

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Benson Church of England Primary School	
Address	Oxford Road, Benson, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 6LX
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good

School's vision
'Love one another, as I have loved you' John 13 v34 Our Christian vision underpins our relationships, developing a sense of community. Drawn from Jesus' words, our vision enriches our curriculum fostering respect and a celebration of diversity. Prayer is central to the life of the school enabling all to experience spirituality and reflect upon how we can serve one another with love.
Key findings
- The vision of Benson Primary school, focussed around the Christian understanding of love as exemplified by Jesus in the gospel of John, is thoroughly embedded and driving the strategic and day to day life of the school. It is known, valued and embraced by the whole community. - Pupils flourish here socially and emotionally and feel welcome, cared for and heard. Most pupils are flourishing academically; the vision is leading many new developments in teaching and learning. There is increasingly strong provision for SEND and the most vulnerable students. - Pupil voice and courageous advocacy are strong in this school; pupils are supported and encouraged to stand up for what they believe in and become agents of change in a variety of ways. - Collective worship is a valued and impactful part of life in the school. Worship is a priority for leaders and has a strong Anglican liturgical shape. Pupils have opportunities to plan, lead and engage with worship in various ways. - Religious Education has a good profile and is a priority in the school curriculum. It is well led and monitored and developments are being made to ensure pupils learn about a range of religions and worldviews in a variety of creative and engaging ways.
Areas for development
- Embed practices and processes that ensure consistent academic flourishing and spiritual development across the curriculum, for all cohorts and pupils. - Develop inclusive and invitational practices to ensure pupils of all faiths and none are able to be fully engaged and inspired in both whole school and class based collective worship. - Continue to build consistent systems for effective planning, delivery and assessment of RE that ensure engagement and progress for all pupils, across a range of religions and worldviews.

Inspection findings

The Christian vision and the core value of love are central to life at Benson school. Leaders and governors prioritise the vision in decision making. They regularly monitor the impact of the Christian vision and elements of Christian distinctiveness in the life of the school. Leaders have good relationships with the local church, the diocesan education team and the academy trust education team.

Relentless love for each other is part of being a member of the Benson community; the vision drives social and emotional flourishing for all. Pupils are kind and respectful and behaviour is generally good. They show enormous compassion for their peers, such as when new pupils join or those with medical needs require help. Difference is welcomed and embraced. Behaviour management processes are grounded in love and forgiveness. Staff feel supported and understood by leaders, particularly in times of need. Well-being is a priority for leaders and governors.

Spiritual flourishing is a valued and important part of school life. Pupils value opportunities to be still and reflective, saying how this helps them. Various opportunities for prayer are invitational but offered to all. A reflection board, school prayer book and prayer space activities offer chances to express concerns and worries. Pupils of different ages and backgrounds share their thoughts here. Breadth and curriculum enrichment are important to teachers and leaders; creative and collaborative activities and outdoor learning take place regularly. Some opportunities for spiritual reflection are evident across the curriculum, this needs further planning and development.

The Christian vision drives academic improvements. Staff speak of the importance of showing love for students through high expectations as well as nurture and care. New phonics, maths and SEND materials target individuals and cohorts that need specific support. Strong vision based decisions are often made regards the cost of this provision. Teaching assistants, a sensory room and specialist emotional literacy support (ELSA) support have been recently prioritised. Inclusion is a core part of work at this school.

Pupil voice and courageous advocacy are also central to life at Benson School. Parents say their children are encouraged to 'find their voices' and express ideas and opinions. Worship leaders, house captains, diversity and science ambassadors have a chance to lead others. The curriculum offers opportunities to learn and speak up about disadvantage and injustice, such as environmental issues, anti-bullying and anti-racism. The school has excellent links with the local community. The vision of love is reflected in the way school embraces projects such as the annual 'race for life' or fundraising for brain tumour research. The 'families of Benson School' group funds a sponsored animal for each class through the WWF charity, engaging pupils with worldwide environmental issues. More work is needed to develop this global perspective.

Collective worship is valued and prioritised. Leaders maintain a clear liturgical structure and pupils plan and lead worship. Staff express the ways in which worship impacts them and offers them a chance for spiritual engagement. Worship makes relevant links between current events such as the coronation of King Charles and the 'value of the term'. Pupils think and reflect quietly. Worship explores the school vision, and all show understanding of the core value of love, and other associated Christian values. Some prayer and singing opportunities are invitational. These inclusive practices need further consideration in order to ensure all pupils, of all faiths and none, can fully access and be inspired by worship.

RE has as good profile at this school. There is strong subject leadership; recent monitoring recognises gaps in pupil knowledge and need to improve creativity and depth of learning. Class RE books and new assessment processes are being implemented but are currently used inconsistently. Pupil enthusiasm for RE varies, not all enjoy it but some find it valuable and say it is 'important to understand each other'. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of Christianity. They know biblical stories and explain ideas around baptism and Holy Communion. Pupils recall some facts about different worldviews well but lack depth in their knowledge around varied faiths and their impact in the world.

Information			
School	Benson CE Primary School	Inspection date	4/5/23
URN	147507	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Oxford	Pupils on roll	277
MAT/Federation	Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust		
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Crolla		
Chair of Governors/ Trust Board	Patrick Gilday & Chris O'Donnell		
Inspector	Laura Harris	No.	2202