

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bulford St. Leonard's Church of England Primary School			
Address	John French Way, Bulford Village, Salisbury. SP4 9HP		
Date of inspection	11/02/2019	Status of school	VA primary academy. Salisbury Plain Academy Trust.
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	143007

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	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Requires Improvement

School context

Bulford St. Leonard's is a primary academy school with 210 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. 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 or disabilities is in line with national averages. 75% of pupils are from military families and there are high levels of pupil mobility. The headteacher joined the school in March 2018. Since the last inspection there has been a significant level of staff turbulence. The school converted to an academy in 2016 and is part of the Salisbury Plain Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

The school's Christian vision

The whole school community recently revisited and reviewed the school's vision. This included selecting the most important values as trust, forgiveness and wisdom and the school seeks to put these into action in everyday behaviours and decisions. It will provide a challenging, yet nurturing, environment based on Christian values, where all achievements are celebrated and children are encouraged to strive for their personal best. Last but not least, the school aims to produce independent and confident children through 'learning and friendship'.

Key findings

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the MAT's leadership team, has created a vibrant Christian learning community where pupils flourish both academically and socially.
- High standards of behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning reflect pupils' understanding and application of the school's Christian values.
- The school believes that every pupil should be valued and loved. This belief drives leaders' determination to make appropriate provision for all pupils' needs. This is especially evident with its care for military pupils leaving and joining the school.
- Worship and prayer have a central role in the life of the school, offering pupils and adults a rich and supportive spiritual experience.

Areas for development

- Monitoring systems for religious education (RE) and collective worship should be used regularly and consistently so future development actions are identified accurately.
- RE assessment systems need to be firmly established.
- Continue the development of deeper questioning so pupils can form their own independent conclusions.
- Deepen further stakeholders' understanding of the biblical narrative that underpins the school's vision.

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

Bulford St. Leonard's has recently, with its whole community, revisited and reviewed its Christian vision. Pupils have designed a 'vision vessel' hot air balloon and a newly appointed member of staff for art will work with the pupils to transform their ideas into a reality. Regular revisiting of the vision is seen as important, given this school's highly mobile military community. This shared understanding allows the vision to be influential and central when decisions are made. The headteacher, significantly supported by the multi-academy trust's (MAT) leaders, works with a strong sense of purpose and a wholehearted commitment to keeping the school's Christian character at the heart of the school. The academy advisory board rigorously monitors the school's effectiveness. The MAT's four Church schools work in close partnership and this strengthens the challenge and support for Church school improvement. Since the headteacher's appointment, she has made rapid improvements to leadership effectiveness and academic standards. The school's Christian vision is at the forefront when courageous decisions have to be taken such as converting to an academy school and measures taken to secure a strong, stable staffing team.

The majority of the school's community comprises military families resulting in significant numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school. Detailed procedures are in place to ensure pupils' smooth transition so they settle very quickly. Leaders are aware that mobility could impact negatively on pupils already in the school and effective measures are taken to minimise this. Pupils enjoy welcoming new friends into the school. They say the 'buddy system' works well, supporting them when they were new. They explain that you do not lose friends, but continue to make new friends, describing how they keep in touch with pupils who have left. They recognise the Christian values of trust and forgiveness as important in supporting friendship. Pupils due to leave the school speak confidently about their move, showing their development of important skills when dealing with life changes. Pupils say they can talk to an adult if they have a worry and they know the difference between minor friendship disputes and bullying. One pupil, who was given significant support when struggling with the challenges of moving school, described Bulford St. Leonard's as a, 'school that changed my life'. Pupils are valued and supported whatever their needs. Parents say they are overwhelmingly grateful for help received, thanking the school for, 'not giving up on my child'. Parents say, when difficulties arise, that the supportive partnership between home and school improves their situation.

The curriculum is well planned and exciting. Pupils enjoy talking about learning, for example, sharing their knowledge of world faiths, cultures and beliefs. They know that many of these exist in Britain. This links positively to experiences of the many military pupils who have lived and attended school in other parts of the world. Pupils discuss serious issues thoughtfully and respectfully, even when individual views may not agree. Classrooms are calm and respectful learning places where pupils patiently listen to each other, giving their peers a safe space to verbalise their thoughts. Themes are made relevant to their own lives. For example, when learning about the Israelites escaping Egypt, they can think about personal happy spaces that support them when they feel scared or angry. Teachers are increasingly using deep questioning to challenge pupils even further with their thinking.

The skilled leadership of the headteacher, rigorous support and challenge from the MAT and committed teaching staff have led to raised academic standards across the school. Results are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs have appropriate support to address any barriers to learning. As a result, the majority of pupils with learning needs make expected progress from their individual starting points. Engagement with external school improvement partnerships such as the Pickwick Learning Alliance and high-quality professional development have created a strong, motivated teaching team with the skills to support pupils, whatever their needs. High expectations regarding school absence have resulted in improved attendance figures. However, the school works very closely with military liaison personnel and requests for absence on compassionate grounds are fully considered.

Pupils have a growing sense of Christian compassion, supporting local, national and global charities. Some charitable acts are child-initiated, such as a pupil requesting to sell items she made at the Christmas Fair in aid of a cancer charity. Pupils describe their support for the local Trussell Trust food bank as important because some people within their own community may need food. They say charity is not always about giving money because giving 'time' can also help people. Pupils are aware of the need to protect our environment, describing ways they personally can make a difference, such as reducing the use of plastic and re-cycling.

Worship forms a special part of the day and Anglican traditions make it a distinctively Christian experience. Adults support pupils who struggle with the demands of worship, such as being quiet or sitting still. Technology and the reading of pupil prayers are organised by the pupil worship team. The school's vision with its associated values forms the focus for worship themes and pupils are invited to contribute their thoughts. The focus carries on beyond worship allowing pupils to see the link between worship, Bible stories and everyday life. Visiting leaders give experiences of different worship styles. The local vicar is a long-standing member of the academy advisory board and a regular visitor to the school.

Pupils say personal prayers help them to be thankful and to think of others. The Trinity is understood at an age appropriate level with pupils seeing the Bible, cross and candle together representing God. Recent training has supported spiritual experiences to be planned across the curriculum and unplanned spiritual moments are recognised and appreciated. A strong partnership exists with Salisbury Diocese and the advisor's suggestions for church school improvement have been quickly embraced, showing the school's determination to further its development as a church school.

Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met.



The effectiveness of RE Requires Improvement

RE development has stalled recently due to leadership changes. However, detailed plans are in place for the new RE leader. The headteacher, supported by the vicar, is currently leading RE, including the monitoring of teaching standards. An appropriate action plan is in place. Effective teaching allows pupils to explore world religions and beliefs and lesson planning is supported with high quality resources. Professional development and diocesan advisory support have resulted in rapid improvements regarding teacher subject knowledge, this impacting positively on the quality of teaching and learning. Work in books and other learning evidence shows appropriate standards of care, presentation and independent thinking. RE assessment systems are currently being developed. Challenging questioning is taking place within RE lessons and this is having an impact on the depth of pupils' thinking, allowing them to appreciate that there can be a range of valid answers to the same question.

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