

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Pilton Bluecoat Church of England Academy			
Address	Abbey Road, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1JU		
Date of inspection	12 November 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VA. The TEAM Multi-Academy Trust.
Diocese	Exeter	URN	138315

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 Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Pilton Bluecoat Academy is a junior school with 264 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. 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 above national averages. The school academised in July 2012 and TEAM Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) was founded in March 2015.

The school's Christian vision

'Life, love and learning to the full.'

At Pilton Bluecoat Academy we aim to build the foundations of life in all its fullness underpinned by our Christian values, where we understand what it means to be loved and to love others within our school and our local, national and global community.

Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10)

Key findings

- The vision has inspired outstanding partnerships with a number of global communities which have transformed pupils' understanding of difference, disadvantage and deprivation leading to them becoming articulate advocates for change.
- The religious education (RE) subject leader is innovative and dynamic, creating excellent approaches to teaching the subject, used nationally and locally. She effectively nurtures schools to improve their practice. The school is recognised as a centre of excellence for RE.
- Leaders are passionate about enabling vulnerable pupils to flourish. They make bold decisions to give pupils a new start, raising their belief in their own talents.
- Pupil ethos ambassadors play a leading role in planning and leading collective worship. They identify new initiatives to raise the importance of worship. However, pupils' knowledge of the main Christian festivals is not fully developed.

Areas for development

- Enable pupils to develop a vocabulary which enables them to express their ideas and thinking about spiritual experiences with greater confidence and clarity.
- Extend pupils' understanding of the main Christian festivals and their significance for Christians.

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 distinctive Christian vision is fundamental to daily life where all recognise its importance. The vision inspires pupils to explore beyond their local community, to become global citizens and raise their aspirations. Leaders articulate a well-developed understanding of the Christian principles underpinning the vision. They point to Jesus who shows how we can love one another as each individual is special to God. Leaders model the way Jesus treated others enabling all to achieve their God-given potential and have life in all its fullness. Pupils are confident to explain what the vision means to them and how it shapes their attitudes and actions. Older pupils set themselves targets in the three aspects of the vision; life, loving and learning, explaining the difference these make.

The vision drives powerful partnerships which allow pupils to learn from and value one another. Pupils and staff have visited their well-established linked Indian school. School staff have helped them to raise the quality of teaching through modelling outstanding practice. Pupils' attitudes and knowledge have been transformed as they share 'Skypes' and become penfriends. They have a particularly well-developed understanding of difference, diversity and disadvantage, which they discuss with confidence. Pupils articulate differences between these communities thoughtfully and explain how the beliefs of Christians and those of other faiths influence their actions. This has inspired many pupils to independently become advocates for change creating projects which improve others' lives. In a similar partnership with a Ugandan community several innovative projects have deepened pupils' understanding of global warming and the environmental dangers of plastic. In addition, there are numerous links with European countries including pupils' exchanges and exploring their cultures. The school is recognised as a centre of excellence which is celebrated through an international schools award. These outstanding practices are shared with other MAT schools and beyond. Further excellent support is shared in RE and other subjects where staff demonstrate high quality practice. The school has supported other schools very effectively, helping them to raise standards and the quality of their Christian distinctiveness.

The school is recognised as a centre of excellence for its teaching in RE by the diocese and beyond. The subject leader is extremely enthusiastic and skilled. She has been accredited as a specialist leader of teaching RE and is involved in developing innovative approaches to the subject for a national organisation. Her excellent practice is shared across the MAT, locally and nationally. The school welcomes other RE leaders to visit, to learn from the excellent practice at Pilton. The subject leader has shaped innovative approaches to RE, enabling pupils to deepen their thinking through specific strategies. These ways of deepening pupils' thinking are now used effectively across other subjects. Pupils have a depth of understanding of other world faiths through RE days which provide rich interactive experiences to explore artefacts and talk with people. This raises their respect and tolerance for those who hold different views to their own. Assessment strategies are robust and effectively enable staff to monitor pupils' progress. They are inspired and speak enthusiastically about RE, and enjoy the challenges, recognising that the subject shapes their thinking.

The vision has inspired leaders to create a 'big event curriculum', which is rich in experiences often beyond their locality. Leaders are committed to raising the aspirations of all, particularly vulnerable pupils, so that they can achieve their potential. This reflects the vision. An innovative curriculum for vulnerable pupils, 'the walking curriculum' provides local experiences. These are highly effective and transform pupils' self-belief and attitudes to learning. Vulnerable pupils are expertly supported by staff 'learning champions' who match a range of activities to their individual needs. This has enabled vulnerable pupils to make significantly better progress often in line with their peers. Attainment across the school is similar to national expectations and is steadily rising. Pupils make connections between Christian values and how these help them overcome barriers to learning. Pupil and staff mental health and well-being have a high priority, with a range of effective strategies and support in place. They talk about the story of Nehemiah and how he overcame problems. There is a well-developed understanding of spirituality. New ideas are being explored to deepen pupils' thinking. Spiritual arts and poetry provide rich moments to explore ideas. At present pupils are less confident to express their ideas verbally as they do not have a relevant vocabulary to draw upon.

Ethos ambassadors play an impressive role in raising the importance of worship. They regularly plan, lead and shape ideas for worship so that they are meaningful for all. Ambassadors work actively with peers identifying improvements. An excellent example is the creation of new reflection areas. Pupils' feedback indicates these are

valued, helping them to become calm. Rich relationships with the church are well established, particularly through festival celebrations. The church leads engaging workshops at Christmas and Easter. Each term ambassadors lead a Sunday worship in the school. This relationship is recognised as high quality practice. Prayer and reflection are valued, particularly when pupils are worried. Collective worship draws upon biblical stories which help pupils to see how Jesus lived his life and its relevance for them. Pupils have some understanding of the main Christian festivals, but were unsure of others such as Pentecost.

The vision strongly promotes a culture where everyone is special. Staff model a high degree of dignity and respect in their relationships with pupils and parents. This has created a rich caring family where all work well together. Pupils explain that Christian values shape their relationships and give numerous examples where these have transformed their behaviour. Pupils act as mediators resolving minor disputes drawing effectively upon their understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation. An impressive feature is the support and tolerance pupils have for peers who join the school who have particular behavioural needs.

Leaders are passionate and dedicated to the work of this church school. They make bold ethical decisions which reflect the vision, regarding welcoming pupils who need a new start. The school has a high reputation for their nurture, enabling pupils to overcome barriers and flourish. A strong cohesive staff team is established who wholeheartedly share this vision. The school has an excellent record of developing future church school leaders. Staff at all levels feel valued to realise their potential. Governors are well informed and committed to their roles. They work enthusiastically with staff and have regular developmental discussions with pupils. This has led to the school making outstanding progress in recent years.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

Teaching and learning is of a very high quality, with a number of examples of excellent practice. The subject leader is influential in supporting staff and identifying creative approaches to developing a theme. Staff effectively use a rich variety of approaches which stimulate and engage pupils. Pupils’ attainment is in line with other core subjects and is steadily rising. Vulnerable pupils are excellently supported by teaching assistants who extend and enrich discussions. This enables these pupils to frequently make better progress than other subjects.

CEO Head of school	Rhian Nicholas Ian Thomas
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