

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Balshaw's Church of England High School

Address	Church Road, Leyland, Lancashire. PR25 3AH		
Date of inspection	11 July 2019	Status of school	VC secondary
Diocese	Blackburn	URN	119775

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent

School context

Balshaw's Church of England High School is a secondary school with 922 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The current headteacher has been in post since 2014 and has wider responsibilities in local teaching alliances.

The school's Christian vision

'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.' Psalm 119: 105.
Lighting the path to excellence through Christian vision and values. Gospel values of love, forgiveness, friendship, kindness, truth, patience, respect and humility are the foundation for decisions made in the Balshaw's family. Our aim: to develop students of faith and no faith, who reflect Christ's love within the wider community.

Key findings

- The impact of the Christian vision is clearly understood and lived through strongly held values which infuse the whole school community. Pupils speak thoughtfully of this as the 'guiding light' of their lives.
- Collective worship planning is exemplary in supporting the vision. Its impact on pupils is seen in the way they are often called upon to support and lead worship on special occasions in the town and community.
- The curriculum is shaped to express the vision, but only some subjects document the opportunities to express the vision in the scheme of work. As a result, some opportunities are missed.
- Religious education (RE) planning and organisation is excellent and is both inspirational and challenging. This is evident in the way pupils confidently speak about their understanding of a range of religions and worldviews.

Areas for development

- Explain the vision fully on the website so that all stakeholders understand how the values flow from the vision.
- Review departmental handbooks so that all subjects clearly identify teaching opportunities to express the vision.
- Develop an appropriate context for eucharistic and sacramental teaching to further enhance spiritual growth.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The school's Christian vision is lived out in an exemplary manner. Leaders at all levels are deeply committed to implementing and promoting the vision. Pupils deeply understand the source of their vision and values. They carry cards reminding them of these and the Lord's prayer. However, the theological journey from vision to values is less visible on the website. This means that a full explanation is not immediately apparent to all stakeholders. An outstanding sense of shared purpose unites school, church and community. The clergy and headteacher give the deeply held Christian vision the highest priority. The school buildings have wonderful displays reminding pupils of the vision. The senior leadership team provide inspirational and caring leadership exemplifying this. Governors and the business manager integrate the Christian vision into continuing excellent management. Leaders encourage all adults to flourish through a wide range of professional development courses. Reflecting the impact of the vision, strong emphasis is successfully placed on the mental health and wellbeing of all within the community. Staff and pupils speak highly of the transformational care and support provided across the school. Evidence of excellent practice is seen in how beliefs, hopes and aspirations are discussed and shared by pupils and adults alike.

The Christian vision is explicitly realised in educating all pupils, meaning progress is above national averages. Parents strongly appreciate the approachability of staff and feel every pupil is highly valued. A well-developed system for using funding for disadvantaged pupils ensures maximum progress. Vulnerable pupils have individual care plans which show a great depth of understanding. There is a broad curriculum and approaches to spirituality are evident. However, not all subject handbooks document the opportunities for spiritual development that staff might take. Pupils readily reflect on spiritual thoughts in poetry and prayers. Prayer is a natural and frequent part of everyday school life showing that spiritual maturity is deeply embedded. Many other opportunities are provided from which pupils gain great joy and further spiritual understanding. Musical events such as 'Resurrection Rock' and 'Joseph' are examples. Pupils readily understand the Christian vision applies to all areas of life both academic and personal.

Pupils are encouraged to explore their potential in innovative and creative ways in and out of school. Opportunities for reflection are plentiful and have a profound effect. Pupils express their understanding of God as seen in Jesus' life and readily relate this to their school motto 'Not for self, but for others.' As an example, this means that pupils reflect readily on their hopes and aspirations. They understand that as God's promises helped Jesus, so the Christian vision helps them achieve their potential. Thus, the vision is transformational. Pupils enthusiastically embrace the importance of the Christian concern for justice for all. This is demonstrated through an exceptionally large range of charities supported by them. The Bethany Trust is one example, and pupils eagerly anticipate a planned visit of a group of pupils from Tanzania. Pupils have also listed further topics ready for discussion and action and are eager to make a difference to the world in Christ's name.

The Christian vision is evident in the ways that different views are explored and resolved. This is seen in the school council where pupils have responsibility to voice opinions. Their conduct shows that as Jesus worked with his followers to care for everyone, so they do the same. The behaviour policy reflects the vision and values, and underlies actions taken. This means that 'Forgiveness is our default setting' are significant words from that policy. Perseverance with the Christian idea of forgiveness in difficult times is deeply understood by pupils, and they readily link this with Jesus' example. They fully realise it takes God's strength to maintain the Christian ideal. Staff conscientiously ensure pupils understand the world's diverse nature. Dignity and respect for all is strongly encouraged through a vast range of pupil support for the disadvantaged, marginalised or those with special needs. Motivated through the Christian vision, pupils have with a real passion and desire to do more as advocates of change.

Pupils respond enthusiastically to invitational worship and deeply appreciate moments of stillness and reflection. The collective worship leader's excellent planning ensures all worship supports and expresses the vision. Pupils plan and lead acts of worship on major occasions. Such is the quality of this that civic leaders request pupils to lead worship events in the town. Elements of gathering, engaging, responding and sending out are inspirational

and uplifting. Pupils respond readily sharing the impact of spiritual thoughts on their lives and how worship has moved them to action. Christian teaching about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is evident and pupils confidently explain their theological understanding using various illustrations. Formal prayers are used, and pupils and adults understand the central importance of prayer. All major activities begin with an act of prayer. Pupils understand the church year and special worship projects are used in Lent and other seasons. They engage with the eucharist to some extent but a deeper understanding of this and other sacraments is currently less developed. Permission for confirmation classes has been granted by the bishop to address this. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of Anglican and other practice through visiting ministers. Excellent systems monitor and evaluate worship informing future planning and ensuring pupils make progress in prayer and spirituality.

Religious education is a separate subject and is exceptionally well planned and confidently taught by staff. It meets all the statutory requirements. The RE leader promotes staff development through innovative subject training. Her own exceptional professional development is seen in the award of a prestigious Farmington scholarship at Oxford university. Resources include 'Understanding Christianity' and the Lancashire Locally Agreed Syllabus. This material has significant impact in helping pupils' understanding. It is reflected in the highest quality oral and written work demonstrating a thoughtful appreciation of the influence of Christianity and other religions on society. All pupils can explain the importance of RE and its impact on their personal spirituality. Pupils of different faiths and backgrounds can readily re-interpret the vision in the light of their own beliefs. The curriculum has an excellent balance between religious and other views. As an example, pupils readily explain and assess the impact of religious beliefs on ethical issues. The quality and range of their theological thinking is impressive. They have excellent knowledge of other world religions and recognise the importance of this in promoting global understanding. All pupils study RE to GCSE level. A clear and very thorough system of assessment informs and guides their progress and recognises their attainment.

Headteacher	Steven Haycocks
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