

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School	
Address	Buxton Road, Longnor, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 ONZ

School vision

To be a loving and nurturing school community, providing the rich soil that enables our children to develop deep roots, grow and flourish, to be the best they can be.

Nurture, Grow, Flourish

Keep you roots deep in Jesus and have your lives built on Him. Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught.

Always be thankful. Colossians chapter 2 verse 7

School strengths

- The school has a cohesive Christian vision that binds pupils and staff together. Adults and pupils are encouraged to 'be the best that they can be'.
- The school has deeply committed leadership which provides stability and support for adults and pupils. Leaders are beginning to take effective steps towards the improvement of St Bartholomew's as a Church school.
- Pupils' social and emotional needs are exceptionally well met so that all learners thrive and grow in self-confidence.
- There are very positive relationships and partnerships between pupils, staff, parents, the Diocese and the local community. These demonstrate the rich soil that enables growth.
- Support for the most vulnerable and the youngest members of the school community reflects the Christian vision and values as a lived reality. This enables pupils to be cared for and grow whatever their age or level of need.

Areas for development

- To improve the religious education (RE) curriculum so that pupils have a more secure knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews.
- To establish a shared understanding of spirituality that enables pupils and adults to have a deeper experience of flourishing.
- To enable pupils to look beyond their locality to see the needs of the wider world so that they become agents of change.

Inspection findings

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary school is an inclusive school where everyone is nurtured. The school is a very important part of the community and is valued by parents, staff and pupils. All are well known and are treated with respect as precious individuals. Pupils have a deep understanding of the vision and values so that they know they are growing in 'good soil'. The Christian vision is referred to during collective worship and at other points in the day. This reminds pupils and staff what it means to be part of the caring school family. Pupils are confident to discuss

what the Christian vision means to them and how it feeds into their school life and beyond. As a result of the lived vision, this rural Church school has the feel of a loving family where there is positive sense of belonging. The nurturing aspect of the vision is reinforced each morning as staff welcome everyone individually, greeting them and showing interest in their lives. Parents are generally aware of the Christian foundation and vision of the school. This means that the vision is beginning to have an impact on the wider community through events such as Christmas lunches in school and the popular 'bake and brew' gatherings.

The school is led by committed and enthusiastic staff who work closely with governors and help to guide the school. This is appreciated by many, in and beyond the school community. Pupils, staff and parents are supported effectively and nurtured so that personal difficulties are met with a sympathetic response. The wellbeing of all is at the heart of everything the school does. The acting headteacher and governors have led the staff and pupils through a worthwhile review of the Christian vision and values. This is now snugly interwoven through the daily life of the school as it is particularly suited to the locality and community needs. The school rightfully has an excellent reputation for enabling pupils to be happy and engaged in lessons. The youngest pupils are given many opportunities to thrive, putting down roots at the start of their school lives. The governors, acting headteacher and staff have been through a period of rapid change. This includes significant recent work to develop the wider curriculum, so that it delivers growth in line with the vision. Pupils with additional needs or specific vulnerabilities are extremely well looked after. School leaders and staff know them well and work effectively with both the pupils and their families. Those undergoing more difficult times are signposted to external sources of help, as needed. Governors recognise the school now needs a period of consolidation to enable recent changes to become embedded. One noted that what was needed was time for 'settling'. The governing board references the Anglican foundation of the school by giving time for prayer or reflection at the start of their meetings. They uphold the Christian vision in principle and increasingly, in practice. They explain that they see the vision, 'in respectful relationships'. Governors and leaders actively seek the views of pupils. As a result, reflection areas in classrooms were reintroduced. Nursery children now join worship, and this is a direct result of leaders' commitment to inclusion.

Maintaining fruitful partnerships is one way St Bartholomew's lives out its vision. The school has longstanding links with the parish church. This includes visiting for special events like, 'Experience Christmas' and to celebrate key festivals during the year, such as Harvest. Links with the Diocese are also good. These are an important feature as the school addresses the issues that it faces and moves forward. Diocesan advisers are a hugely valuable source of expert advice and pastoral guidance. The school has been well supported through a period of substantial change in staffing. The diocesan team has successfully worked with the school to improve collective worship and is now providing guidance on RE. Leaders are enthusiastic about the next steps that they are taking and have a clear understanding that RE needs to be improved. This is so that all pupils develop their understanding of worldwide religions and begin to become critical thinkers. Pupils are keen to help others. They work with adults to raise funds for good causes, particularly those more local, and so known to them. At this time, pupils are less aware that they can make a difference to the lives of others more widely.

Collective Worship now takes place daily and includes prayer, sung worship and Bible stories. All pupils take part in collective worship which demonstrates the vision of personal growth and inclusion. Worship gives pupils and staff time to consider key values, such as friendship, and to reflect on their own views. Pupils eloquently discuss the meaning of different artefacts on the collective worship table, particularly the beautiful cross, crafted from a tree in the school grounds.

As pupils explain, 'this shows Christians walk away from sin and death'. Pupils have a good understanding of the main events in the Church's year. Pupil involvement in worship provides some opportunities for spiritual development. The impact of this is limited because pupils and adults do not have a shared understanding of spirituality. Opportunities to develop this are not embedded in the curriculum or collective worship. Consequently, the impact of opportunities for spiritual flourishing is underdeveloped. The school worship team assists during collective worship, leading the welcoming and closing prayers. Their leadership of worship matters to them. It allows them to reflect on how they live out the vision for example, by encouraging other children to show kindness to others. Worship invites adults and pupils to engage with Christian teaching and prayer. The impact of worship is growing. This is seen in the enthusiasm with which pupils engage, especially in boisterous singing.

The RE curriculum is now planned in a sequential manner. Pupils do not develop their knowledge and understanding beyond a basic level and are not consistently academically challenged. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their visit to a place of worship, whilst studying Islam. This enables them to begin to think about life outside their locality. Older pupils recall some knowledge about how Muslims make visits to Mecca and about the five pillars of Islam. Bible stories have been studied during RE lessons. However, pupils cannot consistently remember them and are confused in their understanding. RE lessons, therefore, do not have the expected impact on learners. They do not give enough opportunities to explore and develop ideas related to people of faith and those of no faith. Leaders know that the RE curriculum does not sufficiently challenge pupils or expand their knowledge and experiences. There is currently no understanding of Christianity as a diverse world religion.

The inspection findings indicate that the school has strengths, but that there are also issues that leaders need to address as a matter of priority. These are listed in the areas for development. School leaders have not ensured that the provision, profile and priority of religious education result in an effective curriculum.

Information			
School	St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School, Longnor	Inspection date	26 February 2024
URN	124261	VC/VA/Academy	VC
Diocese/District	Lichfield	Pupils on roll	22
MAT/Federation			
Acting headteacher	Emma Priestman		
Chair of Governors/ Trust Board	Kate Brown		
Inspector	Paul Hunter	No.	C.23/24