

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Barlow Church of England Primary School			
Address	Park Road, Barlow, Selby YO8 8ES		
Date of inspection	21 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	York	URN	121548

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

Barlow is a primary school with 58 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. No 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 in line with national averages. Following a poor Ofsted judgement (2017), there have been significant changes in leadership and staffing which led to a judgement of Good in 2019. The school recently federated with another small Church school and is in the process of federating with a non-church school.

The school's Christian vision

One family, branching out together: *'For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.'* (Romans 12 verse 4-5)

Key findings

- Leaders, led by a very effective executive headteacher, have prioritised the development of a strong vision, grounded in biblical teaching. It is understood by all and at the heart of everything they do, ensuring they are stronger together.
- Highly effective leaders, including governors, know the strengths of the school and have clear actions for continued improvement.
- The recent federation has clearly strengthened all aspects of school life, including opportunities for pupils and the development of all staff. It has also ensured that the school has gained the confidence and trust of the local community.
- The RE lead has diligently developed staff confidence in RE and is now beginning to support them to use RE to drive the wider curriculum.
- Staff are well supported in leading collective worship, which is inviting and inclusive, however opportunities are missed to inspire and fully engage pupils in a range of experiences.

Areas for development

- To continue the development of RE as a driver for the school's broader curriculum. Ensure that work in RE maintains its distinctive character, in order that pupils develop skills specific to the subject.
- To adapt a more varied and creative approach to worship in order to inspire pupils through a range of different experiences and settings.
- Continue to develop a whole school, shared understanding of spiritual development, that impacts on the curriculum and personal development of all pupils.

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

After significant changes in both leadership and staffing since the previous SIAMS Inspection, everyone associated with Barlow is benefitting from being a branch of a family of schools, flourishing and growing together. Federation has brought a stability to this small primary school and the community it serves. All stakeholders can articulate the school's distinctively Christian vision and are proud of the way it is supporting everyone in school to flourish.

The executive headteacher has had an enormous impact on the school and the local community. Strong leadership, including a very effective governing body, has turned around this school to ensure it is a safe and valued place in the community where pupils and staff can learn and flourish together. Governors are committed to ensuring that every child that leaves Barlow is the best that they can be and is well prepared for the next phase of their education. For example, one governor said 'We don't want our children to be happy with reaching the sky, we want them to aim for the stars.' Governors are very proactive in their evaluation of Barlow as a church school and know their school well. Pupils talk about how the federation, strongly driven by their vision and the values of endurance, peace and friendship, has ensured that school is now a calm and exciting place to learn. They talk with excitement about the opportunities being part of a federation offers. One child described it as 'being a branch of a much bigger tree' and said 'it is like having an extended family with lots more friends and the opportunity to do new things like enter sports competitions and go on residential trips. This really helps us with our value friendship.' Although the children can articulate the school vision and what it means, they are not yet secure in understanding its Biblical underpinning.

This is a school where everyone's wellbeing and good mental health is given high priority. All staff talk of how the vision influences the good support they get and how well they all look after each other. Leaders, teachers and support staff benefit from high quality professional development which equips them well to do their job. They are grown and supported to develop their own interests and skills. They are well placed to support children's mental health and wellbeing as a result of training through the local authority, and the effectiveness of the school's emotional literacy supports assistants (ELSAs).

Leaders at all levels have worked together to develop a curriculum that is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and progress. The support for pupils with special educational needs is a particular strength of the federation. This is an area where the school vision of being stronger together, enabling all to flourish, really shines through.

The federation lead for religious education, who has worked diligently over recent months to improve staff confidence in teaching RE, is now supporting them in using RE as a driver for termly curriculum themes. This is giving RE a much higher profile in school, however, teachers' assessment does not place enough emphasis on developing pupils' skills that are specific to RE. Teaching and learning in RE reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement and is being enhanced with visitors from a range of faiths. Children in Key Stage 2 talk about how a recent visit from a practising Muslim, had helped them understand more about Islam. Their understanding however, of Christianity as a global faith along with opportunities to use RE to enhance their spiritual development are underdeveloped.

Collective worship is valued by the whole school and is well supported by the local priest and Open the Book team. The programme is well planned by the federation collective worship lead, using a resource that supports staff confidence in leading worship with a clear theological foundation. It encourages pupils and staff to live out the school's vision and children's chosen values, and consider key Christian beliefs. Pupils describe it as having a direct impact on their behaviour and attitudes towards each other. Biblical teaching underpins the theme of worship, relating scripture to pupils' own lives. For example, one pupil shared 'today's worship helped me to think about how I could share things I value with my friends just as Andrew did with Peter in the story about Jesus choosing his disciples'. Although they have some appreciation of the importance of Jesus for Christians, pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is limited. Prayer is frequently led by pupils and is seen as a natural opportunity to reflect on the theme of worship. Since the previous denominational inspection pupils have the opportunity to become worship leaders. They now support and lead key aspects of worship,

however, the pupil worship leaders do not regularly plan or evaluate. Children are invited to write in a reflection book at the end of each worship so that leaders can monitor the impact but this information is not yet shared with the pupil leaders. Children talk with enthusiasm about how they can use the outdoor 'Peace Palace' to reflect at playtimes, as well as how they use reflection areas in their classrooms to support them in prayer. The school, however has not yet enhanced pupils' worship by taking the opportunity to worship in a range of settings and in different ways.

Children at Barlow are encouraged to be social advocates for change and are given some responsibility for choosing the charities that the school supports. Recently, school council chose Selby Foodbank to support during their Harvest celebrations and talked with conviction about the unfairness of people in their community not having enough food. One child also spoke about how she had been given the opportunity to raise money in school for a charity that was very personal to her. They are developing their knowledge of local and global issues through the resource 'Picture News', which is used both in worship and in the classroom. Children were inspired by one of these sessions to start to consider the use of plastic in school and junior road safety officers have worked hard to make the area around school safer, campaigning for parents to park more safely.

Barlow is a school where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and feels valued as part of not only the 'Barlow family', but the wider federation family. They have developed strong partnerships with the local churches and the Diocese, with whom they have engaged well to ensure clear visible school improvement. All leaders know the strengths of the school and have a clear vision of the developments needed to carry on their journey, ensuring that everyone at Barlow continues to flourish and grow, benefiting from being 'one family, branching out together.'

Executive Headteacher	Suzanne MacDonald
Inspector's name and number	Sue Thackray
Quality Assurance	Lyn Field 151