

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Birchwood Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Vision

Learning together through faith, fun and friendship.

'Show me your ways Lord, teach me your paths.' Psalm 25:4

Strengths

- The Christian vision has been carefully designed for the specific context of the school it serves. As a result, Birchwood Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a loving and inclusive school community.
- There is a strong integration of the Christian vision into learning opportunities. This underpinning vision contributes significantly to the holistic development and flourishing of pupils.
- Pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are deemed vulnerable are given opportunities to thrive. Leaders make bold choices based on the Christian vision that break down barriers to learning, enabling all pupils to believe in themselves.
- The school has a well-balanced and sequenced religious education (RE) curriculum. RE is regarded as a key subject. Pupils respond positively to the questions and creative learning opportunities.

Development Points

- Ensure that governors monitor and evaluate the impact of the Christian vision across the whole school. This will enable them to play a greater role in setting the strategic direction of the school.
- Develop planned opportunities for spirituality across the school. This is so that experiences are enriched and more widely understood, enabling pupils and adults to flourish.
- Create more opportunities for pupils to individually advocate for change on issues they are passionate about. This is to broaden their understanding of justice, responsibility and active citizenship.



Inspection Findings

Birchwood Church of England School has a nurturing and caring atmosphere that is evident from the moment you walk in. The Christian vision, lived out by the school community creates a powerful sense of togetherness. The school has created a culture where pupils and staff flourish and thrive together, learning through faith, fun and friendship. During break times pupils play happily and safely. The school's outdoor environment and prayer space is purposefully set out. It encourages nurture, inspiration, collaboration and respect. As pupils develop their resilience and respect they are encouraged and supported to aim high and unlock their potential. Parents are supportive and supported, appreciating the Christian values and Bible teachings the pupils bring home. Leaders strongly model the vision and values in supporting pupils, staff, and the wider community. Excellent communication and the building of trusting relationships is central to this inclusive school. There is a practical outworking of the vision and values into the community, through a wealth of provision. Governors are committed to the school's development as a Church school. However, their understanding of the impact of the Christian vision across all areas of the school is underdeveloped.

Leaders are constantly monitoring and adapting the curriculum to reflect the vision, particularly in unlocking the potential of pupils. Their purpose is to encourage pupils to succeed as happy and fulfilled members of society. The curriculum has substantial provision for the vulnerable and pupils with SEND. Pupils with additional needs are fully included in lessons and the wider life of school. Parents/carers commend the school for its exceptional personalised care, which has a positive impact on fostering strong relationships. Outdoor learning encourages the development of strong relationships between pupils and nature during Year 1. For example, pupils applied their RE learning by building together a Jewish Sukkah. Pupils talk about the sense of calm they feel in the forest when listening to the birds or making fairy houses. Opportunities for deeper spiritual thinking are missed because they are not explicitly planned for.

Collective worship at Birchwood is an integral part of school life. It is inclusive, invitational and aspires to be inspiring for all, as they learn the ways of the Lord. Singing is a highlight. It is joyful and reflects the vision of 'Learning together through faith, fun and friendship.' Leaders ensure that collective worship themes are pertinent to the school community and encompass the vision and values. Staff and pupils are confident in leading worship. It is a time for thinking, reflection and unity. Strategic monitoring of collective worship is robust. Meaningful times of prayer and thoughtfulness are valued highly by pupils and staff and include times of stillness and the opportunity for spiritual growth. A prayer and reflection room for Key Stage 2 pupils is maintained by the collective worship group. There are interactive prayer areas in classrooms that are used by all year groups. School is supported by local clergy who regularly lead worship.

The school vision to 'Learn together through faith, fun and friendship,' is evident. Pupils and adults are valued as individuals and treated with respect. Good mental health and wellbeing of the school community are of high importance. They are strongly promoted through forgiveness and reconciliation. Pupils give numerous examples of how they live out the school vision. These include how faith helps them to keep going and how disability can be overcome through friendship. Staff speak of how the community supports their wellbeing. They particularly appreciate the way senior leaders support them in their professional development and the respectful relationships they share. Pastoral care at the school is of high quality. There is a strong outreach to families through supportive and approachable staff. These include the SENCO, pastoral manager and attendance officer. The pupil pathways provide valuable support for pupils in managing their emotions and regulating behaviour.

Pupils are encouraged, through the vision to take responsibility for themselves. Pupils are supported to develop a growth mind-set and reflect on their actions. As they grow in confidence and independence they are then able to support others. This is particularly evident in the way older pupils talk about their responsibilities for caring for others. Pupils take on roles such as head boy/girl, school councillor, worship committee and eco club. Eco club actively pursues external awards to measure the impact of their projects. Leaders provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about and support the work of charities locally, nationally and globally. Pupils are given depth in their understanding of the injustice and the actions each charity takes.



These include Warrington Food Bank, National Autistic Society and UNICEF Water Sanitation and Hygiene project. Pupils understanding of justice is being developed. Currently only a few pupils independently initiate advocating for issues that they feel passionate about.

The teaching of RE is clearly structured using a range of high-quality resources. Leaders ensure that the subject is well-resourced. Local networks are regularly attended by leaders, to support the assessment of the standards of learning in the school. The school makes good use of diocesan resources, which support the depth and variety of the curriculum. Staff receive appropriate, ongoing training to ensure that teaching and learning is always improving. Each classroom has a prominent up-to-date RE display. The curriculum is challenging and relevant. Leaders ensure that RE assessment systems are used effectively by teachers. High quality assessment and monitoring supports teachers' planning, resulting in good teaching and learning. All pupils are given the opportunity to recap and reflect on what they have been learning. Pupils take pride in their work and are keen to share their learning with their families and visitors. Pupils particularly enjoy the philosophical, collaborative and creative elements within their lessons. They use religious language well the majority of the time. Consequently, they make good progress in RE from their starting points. Leaders are aware that the context of the school means that pupils have limited exposure to faiths other than Christianity. In order to address this school links with local places of non-Christian worship, for example the Mosque in Warrington. Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity as a world faith. They can speak about some differences in how Christians worship. Older pupils explain that learning about wider religions is very important to them, so they can act respectfully to others. However, pupils' understanding of a range of religions and worldviews is less developed than their understanding of Christianity.

Information

Address	The Mount, Admirals Road, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire. WA3 6QG		
Date	Monday 14 th October, 2024	URN	111304
Type of school	Primary	No. of pupils	164
Diocese/District	Liverpool		
MAT/Federation	None		
Headteacher	Stephen Latham		
Chair of Governors	Nicola Fox		
Inspector	Lisa Lakey		