

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School			
Address	Breaston Avenue, Leigh. WN7 3DJ		
Date of inspection	09/05/2019	Status of school	Academy. Member of the Acorn Trust. Inspected as voluntary controlled.
Methodist District	Bolton and Rochdale	URN	140053

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 Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent

School context

Bedford Hall is a primary school with 209 pupils on roll and an additional 54 pupils in the nursery. 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 above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school is situated in an area of high deprivation. The headteacher is temporarily acting as executive headteacher of both the schools within the Acorn Trust. The school has a part-time chaplain.

The school's Christian vision

'Learn, love, live: without limits.'

This is based on the words of John Wesley, John 10:10, Psalm 25:4 and Galatians 5:13.

Key findings

- The vision for learning, loving and living without limits permeates all aspects of school life and is well-understood by all stakeholders. The vision for learning without limits inspires an innovative curriculum and excellent spiritual development. This equips pupils to look beyond the boundaries of their community and engage with new challenges with resilience. The school supports all in living life in all its fullness.
- Loving without limits informs the way in which the school provides transformative pastoral and practical care for all members of the school family. It results in ground breaking work, which is seen as 'prophetic', to promote the dignity of each valued individual. A rich programme of visits and visitors enhances understanding of religious and cultural diversity. The school is a highly inclusive and welcoming community,
- The vision for putting love into action results in a strong commitment to securing mental wellbeing for all. This extends to supporting the wider school family and local community. The school have been highly innovative, as well as embracing considerable investment, in promoting mental wellbeing.
- The exceptionally strong partnership with the chapel greatly enriches both school and church. It results in exciting collective worship which inspires pupils to compassionate action. The worship committee, which includes members of the congregation, the chaplain and staff, facilitates creative thinking. The wonderful reflective stations around school make a profound impact on pupils' understanding of prayer.
- Curriculum planning for religious education (RE) secures a well-balanced curriculum which enables pupils to make very good progress in RE skills and concepts across the key stages. Strategies for assessment are highly effective. Strong leadership ensures that monitoring informs development planning.

Areas for development

- To share the school's excellent practice more widely, so that more schools are able to benefit from the way the school has creatively implemented its vision in response to its context.

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 vision for learning, living and loving without limits has been developed with the whole school community. Consequently, the vision is embedded and understood by all. This Christian vision, arising from the school's context within an area with high levels of deprivation, informs all decision making and investment. One example of resulting innovation is the school's curriculum. This is designed to remove barriers to learning and break the cycle of deprivation. This visionary curriculum contributes to the strong progress made by all groups of pupils. Identified needs include communication skills and lack of opportunities to experience the world beyond Leigh. In response to this, a curriculum based on consideration of great literature has been developed, securing rapid progress in reading, speaking and listening skills. Planning for this curriculum secures high quality spiritual development, with consideration of big questions addressed through Christian values and the Bible. Pupils frequently use art as an expression of their spirituality. Their work results in a vibrant school environment which prompts further challenge and reflection. A project inspired by the Methodist Art collection resulted in wonderful interpretations of paintings on Biblical themes. The commitment to learning without limits results in investment in curriculum enrichment, including a varied programme of visits beyond the boundaries of the local community. The partnership with a school in Bolivia supports pupils in gaining global perspectives on the world. The curriculum contributes to pupils' strong sense of justice, for example, through work on Martin Luther King which included pupils enacting a peaceful protest in the school hall.

Vibrant collective worship is at the heart of school life. It is a key way in which the vision is shared with the school family. Children reflect the Methodist tradition for singing the faith as they exuberantly sing worship songs. Worship is enhanced by the exceptionally strong partnership between school and chapel. The school's worship committee includes many members of the congregation, who give unstintingly of their time and creativity to develop worship experiences. They worked with pupils to create the beautiful spaces for quiet reflection in every classroom. These use a range of interactive prayer activities and contribute to pupils' excellent understanding of the purpose of prayer. Chapel members run a much valued day focusing on transition for Year 6 pupils. All pupils lead worship at different times. They say they appreciate hearing explanations of big ideas from their peers. Leadership of worship is strong. The Worship Warriors team are inspired by their work with the chaplain. They routinely evaluate worship. These pupils regularly use drama to enrich school worship. During an act of worship thinking about the significance of Jesus' resurrection for Christians today, the Worship Warriors presented an engaging dramatic presentation of resurrection appearances to Peter and the disciples. Adults as well as children are highly appreciative of the support they receive from collective worship. A governor described the way worship, including dance from pupils, had helped to lift her during a bad patch. Worship often inspires pupils to compassionate action, for example, support of many charities and the local foodbank. Careful planning supports pupils in thinking deeply about issues of life and faith.

The school is a loving family environment where relationships are excellent. Behaviour is very good and behaviour management is characterised by forgiveness. The desire to love without limits and provide all with the ability to live life to the full drives the school's commitment to and investment in support for mental health wellbeing. This includes training for staff in mental health first aid and the appointment of a pastoral manager. The local community has unusually high levels of domestic violence and one outcome of the school's work has been to address the issue of domestic violence through the curriculum and workshop activities. The wellbeing of staff is a high priority. This informs the decision to invest in access to a mental health counselling service for staff and their family members. Consequently, staff feel highly valued and well-supported. The school's work with the Greater Manchester Mentally Healthy Schools Pilot Project has contributed to the way the school family reflect the words of John Wesley in 'watching over one another in love'. Through 'Growth Mindset' strategies, pupils learn to be resilient and to embrace challenges as they enter the 'learning pit' with determination. The impact of the love and exceptional pastoral care provided by the school is also felt by the wider school family. A parent, who herself struggled with mental health issues said, 'Every time I or my kids have been at rock bottom, teachers have given support.'

The desire to 'serve one another humbly in love' (Galatians 5:13) drives the school's passionate commitment to securing the dignity of each valued individual. The school have worked creatively to address issues relating to gender and sexuality through personal, social and health education. As champions for Stonewall the school lead workshops for parents as well as pupils. The chair of the Methodist District described their sensitive work in this

area as 'prophetic' and as having a strong message for churches. The school also promotes understanding of diversity by providing opportunities for this largely White British community to engage with people of different faiths and cultures. This is well-supported by opportunities for engaging with different faiths in RE.

RE is carefully planned to support learning without limits. Links with collective worship and the wider curriculum support pupils in thinking deeply about big questions. Methodist units of work support understanding of the Methodist story and traditions. RE is very well-led. Embedded assessment strategies ensure that assessment informs planning and supports effective feedback. Exciting teaching strategies result in pupils being inspired by RE. They find it a safe place in which to explore ideas and beliefs.

The way in which the vision is monitored and evaluated is secured by the inclusion of planning for the school's Christian character in the school development cycle. Governance is strong. The trustees uphold the Methodist foundation of school well. Governors are driven by the Christian vision and the desire to meet the local needs. The recent development of the nursery has been driven by the needs of local community. The school works closely with the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust. Staff have benefitted from high quality training for their roles in a Methodist School and some have taken on leadership responsibilities as a result. The school already shares its good practice through local and national networks. This is something which they are keen to extend, as they seek to work out their vision to enable all in their community and beyond to live life to the full.

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