnerable pupils including those who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of justice and injustice and explore ways in which people may respond. This will enable them to understand how they could develop as agents of change.</li> <li>• Deepen pupils' awareness and experience of diversity. This will enhance and enrich their understanding of the breadth and variety of life and faith in today's society.</li> <li>• Continue to grow the school community's understanding of spiritual development and reflection. This will progress the breadth and depth of pupils' spiritual experiences and responses.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

Betley Primary is a happy school at the heart of a small, close-knit, rural community. Its biblically based Christian vision and associated values drive everything that happens in the school. This creates a place where all are warmly welcomed and included. Each person is known well and able to thrive and flourish in a nurturing and supportive environment. A group of pupils summarised their experience and the atmosphere of the school saying, 'we love staff and staff love us'. Leaders and governors are clear about what it means to lead a Church school. They are inspired and motivated by the vision and values in all their work. Consequently, they ensure that policies, practice and resources reflect the vision and work well to enable everyone to succeed. Governors are active in the school and monitor and evaluate its work appropriately. As a result, they know the school well and offer effective support and challenge to leaders.

The curriculum is thoroughly rooted in the school's vision and values. It is designed to motivate, engage and interest all pupils. Leaders and teachers ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are fully included. Where necessary, well-targeted interventions enable each individual to overcome barriers and make progress. Through the curriculum, pupils recognise how school values influence and guide their own lives. This inspires them to make good, life-enhancing choices. Pupils enjoy the range of learning opportunities, including those offered in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. These develop new and exciting skills, enrich their lives, deepen their learning and strengthen relationships. Leaders ensure that the curriculum emphasises personal development alongside academic achievement and progress. Consequently, care is taken to support and nurture pupils enabling them to access learning and thrive. Staff firmly believe that everyone can achieve and actively seek to develop that self-belief in every learner. The expansion of opportunities for spiritual development across subjects is in its infancy. However, as this is a priority for the school, staff are increasingly addressing this in their planning and lessons.

The school community loves to anticipate and participate in their daily gathering for collective worship. Careful planning ensures that these times explore and affirm the school's Christian vision and values and their biblical underpinning. They help everyone to discover how they can meaningfully apply them to their life and future. Pupil involvement with planning and leadership is led by Worship Whiz Kids who contribute enthusiastically through drama, readings and prayers. They also lead and enthuse others to join in the signing of the words of prayers and songs. There is an excellent and mutually beneficial partnership with the clergy, church community, and the parish youth and families' worker. This enables significant and impactful support for worship and many other elements of the life of the community. The school is on a journey prioritising the development and integration of a greater understanding and experience of spirituality. This is at an early stage and there is evidence of impact. The school reflection trail, times for brief contemplation in worship and moments during classes demonstrate this. During a lesson on counting, the teacher spontaneously invited everybody to meaningful wonder about a pupil's question, 'can you count love?' Each classroom has a well-resourced reflection area. These are positively used by pupils for prayer, personal focus and consideration of the needs of others and world news events.

The vision promotes a culture which recognises and celebrates each individual's significance and uniqueness. Positive mental health and emotional wellbeing is a high priority for pupils and staff. Regular teaching, discussion and signposting about this is incorporated into the school week. It is secured through the strength of relationships at all levels, by effective pastoral care and the appointment of a counsellor. As a result, the needs of pupils and adults are quickly recognised, and appropriate action is taken. Anyone who is struggling or in difficulty will be supported and effectively cared for. The very kind and positive way in which pupils instinctively and generously support and look out for one another is remarkable. Behaviour around school and in classes is very

good and relationships at all levels are a significant strength of the school. This promotes a calm and purposeful environment in which all are valued and included. As a result, each person in the school community is unfailingly respected and treated with dignity. Pupils know how to resolve differences and to disagree well. On occasions where issues arise, these are dealt with effectively and relationships are quickly and meaningfully restored.

Partnerships are important to the school. In addition to a strong relationship with the parish church, there are productive links with the diocese and local schools. All of these help the school to live out its vision. Pupils are aware of the needs of others beyond the school and there is strong moral teaching threaded through the curriculum. This has established a lasting culture of generosity in terms of fundraising and charitable work. However, pupils' understanding of the concepts of justice and injustice, and the responsibilities these infer, are less well-developed. As a result, they have limited understanding about how people can act personally as courageous advocates and agents of positive change. Similarly, empowering pupils to make independent ethical choices to challenge inequality is less evident.

RE has a high profile and status in the school. It is well resourced and is underpinned by the school vision. The subject leader has a strong and clear plan for the subject and ensures that the curriculum is interesting and engaging. Consequently, pupils enjoy lessons and gain a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, a number of faiths and worldviews. They are increasingly gaining an awareness of the diversity of approaches to belief and practice within faiths. Pupils' knowledge of key Bible stories and their command of specialist, religious vocabulary are strengths. The regular use of big questions motivates pupils to confidently explore ideas and beliefs. Because they live out the school values, wisdom, respect and love, they are skilled in doing this confidently and safely. Staff feel confident in their RE teaching because of the impact of valued input from the diocese, the subject leader and relevant resources.

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

Information			
Inspection date	16 January 2024	URN	124235
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	101
Diocese	Lichfield		
MAT/Federation	The Great Oak Learning Federation		
Executive Headteacher	Sam Ray		
Chair	Jan Phillips		
Inspector	Peter Coates	No.	937