

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

<b>Bishops' CofE and RC Primary School, Chelmsford</b>	
Address	Beardsley Drive, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM1 6ZQ
School vision	
<p>‘Live Fully (John 10:10), Laugh Often (Job 8:21) , Learn Deeply (Proverbs 18:15), Love as God Loves You (1 John 4:16) and Let Your Light Shine (Matthew 6:14 and 15)!’</p> <p>Try to live as Jesus showed us; Offer a wide curriculum of a high standard; Value each other as individuals; Work in partnership with parents, local parish communities and partner schools; Encourage everyone to achieve their full potential; Offer a happy, safe and caring environment; Prepare each pupil to live respectfully and responsibly in a global community; Respect that we are all equal members of God’s family</p> <p>Belonging, thankfulness, individuality, courage, happiness, love, forgiveness, respect, justice, trust, compassion, friendship, peace, kindness, hope.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Christian vision reflects the distinctive context of this joint Church of England and Roman Catholic school. It is deeply embedded and drives the school’s actions and culture.</li> <li>• Close relationships between the school, local Church of England and Roman Catholic clergy enrich the life of the whole community. Strong, effective partnerships with the Diocese of Chelmsford and the Catholic Diocese of Brentwood enhance this.</li> <li>• Collective worship is a powerful expression of the school's vision. Adults and pupils benefit from coming together to experience a wide variety of worship styles. This increases their spiritual awareness.</li> <li>• The religious education (RE) curriculum is creatively delivered. This enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to 'learn deeply'.</li> <li>• Pupil voice is strong and purposeful. Through the many opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities, pupils make a positive difference in the school.</li> </ul>	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed a shared understanding of what spiritual development means at The Bishops’ School. This is so that pupils and adults can better process the many spiritual experiences they encounter.</li> </ul>	
Inspection findings	
<p>Adults and pupils are proud of what The Bishops’ stands for. Its deeply embedded Christian vision affirms this. It reflects the school’s distinctive joint Church of England and Roman Catholic Church context and provides a blueprint to live by. As one of only a few inter-denominational schools,</p>	



leaders and staff understand the special position this affords them. Focusing on building a strong community, leaders foster a spirit to 'love as God loves us'. This underpins decisions and actions, bringing unity as they work for the good of all. Through a positive, 'can do' attitude, challenges are seen as opportunities. Pupils 'catch' this and are enthusiastic about what the school offers them. The vision is lived out through the five aspects of the motto, known as the 'High 5'. By encouraging pupils and adults to 'let their light shine' this provides a model for 'living fully'. Underpinned by carefully chosen Bible verses, the motto is well known to pupils and their families. Parents describe the positive impact it has on their children. Staff see its influence on pupil behaviour and in the strong relationships built across the school. This engenders a happy environment. Adults and pupils are welcomed and enjoy being at school, where they 'laugh often'.

In line with the motto, the curriculum is shaped so that pupils can 'learn deeply'. Provision for those requiring additional support, including those with SEND, is provided in ways which are particular to their needs. Pupils understand that this is showing equity. They share that everyone has the same opportunities, but that some need help to take advantage of them. Collages of Bible verses around the school include representations of disability and diversity. This is deliberate in enabling all to recognise themselves and have a sense of belonging. It contributes to the inclusive culture where all are accepted for who they are. Mental health has a high priority. Strategies, such as the school dog and art therapies, help pupils build resilience. Links with external agencies ensure specialist help is available. Parents appreciate the care and nurture their children receive, enabling them to grow in confidence and become successful learners. The many extra-curricular clubs provide opportunities for pupils to try out new things. They develop their interests in sport and music to a high level of skill. Pupils regularly and successfully take part in sporting tournaments and choir competitions. These provide additional challenges and increased self-knowledge. Educational trips also widen pupils' horizons. A recent one to see a current Bishops' pupil in a West End musical reminds them of what is possible. This influences their aspirations for the future.

Partnerships between the school and local churches are strong. Church of England and Catholic clergy see their role as 'bridges' to the worshipping communities they represent. They work closely with each other and staff, planning and leading services either together or separately, unifying worship. This enriches the spiritual life of the wider community and promotes the school's distinctive context. Weekly and special services are well attended by families who enjoy the fellowship this brings. Adults value the support and comfort the regular presence of Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy in school brings. They see them as 'interchangeable', all equally willing to provide help when needed or share in family celebrations. The Bishops' is well thought of by both dioceses for its work in the community. The special position it holds within the respective diocesan family of schools is recognised and appreciated.

Spirituality is developed through many opportunities within the curriculum and beyond. Time and space are created for pupils to explore their thoughts and feelings. A 'sense of the spiritual' is present in the calm and purposeful environment. However, developing a shared understanding of what spiritual development looks like will enable experiences to be recognised and articulated.

Collective worship is a vital part of school life, contributing to spiritual development. The pattern across the week enables adults and pupils to experience a range of styles. They engage with worship in its many different forms in their own ways, developing their individual spirituality as a result. Choir members lead joyful worship through music. Songs are carefully chosen to reflect the themes. Pupils learn from Bible stories which are linked to and promote the vision. Personal, community and global requests are included in prayers written and led by pupils. This shows their understanding of the purpose of prayer.

Pupils fulfil a range of roles which have a positive impact on community life and prepare them for

the future. The school council suggests ideas, which are acted on. This provides them with a sense of empowerment and enables them to be agents of positive change. International Week, suggested by a pupil, provided an opportunity to celebrate the diverse cultures within the school, for example. Ambassadors work with schools online, sharing ideas and extending the school's influence. Pupils understand the importance of raising money as a way of supporting change on a wider scale and challenging injustice. However, they also recognise that giving time is equally important. Collecting litter improves the local environment but also supports their contribution to helping the planet. Parents remark how their children take responsibility for the wellbeing of others. Without being asked, they help them to feel happy and safe. This contributes to the school's nurturing, loving culture.

The RE curriculum is bespoke to the joint foundation of the school and relevant to the context of the community. Well-sequenced activities are taught creatively through art, music and drama. This means that pupils easily access learning. Monitoring by leaders ensures that provision is of a consistently high standard. Teaching is good, and pupils make strong progress as a result. They are challenged to think about their own views through reflecting on 'big questions'. They confidently articulate their learning from Christianity, demonstrating sound knowledge. Pupils explain that learning about a range of world religions and diverse worldviews is important. It helps them understand and respect the beliefs of others. Both dioceses contribute to the high quality of RE by providing training. This supports the ongoing development of staff skills and knowledge.

Governors are active and know the school well. They monitor and evaluate curriculum areas, including RE, in the light of the vision. This ensures it is at the forefront of any actions taken. This understanding is used in decision making for the best interests of all, including the appointment of a pastoral lead. This role successfully provides support for pupils, leading to trust between the school and families who appreciate the help offered. Mindful of staff workload, leaders ensure that strategies are in place to promote their wellbeing. Staff changes are low because they feel appreciated and valued. Leaders develop staff skills which enable them to develop their careers within the school. They are proud to be part of The Bishops' team. They identify with the motto and use it to encourage one another in love.

The inspection findings indicate that The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	5 March 2024	URN	115204
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	438
Diocese	Chelmsford		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Greg Waters		
Chair	Rob Higgs		
Inspector	Rachel Beeson	No.	952