



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bramley Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School

Address Birtley Rd, Bramley, Guildford, GU5 0HX

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

Excellent

The impact of collective worship

Excellent

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Excellent

School’s vision

Rooted in Christian values, Seek within, Wonder why, Reach out, Aim high.

Key findings

- The cohesive and deeply rooted Christian vision is integral to all aspects of the school’s life and work. It profoundly influences decision making and practice at all levels.
- Relationships and partnerships nurture and support each individual member of the school family, enabling them to flourish and succeed.
- Pupils’ personal and spiritual development are exceptional. The golden thread of the school’s Christian vision impacts on them personally and on their school community.
- Collective worship is the time for thinking, for listening and for seeking within. There is clear evidence of the exceptionally positive impact on pupils’ and adults’ behaviour and positive attitudes to learning and life.
- Religious education (RE) lessons skilfully offer creative opportunities for learning across the school combined with challenge which results in pupils gaining a deep but age appropriate knowledge and understanding.

Areas for development

- Develop pupils’ understanding that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith in order for learners to understand the difference and diversity within global Christian communities.
- Extend learning about people from a range of religions and world views to address the mono-culture of the pupils’ immediate community.

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

Bramley's Christian vision of 'seek within, wonder why, reach out, aim high', is well known, understood and lived by all members of the school community. It is the driver of all decision making, policies and routines in the school. It is deliberately short and carefully written making it accessible to the young children of Bramley. They readily articulate the impact it has on the choices they make and how they live their lives. The vision is rooted in Psalm 119 'Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path'. Staff often refer to the light that guides everyone in the school community along their path. They say that this was encapsulated in the school's first worship together during the pandemic which took place outside on a bright sunny spring morning on the grass surrounded by daffodils. The school underpins their vision in carefully chosen Bible stories that are accessible to young children and the teachings of Jesus. One parent reported that her son only tells her about two things from his day, lunch and the Bible stories that he hears in worship. The vision has fostered an exceptional shared understanding of spirituality across the whole school community, with words and actions for 'seek within' and 'wonder why' often repeated. This encourages reflection and what one child called 'a quiet moment of calmness in the middle of playtime'. The Christian vision and values are clearly shown in the strong and supportive relationships within the school and in the good behaviour which contributes to a calm learning environment. One member of staff said that 'there isn't a day that goes by when we don't reach out to each other'. The school's behaviour policy is rooted in its Christian vision and its Christian values all of which contribute strongly to the children's character development. Pupils explain that the value of perseverance means that they keep on going and trying, they don't give up. The school clearly fulfils their own statement that 'our vision prompts us to have high expectations for all, questioning and challenging ourselves in our learning and behaviour while understanding we can support others through reaching out'.

Leadership is strong and effective. The headteacher, supported by her governors and staff, has developed a school with a strong Christian character. In fulfilling its vision the school proactively reaches out to partners and has created many links which add to the richness of the school's provision. The school invests an admirable amount of time in providing high quality information for parents to enable them to support their children's learning at home. Parents and pupils deepen their understanding of how to achieve the term's value together, as a family, through the engaging tasks in the Values at Home activity letter. Parents strongly support and appreciate all that the school does. The greatly valued and supportive partnership between the school and the church is cherished. The vicar, who is a governor, has observed that the 'school is shot through with Christianity and spirituality. It is the air that they breathe'. This is clearly demonstrated as the children enter worship with an air of excitement and reverence.

Bramley has 'aim high' aspirations for all alongside a focus on the development of the whole child. The curriculum was rearranged during the pandemic to ensure it maintained a broad and balanced focus. Leaders were determined that pupils would flourish during and after the pandemic so a high proportion of pupils came into school because they struggled to concentrate with online learning due to their young age. Leaders were determined that all pupils would continue to 'aim high' so a detailed gap analysis during and after the pandemic has ensured that pupils have continued to achieve well. 'Wonder why', a key phrase from the vision statement, ensures that time is given across the curriculum for pupils to reflect and question. Forest school and outdoor learning is a priority in understanding and celebrating creation. This supports the children's knowledge about the world around them and knowing how to care for it. However, the school recognises that it is predominantly a monoculture and has rewritten parts of the curriculum to explore difference and diversity. The school 'reaches out' to charities which the children can particularly relate to such as toilet twinning. Their recent fundraising for Ukraine, focusing the appeal to the adults in the community due to the age of the children. The school have been led by the children in their response to it: i.e., only discussing it when children raise it, revolved around developing an understanding of the situation in Ukraine. School council discuss which charities will be the school's chosen charity and recently requested that Red Nose Day be supported. The school 'reaches out' and

encompasses the local community by sharing the school's vision and half termly value in the parish and village newsletters. A science trail was set up around the village during the pandemic and school council have undertaken litter picking. The vicar and the open the book team are well known to the pupils who greet them when they see them in the village. Pupils and families recognise the church as a focal point in their community and the school has begun to use the church again.

The RE leader, who was appointed to the school during the pandemic, has shown strong leadership throughout this difficult time enabling RE to continue to grow and develop. Staff training this year has focussed on the flourishing of high attainers in RE. The termly pause days contribute significantly to the extraordinary depth of understanding that all of the young pupils at Bramley achieve. RE contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and to their understanding of the school's Christian vision. This term the whole school have been immersed in the Easter story through a combination of RE lessons, Open the Book worship, school worship and a pause day. Pupils' knowledge of the Easter story is excellent. This was demonstrated by two reception children who were articulating and acting out the whole of the Easter story with wonderful resources provided by the teacher and small world figures that they had made themselves. "Don't worry' they said 'it has a happy ending'. Each term the school holds a 'pause day'. This is a special time when children come together to work with children from different year groups. The school reports that these days are invaluable to children because they enable them to reflect on their learning and engage in deeper religious thinking. Recent pause days have focussed on courageous advocacy and the importance of the festivals of Advent and Lent. RE supports the school's Christian foundation extremely well and planned activities successfully provide a range of opportunities for pupils to 'reach out' and learn about Judaism and Islam. Although pupils have gained an understanding and respect for difference and diversity in the world today, they do not fully appreciate that Christianity is a multi-cultural, global religion. The RE leader has taken advantage of diocesan training. This has greatly influenced and benefitted many aspects of RE and has consequently created a thorough assessment system. She has moderated judgements with support from the Diocese and now supports and challenges teachers' judgements.

Pupils are reminded of the vision at the beginning of worship to emphasise that this is the time for 'seeking within, wondering why, reaching out and aiming high'. Worship is short and interactive with opportunities for impromptu prayer. It has stories with acting and songs with movements and actions. Pupils report that they love worship. It is integral to the school day and is led by a range of school and community leaders. The programme is carefully planned focussing on the Bible and one of the school's Christian values. It is designed to support the pupils to make connections between the church year and the school's vision. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the liturgical coloured cloths and the meaning of each colour with the gold cloth generating suitable excitement. Children come into worship with reverence and with the expectation that they are going to receive something special. The worship team, consisting of Year 1 and 2 pupils, are extremely proud of the responsibility given to them and are actively involved in planning worship and in the daily act of worship. Prayer is integral to the school day and pupils are invited to share their own prayers or reflections each day. Evaluations by the Year 1 and 2 worship team and adults from the school community contribute to planning the next term's worship.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

RE is well led and managed. It is rigorously and regularly monitored by leaders. RE teaching across the school is at least good and often better. The curriculum is planned well, so that the all pupils make good and often better progress. Learning for all pupils, including vulnerable pupils is deep and wide. This has enabled all pupils to flourish.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	23 March 2022	URN	125243
Date of previous inspection	12 May 2015		

School status	Voluntary aided infant school	NOR	67
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese	Guildford		
Headteacher	Shona Taylor		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The school lost an established member of staff to Covid at the beginning of the pandemic		
Inspector's name	Janice Meyer	No.	921