

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Blue Coat Church of England Junior School

Address	Langley Road, Newton Hall estate, Durham, DH1 5LP		
Date of inspection	7 February 2019	Status of school	Blue Coat Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary
Diocese / Methodist District	Durham	URN	114274

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Blue Coat school is an average sized school with 252 pupils on roll. The school has growing levels of religious and cultural diversity and a growing number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs/disability (SEND) is below national averages. There have been changes in leadership since the last inspection and the new headteacher has been in post since September 2018. A new chair of the governing body is in post.

The school's Christian vision

Love is at the root of all of the core Christian values of courage, hope, trust, peace and forgiveness and impacts on everything that school does. Everyone values each other and learn together to be the very best, bringing communities together. The school clearly states in all documentation: 'As God loves us, so we love one another as a Blue Coat family'.

Key findings

- The school has developed a clear set of Christian values and is implementing them effectively. Leaders promote a deeply Christian mission, although they are less clear as to the distinction between vision and mission.
- During the changes to leadership, upholding the Christian foundations of the school has been a priority.
- The school is engaged in social action, driven by its values and vision. Pupils speak convincingly about their role in this. Pupils are supported by adults to appreciate how their actions can make a difference in the wider world.
- The experienced religious education (RE) leader has developed subject assessment. This does not yet make clear the links between the subject within the new curriculum and pupils' progress.

Areas for Development

- Leaders at all levels to develop a better understanding of vision, as distinct from mission, so that there is a shared vocabulary to drive improvement as a church school.
- Develop RE assessment so that the links with the new curriculum are clearer and progress is assured.
- Leaders, particularly new leaders, to establish a shared definition of spirituality to increase opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.
- Develop systems for evaluating collective worship so its impact on the whole community may be more fully understood.

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

Blue Coat Church of England Junior school is making courageous decisions about curriculum development where love for all is at the heart of its work. The school's vision and mission are embedded. These terms are used as interchangeable and so there is some confusion as to their respective qualities. More experienced leaders provide ongoing support during transition. Leaders have taken part in professional development and understand current wider church school developments. As a result, leaders have a well defined view of diversity and respond rapidly and effectively to any issues that may arise. Children articulate a mature response to inclusion because of strong leadership in this area. New leaders articulate an understanding of what it means to lead a church school. However, since experience is limited, they understand that they have to work to deepen their understanding. They have an honest approach to this and are working hard to develop skills and knowledge. Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a church school but understand the need to develop shared understanding of the impact of worship. They receive regular reports about the quality of teaching and standards in RE and about curriculum developments. They articulate they need to develop a shared understanding of spirituality in order to support fully less experienced members of the governing body. They talk about how love, rooted in the teaching of Jesus, underpins all they do.

Academic standards overall are good with all outcomes within the average range. Pupil outcomes, therefore, reflect the vision for everyone to be the best that they can be. Pupils are happy at this school and behaviour is impeccable. They are keen to learn and enjoy talking to visitors about their school. They show pride and tenacity in their work. This is clear evidence of the vision in action. Pupils can talk about the impact of God in their lives and enjoy worship and church links. RE work shows that they can answer big questions and are beginning to show that they understand the importance of social action, through the Shoes for Shoes appeal, and numerous other charitable activities and actions.

Pupils can say how the community-based vision of the school support them in their decision making. The Christian mission states that the school will develop creative, unique and open minded individuals who understand their own community and the wider world. Pupils enjoy receiving rewards based on values and articulating to others how rewards are awarded. They can say with pride how love is the overarching value and supports the decision making about behaviour and respect for others. They have a clear definition of diversity within the family of Blue Coat. Very strong links with a parish youth worker encourage pupils to be curious about local communities and the wider world. Pride in the Christian faith is clear and reflects the Christian mission, which states that the school will promote pride in the individual but also in the wider community. The quotation from 1 Corinthians 16:13 encourages children to have courage and to stand up for what is right, knowing God is ever present.

Links with Burundi have been instrumental in children developing a sense of life in other countries, whilst avoiding stereotypical views of foreign aid work. As a result, pupils share a highly mature view of social action. Leaders understand the importance of this in a largely mono-cultural community and promote global links effectively. This is also made clear in its vision and mission statements. These state that the school is working to improve communities, including those overseas. This is driven by the value of hope, underpinned by Corinthians 13:13, which reminds the community of the biblical significance of hope. Adults teach pupils that they should work to bring hope to those who experience difficulties in their lives. Leaders at all levels, parents and pupils articulate clearly the impact of this upon pupils and their deep understanding of social action.

Pupils understand that it may be good to hold and share opposing opinions and a well-structured Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, linked with RE, helps pupils understand about the commitment to dignity and respect for all. They can talk about how forgiveness and reconciliation work and can say it is underpinned by love. One child linked this to a sense of 'wiping the slate clean' as a means of explaining forgiveness. Leaders state how differences are expressed in leadership meetings. They are able to model to other staff how strongly held opinions can be valuable. In this way, they are able to demonstrate love for the school and its determination to build a flourishing community.

Mental health provision for all is very strong. There are numerous opportunities to discuss problems and several opportunities for pupils to have their needs met. These include The Haven, a lunchtime provision, as well as 'Relaxed Kids', linked to mindfulness and Lego Therapy, which is concerned with developing good social skills. Leaders also work hard to ensure staff have a strong work life balance. Provision for this is made through planning and assessment policies, which demonstrate that leaders have worked hard to consider staff work load without compromising standards. Love for the whole community abounds.

Parents speak with great respect for how difficult issues about diversity and prejudiced based behaviour are dealt with. They feel confident that their children are emotionally safe.

Pupils enjoy collective worship. They have the opportunity to lead it and to plan and evaluate. The work of the Christian Character committee, which includes pupils and adults, is clearly planned. It is highly effective in delivering worship. Systems to monitor and improve collective worship are developing. Strong links to the local church, All Saints, are developing a wide range of worship opportunities for pupils and their families. This includes worship at major Anglican festivals but also other opportunities such as 'Messy Church', film church and Open the Book which enhance the worship life of the school and church. This is seen in the very high degree of mutual respect between both communities. Children take part in the celebration of the Eucharist and speak about it with respect. It has helped them to understand some complex concepts including resurrection and the Christian belief of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer is central to the life of this school and is included regularly throughout the school day. Children write prayers and enjoy leading prayer. Adults have the opportunity to pray and leaders recognise that development of this would be of benefit to the whole community.

RE allows pupils to ask and answer questions of deep significance in their lives. This helps them to understand Christianity as a worldwide faith.

Leaders have a clear sense of what the school needs to do to grow in line with its mission, vision and values. Prudent use is made of financial planning and of funds from the Blue Coat trust. Adults and pupils flourish in this good school, built on love.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE is planned systematically and has a high status in school. The leader is thorough and diligent in monitoring standards and supporting staff. The quality of teaching in RE is well evidenced. There is a well-developed curriculum, which uses 'Understanding Christianity' and 'Questful RE' to pose challenging questions and develop children's ability to express an opinion. Work in pupils' books is of a high standard and is assessed regularly. There is a second RE modular curriculum in place, which is designed to deepen and extend pupils learning by promoting independent thinking, particularly for the more able. However, this aspect of RE is less clearly assessed and some opportunities are missed to contribute to the understanding of pupil progress. The RE leader is aware and steps are being taken to understand pupil progress in this area more clearly.

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