



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Address | Vaughans Lane, Great Boughton, Chester, CH3 5XF |

School vision

The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School is an exciting place to be. We know, nurture, and inspire our community to be the best version of themselves through a better understanding of the Christian faith, our core values, and a rich set of opportunities. Students achieve academically whilst growing personally and spiritually. Through their engagement in society and beyond, our students make a positive difference through wise action, resilience, and a sense of responsibility. Our community is enabled to live life guided by Jesus, to flourish and have “life in all its fullness” (John 10:10).

School strengths

- Dedicated leaders and governors are fully committed to ensuring that the biblically rooted Christian vision drives all the school’s actions. This results in wise, ambitious and transformational decision-making. Consequentially, pupils and adults excel, in a community where they are ‘known, nurtured and inspired’.
- National, diocesan and local strategic partnerships are very strong. These enhance the impact of the vision. They contribute significantly to ensuring that pupils and adults are given every encouragement and plentiful opportunities to live life to the full.
- Pastoral care and chaplaincy support is exemplary. Pupils and staff are treated with dignity and respect, and feel very well-supported. This imparts a deep sense of wellbeing and helps to foster a vibrant culture of service and mutual support.
- Pupils play active and purposeful leadership roles in helping to change their school, their community and the wider world for the better. They are inspired to be agents of change with a strong sense of moral purpose. Pupils and staff take responsibility for addressing injustice and disadvantage.
- Religious education (RE) is considered to be a very important subject. It is constantly being reviewed to improve it further. Pupils benefit from high quality teaching and achieve exceptional examination results.

Areas for development

- Implement and embed desired changes to the RE curriculum. This is so that pupils benefit from a rich and progressive RE curriculum in all year groups, providing further opportunities for spiritual development.

Inspection findings

The Bishops’ Blue Coat Church of England High School’s Christian vision causes pupils and adults to be nurtured and inspired. Pupils are known very well by the staff and many also feel greatly encouraged that they consider they are known by God. Values that are faithful to the Anglican

foundation of the school are lived out with integrity and authenticity. The school is characterized by the values of dignity, respect, wisdom, hope and aspiration. This fosters strong and supportive relationships between members of the school community. The pupils feel safe, secure and very well supported, and assured that the school wants the best for them. There is a high level of pupil engagement with enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs. These are led by the staff with the support of pupil leaders. Older pupils often assist younger pupils with their studies, voluntarily and with enthusiasm, through mentoring and buddying schemes. Similarly, leaders and governors have invested heavily in the training and development of staff. This investment has led to low staff turnover and several internal promotions. The school has also been careful to recruit new staff who are fully aligned with the school's compassionate culture. School roles, policies and processes are all informed and shaped by the vision and values of the school. The headteacher has refreshed and revitalized the school vision, through discussion and wide consultation. There is now greater emphasis on positive and healthy relationships, academic success and the centrality of Christ in guidance and support. This is proving to be reinvigorating and transformative. There are numerous examples of pupils who have overcome significant challenges in their education and thrived.

The school provides a broad, balanced, well sequenced and ambitious curriculum that supports the flourishing of pupils very well. Rich and plentiful opportunities for spiritual development are offered to pupils, deepening their empathy, understanding and insight. Pupils speak about spirituality with real understanding, and enjoy thought-provoking discussion and debate. Pupils are resilient, polite, courteous and thoughtful, and listen carefully to their teachers and one another. They are able to put forward well thought-through and strident points of view with confidence and humility. At the same time they are considerate and measured in their responses to peers who hold very different views. A calm and purposeful working atmosphere pervades lessons across the school. This allows pupils to think deeply and express their thoughts in an articulate and unhurried way. They enjoy learning and agree the school is an exciting place to be.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and enables pupils and adults to flourish spiritually. The pupils' roles in helping to shape, lead and evaluate worship contribute well to their spiritual development. The chaplain leads collective worship in an inclusive, invitational and inspirational way, with the support of teaching staff and pupils. Actively listening to pupils in each year group informs the themes explored and the approach taken in worship. This includes working with pupil leaders of faith and of no faith. This makes the worship highly relevant, ensuring that everyone is put at their ease and able to relax. They are then able to fully engage with the worship. Innovative and creative approaches to worship, through drama, art and music, make it fully accessible and ensure it contributes strongly to pupils' flourishing. Pupils from primary feeder schools are invited to join in special worship services. The school also welcomes the contribution of local churches and Christian charities to their worship, which enriches it on many levels. Adults and pupils speak about how the worship nourishes them, and is central to them feeling known, nurtured, valued and inspired.

This is a school where people treat one another very well. The school has a celebratory culture, where pupils and staff are routinely praised, encouraged, rewarded and affirmed in many ways. They feel confident they would receive the support they might need, in any eventuality. The school's increased focus on healthy relationships has led to a greater emphasis on forgiveness and reconciliation. Pupils are very well supported by mental health and wellbeing programmes, the tutor system, the sanctuary and the prayer space. Staff benefit from additional support too, through the wellbeing group, the wellbeing charter, supervision for pastoral leaders and the gratitude board. The headteacher exemplifies this deeply caring approach, stemming from her own Christian faith. Consequently, the school managed to navigate a clear path over the course of the pandemic. The headteacher, formerly deputy headteacher, has ensured the school remains anchored to its Christian vision and values, throughout times of crisis. The school is more confident than ever in its

own identity and resulting servant leadership and management style.

The school's Christian vision drives an active culture of justice and responsibility across the school. Pupils are empowered to make ethical choices and become agents of change and social inclusion. Pupils in all years democratically decide on their year group charities. Social action projects have had a beneficial impact on both the school community and the wider community. The Christmas fayre, culture week, refugee week and the Easter tea party, for residents of a local care home, all exemplify this. Many pupils engage in individual acts of voluntary service out of their personal sense of responsibility and as part of awards programmes. Staff also voluntarily engage in charitable fundraising activities outside of school and so provide inspiring role models for the pupils. Pupils know it is within their power to make a positive difference in their school, their local community, in society and in the wider world, and do so. For example, one Year 7 pupil, without any prompting, recently wrote to the Prime Minister about a particular issue of social injustice.

RE provision is rich, varied, challenging, well-sequenced, and meets the requirements of the Church of England. Departmental leaders contribute to curriculum developments in the subject through diocesan initiatives, achieve national awards and serve with examination boards. Pupils are enabled to achieve results which are well above national averages at GCSE and A Level. The RE department also makes an exceptional contribution to the school's wider life programme. This includes the organisation of trips to places of worship, the chance to hear outside speakers and opportunities to explore issues of justice and responsibility. RE is a popular subject and pupil voice indicates that pupils enjoy and appreciate it in all key stages. RE teachers are highly conscientious and are keen to improve the curriculum further, even though it is already effective in all key stages.

RE lessons are well structured, interesting and engaging, with incisive questioning, leading to lively debate. Knowledge organisers and the systematic reconnecting with previous learning also help to progressively build pupils' knowledge and understanding. RE staff are keen to learn from the best practice in other schools and to incorporate new learning into their teaching. Pupils make very good progress in their learning from their starting points and attain standards well above national averages. There are many examples of high quality RE taking place. This is particularly evident in discussion and debate. For example, in discussing the issues of free will, human responsibility and the problem of suffering, one Year 7 pupil commented in a RE lesson that "You are not technically alive if you are not free to make choices; you are just 'data on a screen' ". Pupils develop a high level of philosophical, ethical and theological literacy from an early age.

The inspection findings indicate that The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

| Information | | | |
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| Inspection date | 15 May 2024 - 16 May 2024 | URN | 136543 |
| VC/VA/Academy | Academy | Pupils on roll | 1180 |
| Diocese | Chester | | |
| MAT/Federation | The Bishops' Blue Coat SAT | | |
| Headteacher | Helen Cairns | | |
| Chair | Ralph Mainard & David Walsh | | |
| Inspector | Peter Cantley | No. | 2218 |