

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bentley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address Church Road, Bentley, Ipswich IP9 2BT

Christian vision

Our vision is for all children to be confident individuals, successful learners, and responsible citizens...who are well equipped for future life, whatever that may hold...knowing that God is with them always.
 'Know that I am with you always.' Matthew 28:20

School strengths

- The school's Christian vision, promoted by leaders and supported by effective partnerships, underpins action and policy. Consequently, pupils present as confident, resilient learners and they are well equipped to navigate their learning, relationships, emotions and challenges.
- Collective worship is inspiring, relevant and joyful. Pupils respond to the message with their individual reflections and prayers. Worship centres around Christian values, such as thankfulness, and many pupils respond by applying these to their lives.
- There is a tangible culture of care in the school. Wellbeing and positive mental health are prioritised in this inclusive community and as a result, all, including the most vulnerable, flourish.
- Vision-driven approaches to restorative justice, and the self-regulation of behaviour, enable this community to learn and grow together. Many view the school as a 'family' where tolerance, care and mutual understanding characterise relationships.
- Effective leadership in religious education (RE) has established a broad ranging and challenging curriculum covering Christianity, world faiths and worldviews. Due to regular professional development opportunities, staff feel confident to deliver RE and pupils enjoy their learning.

Areas for development

- Harness pupil responses to issues of justice, equality and environmental concerns. This is so that pupils become ambassadors of change who understand they can make a difference in the wider world.
- Embed the school's shared language and understanding of spirituality, further equipping staff to promote spiritual development. This is to ensure that all have the opportunity to flourish spiritually.
- Make more use of pupil voice in the evaluation of collective worship. So that worship continues to be relevant and accessible to all.

Inspection findings

The school's distinctive Christian vision is the driving force of leaders' strategic direction and action, it motivates all decision making. Individuals are equipped with the tools to flourish in life, aware of God's

presence in all circumstances. Carefully chosen partnerships are deliberately nurtured. They are effective in the strengthening of church school provision resulting in the flourishing of all. The federation with Copdock Primary School, for example, has brought shared staff expertise and increased capacity in delivering the curriculum. This leads to informed and effective subject leadership enabling academic flourishing. Well-trained staff, who advocate for holistic care, also bring expertise in areas of mental health and personal growth. Leaders' tenacious pursuit of the vision for the individual has resulted in a community where all flourish.

Leaders have carefully developed the curriculum and extra-curricular offer with the view to building confidence, success and spiritual development. There is a very strong sense that staff know their pupils' talents, areas for development and personalities. As a result, pupils are confident, capable and reflective learners. Staff are committed to ensuring that all, including the most vulnerable, are given a skill set that allows access to all opportunities. No limits or ceilings are placed on aspiration for pupils. Where individuals may struggle with certain aspects of learning, despite intervention, they are nurtured and encouraged in their unique talents. The whole school community celebrates these achievements of personal flourishing.

There are many opportunities for spiritual development in the curriculum including the promotion of Christian values, prayer space days and reflective areas. However, whilst leaders are clear about what spiritual development entails, there is little evidence that the understanding is shared. Those in the wider school community do not appear to share a common language for spirituality. Consequently, opportunities to promote or develop this aspect is often limited to the encouragement of personal development and social growth. Evidence of pupils and adults describing or engaging with that which is other or beyond themselves is limited.

Collective worship is valued by many in the school community and driven by the vision. It is meticulously planned to incorporate Christian values, key festivals in the church calendar and wider social and cultural events. The message of God's offer of presence and help in both good and bad times is central. There are regular meetings of the 'worship group.' Here, pupils of all ages volunteer their lunchtimes to contribute to the, planning, delivery and evaluating of worship. They also pray for requests and concerns. Whilst some pupil feedback about worship has informed aspects of planning, these contributions and insights are not utilised regularly. Members of the local church are active in their support of the school and regularly contribute to collective worship through 'Open the Book'. These times help pupils understand biblical stories and also promote valued community links with members of the local church. Pupil leaders welcome the whole school community to worship. Pupils sing joyfully and actively express their worship with actions and percussion instruments. Biblical texts are used to promote half termly values such as thankfulness. Pupils are encouraged and inspired by words, pictures, video and percussion instruments. Pupils happily respond with reflections and are confident to share their thoughts with the whole school. There is space and time for personal and community prayer. Pupils refer to the Lord's Prayer when discussing forgiveness, some can recite it off by heart. Regular services held by the school at the local church are well attended. Parents appreciate the opportunities for pupils to take part in the services. They see the vision's impact in the way that even the very youngest pupils speak with confidence and do well.

All members of the school community comment that Bentley is like a 'family'. People are treated well here they feel valued and cared for. Wellbeing is positively promoted and strongly advocated. Personal and community wellbeing and positive mental health are seen as key to individual success. Staff are encouraged by the mutual care of the team and by leaders' check-ins regarding their wellbeing. They feel personally appreciated. Strategies for pupils to acknowledge, understand, express and regulate emotions have been introduced. Creating systems that quickly respond to pupil need have been positively and enthusiastically received by pupils and parents. The school is able to respond proactively to families who are experiencing difficult times, for example during bereavement or separation.

The vision-driven desire to see pupils equipped for future life can be seen in the way that the school promotes conflict resolution. There are robust systems in place which apply a meaningful restorative justice approach. Older pupils are trained and developed as peer mentors. They are available as a first port of call to advise where there might be low level disagreements or issues. As a result, pupils learn responsibility and

resourcefulness, flourishing as members of the school community. The school has effective nurture provision, this adult lead group is responsive to the needs of individuals. Here, issues that may affect pupils, such as anxiety or social skills, are addressed through craft, discussion and advice. This culture of personal responsibility enables positive relationships to thrive. Pupils are encouraged to take part in charitable events and show their care for others. However, there is limited evidence of pupils championing and speaking out about issues of justice, equality or ethics. Partnerships with the diocese and local authority impact positively on the school and benefit local schools. The diocese utilises the expertise of Bentley staff to support other church schools through the Diocesan Board of Education. Staff also advise the local authority on small rural schools' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provision. This enables the flourishing of others beyond the school's immediate environment.

Leaders ensure that RE has a high priority in the school. The curriculum coverage is broad and enables pupils to focus on Christianity, world religions and worldviews. The resources used are carefully constructed to allow pupils to build understanding year on year. Pupils speak accurately and confidently about their learning. Older pupils can give age- appropriate accounts of Christianity and are thoughtful in their discussions. They are evaluative, respectful and reflective. Educational visits to places of worship enrich learning. Multicultural days enable children to think further about our diverse world. Staff are confident in their delivery of the subject due to effective and prioritised professional development. As a result, pupils are well equipped to appreciate and thrive in our richly diverse world.

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

Information				
School	Bentley Church of England VC Primary School			
URN	124754	Pupils on roll	56	VA/VC/Academy VC
Diocese/Circuit	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich			
Multi academy trust	N/A			
Federation	The Federation of Bentley Church of England and Copdock Primary Schools			
Headteacher	Joanne Austin			
Chair of governors	Simon Hurst			
Inspector	Jane Trampnow		No.	954
Date of Inspection	21 September 2023			