

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bishop Perowne Church of England College

Merriman's Hill Road, Worcester, WR3 8LE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Worcester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	1 May 2012
Date of inspection	2 July 2018
Date of last inspection	28 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Secondary Academy 138107
Headteacher	Mark Pollard
Inspectors' names and numbers	Allyson Taylor 768/Duncan Jones 813

School context

Bishop Perowne is a smaller than the average 11-16 secondary school, with 801 students on roll. Most pupils are of white British background. The number of pupils from other cultures and backgrounds has increased. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is average, although it is above average in some cohorts. In 2017, Ofsted placed the school in special measures. In March 2018, Ofsted judged leaders to be taking effective action to improve the quality of education.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Perowne as a Church of England school are good

- Bishop Perowne is an improving Christian learning community which lives out its vision and values to enhance the life chances of pupils.
- Relationships are shaped by the motto 'Endeavour Forever'. There is a palpable sense of Bishop Perowne persevering through recent challenges and of being a safe and secure place where pupils are enabled to learn.
- The school is held in high esteem by parents; they appreciate the care for those pupils with additional needs and for those who find moving to high school difficult.
- Outstanding leadership creates a powerful ethos of aspiration and nurture where each pupil is known and valued. There is a strong community feel which emanates from the cooperative team spirit of the staff.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) are good in key stage 3 and for those pupils entered for the GCSE. The non-GCSE curriculum lacks sufficient explicit teaching of Christianity.
- Improved academic progress and exam results show the impact of compassionate, yet uncompromising leadership and effective teaching.

Areas to improve

- Extend opportunities for pupils to plan and lead aspects of worship to increase their engagement and build links between biblical teaching and their daily lives.
- Leaders, including governors, to engage with Church of England policy and guidance to support their monitoring of the school as a church school.
- Review the proportion of Christianity taught in both key stages to ensure the expectations of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement are fully met.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

An unwavering commitment to helping each pupil succeed means that Bishop Perowne lives out its motto 'Endeavour Forever'. Exam results in 2017 show that the school community has united to turn around the former decline in attendance, behaviour and so learning. Current assessment and attendance information supports this view and the school is now at or close to national averages.

Strenuous efforts to improve the life chances of the most vulnerable pupils are made and with notable success. Staff are true 'extra milers' and staff stability during an unsettled period evidences the strong team spirit which has a positive impact on pupils. One pupil said, 'This is the place I want to be.' A sense of belonging and self-worth is fostered at every turn. A range of pupils were unanimous in their good humoured affection and respect for staff. One boy talked about his tutor as 'more than a teacher, she is always there for me'. Individual profiles are collated so that every pupil, particularly those who are disadvantaged, is enabled to achieve their potential as unique and precious to God. The school acknowledges that its work on improving outcomes for its more vulnerable pupils is ongoing. The remarkable turn-around in the last 18 months is due to the tireless efforts of the whole community to do better. As a result, there is a supportive culture which is both securely rooted and bearing fruit.

Care, nurture and flourish are words which characterise the ethos of the school. Innovative actions, like the attendance car, make a huge difference to allowing all pupils to flourish. As the senior leadership team state, 'If they are not here, they may not be safe and they won't be learning.' Another commented, 'God and Jesus never give up on anyone, so we don't either.'

Pastoral support for those in need is very effective. A number of different approaches and support mechanisms are tailored to meet individual learning and personal needs. Pupils and parents are grateful for this. Investing in high quality support means pupils' emotional and mental wellbeing are a priority which demonstrates the value of compassion. The offer of a rich curriculum, including performing arts and sports, means that the school ensures pupils' talents and interests are fostered. RE makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of diversity and wider spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The four Kingdom values of love, justice, compassion and freedom underpin the wider vision expressed in the motto. These values are important to adults and pupils and readily related to examples from the Bible. One pupil explained why freedom is important, 'Moses freed the slaves and there are still slaves in the world.' There is a clear impact of the Kingdom, and related Christian, values seen in the positive relationships across the ages. A student commented, 'The values help us to make good decisions in life.'

An inclusive and welcoming culture flows from the values and the reduction in exclusions proves the effectiveness of that culture. Bishop Perowne, while still on its journey of improvement, is a Christian community in action.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is valued by most members of the school community. Time for reflection and worship exist across the school day. A 'thought for the week' is promoted which is linked to the weekly Gospel reading. As a result, there are worship links to the Bible, although the centrality of Jesus to Christians is less clear. Follow up worship in tutor groups gives pupils further time to make the theme relevant to them, although the explicit Bible references are less evident. For example, a follow up on the theme of friendship in a tutor group showed pupils engaging in lively discussion which was related to the values of love and compassion. This theme, however, was not directly linked to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Themes explored provide guidance for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Worship often encourages pupils to take action in the service of others, for example through support for a local food bank. This exemplifies the very effective impact of the values of justice and compassion. Sensitive consideration of the needs of other faiths is evident. Muslim boys may attend a Friday prayer group, but there is no offer for girls. Time for worship supports the good behaviour seen around school. As one pupil said, 'Worship helps us live better lives.' The promotion of values through worship allows pupils and staff to explore their individual spiritual journeys. The 'Third Space' gives a valuable place for adults and pupils to take time out for reflection. In the Third Space photographs which present challenging images help pupils to think deeply about themselves and the world. As a result, the school is effectively enabling pupils to develop their own sense of spirituality. Worship includes some elements of Anglican tradition, such as a prayer and Bible reading. Prayer is usually led by adults, although pupils enjoy being invited to lead this aspect of worship. The decision to rethink the school Eucharist means that such services are now held in the parish church, not the school. Pupils and staff describe how this has made the worship a far more spiritual experience. The school celebrates the main festivals in the Christian calendar and so pupils have an awareness of Anglican customs. The chaplaincy team works with senior staff to plan and lead worship and since the last inspection the number of staff leading worship has grown considerably. At this stage, only a limited number of pupils lead worship. Pupils express a wish to be more regularly and actively engaged in the worship life of the school. This is an area for development already identified by the school. Self-evaluation of collective worship is strong. Staff ask students their opinions about worship and use these to identify key areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE makes a good contribution to pupils' overall progress scores in key stage 4. The high percentage of those achieving higher grades in the GCSE demonstrates the quality of teaching and learning. Some pupils convey how the subject is important to them. As a result of the good teaching by subject specialists, students are interested and motivated to learn. RE gives students transferable life skills. The ability to discuss, debate, agree and to disagree well. Students from different year groups say that they like the challenge of the subject and the fact that RE helps them to think beyond their immediate community.

Assessment is used well so that most pupils know the next steps in their learning. Work in pupils' books shows that standards are broadly in line with other subjects, such as English. Lessons visited during the inspection demonstrated a culture for learning and excellent behaviour. Feedback on these visits was agreed with the senior leader present during the observations. In a study of Oscar Romero, one student commented, 'He is a great role model as he fought for equality, justice and freedom.' This demonstrates the thoughtful responses pupils make to good teaching which also reflects the deeply held values. Monitoring and evaluation of progress is also effective; this involves governors who work with the subject lead to consider subject development plans.

The introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' in key stage 3 is at an early stage and this shows that professional development of staff is a priority.

In key stage 3 and the GCSE classes, there is good coverage of the beliefs and worship practices of different faiths. Christianity is given precedence and this enables pupils to see both similarities and differences with it and other faiths. As such, RE lessons make an important contribution to pupils' sense of their place in our multi-cultural society.

After serious consideration, the school made the decision to offer different 'pathways' so that less able pupils would not be entered into the GCSE RE exam or syllabus. Instead, an innovative curriculum, known as PSRE (personal, social and religious education) is in place. Pupils explore topics which are relevant to them and which are related to aspects of RE where possible.

The PSRE curriculum, however, does not give pupils in this 'pathway' the depth of knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. The RE policy is not compliant with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for RE which states that all pupils should be entered for an accredited and appropriate qualification. On balance, it is clear that the RE and PSRE curricula have been carefully considered to meet the varying needs of all learners. There are, however, some limitations in terms of ensuring that all pupils develop the religious literacy of which they may be capable.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

Determined and able leadership, embodied by the headteacher is reinvigorating the school. The new leadership team is united in its mission to ensure each student is able to grow in academic and personal terms. The headteacher, deputies and assistant heads are shepherding the school into a new phase of success. Their commitment to the Christian principles of the school shines in conversation. The rise in exam results and embedding of a positive culture are testament to the outstanding leadership team. Leaders value staff as well as hold them to account and so teachers in turn are motivated and empowered to do their best. Teachers talk eloquently of the moral and Christian imperative which guides them. Bold and ethical decisions have been made, for example to rethink the structure of the school Eucharist and to target those with low attendance. Leaders' actions make the school more effective as well as distinctive as a church school. It is also clear that governors have reflected on how they need to provide better strategic leadership. The appointment of a dynamic and effective headteacher and restructuring of key leadership posts is instrumental to recent improvement.

The school profile has changed and with it the range of needs which leaders seek to address. Governors articulate how understanding these needs has enabled them to take compassionate decisions in terms of staffing. As a result, those who need additional support for different reasons are exceptionally well cared for.

Self-evaluation of the school as a church school is robust and accurate. Governors have worked with the diocese to develop their effectiveness and so be 'fit for purpose.' Leaders' response to being placed in special measures has been supported by their commitment to Christian values. It is clear that decisive leadership has prevented the school being sponsored after the Ofsted judgment. As the headteacher said, 'Flourishing in God's Kingdom includes achievement.' However, key policies and documents are not referencing Church of England guidance, for example on preventing bullying (Valuing all God's Children). Statutory requirements are broadly met, although not fully, with regard to expectations of RE in an Anglican school. The development points from the previous inspection have been addressed. Partnerships with the chaplaincy team and parish church have grown to mutual benefit with school holding services in St. Barnabas. Governors have sought diocesan support and this partnership, particularly around preparation for SIAMS, has been effective. Parents speak warmly of the support they and their children receive and this confirms the judgment of this inspection that Bishop Perowne is a good church school.