

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Beckley Church of England Primary School			
Address	Beckley School, Church Street, Beckley, Oxon, OX3 9UT		
Date of inspection	21 January 2020	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC school River Learning Trust MAT
Diocese	Oxford	URN	146939

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	Good
Additional Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Beckley Church of England Primary School is a primary school with 113 pupils on roll. 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 below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed. The school converted to Academy status on 1 April 2019 and is now part of the River Learning Trust.

The school's Christian vision

Promote and achieve excellence in all areas of school life. The school will be a place and a community where all children are happy and safe, where they can flourish and achieve their best in a caring, inclusive environment.

Kindness is our core value, underpinning our school vision:

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" *Ephesians 4:32*

Key findings

- All stakeholders confidently articulate the school's well established and inclusive Christian vision. Partnership with the River Learning Trust positively supports the school's heritage and current vision.
- Wellbeing is a strength of the school and fundamental to its ethos. Kindness, consistent with the school's vision, is readily and clearly demonstrated across the community.
- Pupils enjoy worship. However they do not lead, plan or evaluate worship. Consequently, pupils' spiritual development, through deeper involvement in worship, is limited.
- Formal monitoring and evaluation of religious education is not robust or systematic. Therefore, opportunities to drive improvement in religious education are sometimes lost.
- Adherence to the school's vision leads to high expectations for learning. The headteacher has created a culture of continuous improvement.

Areas for development

- Create formal monitoring and evaluation systems in religious education to ensure consistency of practice across the school and inform future developments.
- Develop robust ways for pupils to take greater ownership of collective worship, prayer and spiritual reflection.
- Explore global partnerships to strengthen pupils understanding of Christianity as a living faith and to develop courageous advocacy.

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 dedication and commitment of the leaders of Beckley school means that a highly effective Christian vision successfully permeates this community. Life at Beckley is motivated by the kindness emphasised in the school's vision which is built on Ephesians 4:32. Kindness is modelled by the whole community and creates a welcoming and inclusive ethos with wellbeing at its centre. It generates deep caring relationships and these are effectively fostered across the community. Staff explained this as the 'little acts of kindness ... that make a family'. Moreover, parents, staff and children from all backgrounds, refer to the school as a family.

The headteacher and the governing body have worked well together to secure the ongoing sustainability of Beckley school. To achieve this, the school has joined the River Learning Trust (RLT). The trust's vision reflects the school's passion for excellence and members of both communities work well together. The governors have ensured that the RLT's articles of association uphold the school's church foundations. Governors work in partnership with the school and the trust to effectively monitor and evaluate school issues. These are identified and addressed through the school's improvement planning. Through association with the RLT, staff receive robust professional development. Staff agreed that the training is of high quality and supports their needs.

Staff and governors speak passionately of the nurture, love and respect pupils are shown. This care, arising from the school's vision, allows pupils to grow in confidence in all areas of school life. Staff are committed to providing opportunities for pupils to achieve their best academically. To ensure this happens they carefully plan interventions and targeted sessions for their pupils. This provision has led to improved outcomes across the school and is particularly noticeable in vulnerable groups. Additionally, the school introduced a new marking policy that provides pupils with better feedback in relation to their work. This is part of a sustained effort by staff to fulfil the school vision, that all should excel. Their efforts encourage pupils to become more self-aware and reflective. As a result, pupils say they 'try hard to improve' and that lessons challenge them. They explained that, in line with their school vision, they are learning to be excellent. Academic results are strong and above national averages. It is clear then, that the children of Beckley are flourishing through the kindness and challenge they receive.

Pupils support a range of charitable works such as the school's plastic pollution project and the local food bank. They are able to talk about how, through their actions, they support others. They express compassion for others and have been given opportunities to act on this. For example, pupils have initiated the installation of a remembrance garden in school. The children's attitude to supporting others makes them living examples of their school's vision 'be kind to one another...tenderhearted'. Additional opportunities to reflect on wider world issues are made during collective worship. Through collective worship pupils are learning an appreciation of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. However, pupils are less able to give explicitly Christian reasons for taking action against the injustices they encounter. They do not have connections with Christian communities abroad or an appreciation of Christianity as a living world faith.

Collective worship is held in high regard. Pupils respond positively to worship and enjoy singing a wide repertoire of traditional worship songs. Through collective worship children are beginning to learn about Anglican traditions. For example, they are invited to use the 'call' and 'response' of 'this is the day the Lord has made'. This practice is entered into with enthusiasm and respect. Collective worship allows pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of Bible stories. This is particularly evident in the 'Open the Book' sessions which are delivered by volunteers from the parish. The school community attends the parish church for Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Pupils have a good understanding of the key festivals in the church calendar. During daily collective worship some pupils contribute prayers but pupils do not lead, plan or evaluate worship. Pupils' spiritual development, through deeper involvement in worship, is therefore limited. Furthermore there is currently no agreed definition of spirituality in use across the school. Much work and serious, prayerful reflection by the governors and headteacher have been given to address this situation. Nonetheless, at present, children's spiritual development cannot be adequately planned.

Behaviour at Beckley School is calm and respectful and makes a significant contribution to the atmosphere of learning. Areas in classrooms, and in shared spaces, are explicitly linked to the Christian value being focused on

during the term. Displays reflecting the values and vision of the school encourage children to think and ask questions. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and, following recent training, the introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource is underway. There is a strong commitment to religious education from the headteacher and the governors. However, it is not systematically monitored or evaluated. Therefore, the school's ability to develop religious education is limited.

Through age-appropriate activities, pupils demonstrate an appreciation of how belief influences people's lives and behaviour. This understanding is enhanced through opportunities to explore religions that are practised by families in the school community. To this end the school welcomes parents of other faiths to speak to the children about their beliefs. Children enjoy these occasions and say this helps them understand how others live. Older children spoke with enthusiasm of a Hindu temple they had visited. They were keen to share what they had experienced from a personal perspective. For example, one girl commented, 'it was lovely to sit and reflect in the beautiful building'. Through such efforts the school is creating a community that aptly expresses dignity and respect to all and where all can flourish.

All stakeholders at Beckley strive to live out the school's vision to the benefit of the children they serve. Their sustained effort to live together in Christ-like kindness has created an inclusive community where pupils and adults flourish.

Headteacher	Mark Szortowski
Inspector's name and number	Delia Sheppard 942