

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Beswick and Watton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address	Beverley Road, Beswick YO25 9AR		
Date of inspection	5 April 2019	Status of school	VC primary
Diocese	York	URN	117970

Overall Judgement	Grade	Requires improvement
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 Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Beswick and Watton is a very small primary school with 15 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 in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in line with national averages. Since the last denominational inspection there have been significant changes in staffing and governance. This includes the executive headteacher, with responsibility for three Church schools across the Wolds Federation.

The school's Christian vision

Our children are at the centre of our schools, communities, our churches. Through care and compassion, we strive to be a place of joy for all; the whole child nurtured to grow in God's love. Our vision is to prepare children for all life as lifelong learners.

Love, Laugh, Live, Learn

Key findings

- The dedicated leadership of the executive headteacher, supported by the whole community, is enabling the school to move forward together on its journey of school improvement with a renewed impetus.
- This Christian family community is a nurturing environment where, over the last eighteen months, all delight to love, laugh, live and learn together, so all adults and pupils are beginning to flourish.
- Pupils are active in making a difference, not just in their rural community, but nationally and globally.
- The partnership with the church, albeit within a short space of time since the vicar has been in post, benefits pupils and their families as they celebrate traditional Christian festivals together.
- Pupils are thoughtful and reflective and are growing in their understanding of the detail of the Christmas and Easter story, which is supporting their spiritual development well.

Areas for development

- Embed the school's new vision with a biblical narrative which the whole school community can readily articulate and identify as an integral and defining focus of their onward journey as a Church school.
- Ensure the relatively new governing body has rigorous systems of monitoring and evaluation in place to effectively support the school's on-going journey of school improvement.
- Enrich pupils' spiritual development by enabling them to plan and lead collective worship more frequently.
- Deepen pupils' encounter with the rich diversity of Christianity more locally as part of their cultural heritage and enable them to meet people of faith more frequently.

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

'Our little school is a safe and happy place to be.' This comment from a member of staff typifies the care everyone has for each other in this Christian family community. Whilst Beswick and Watton is very small, it has, 'a big heart, providing a nurturing environment for all pupils', true to its vision. There have been many changes in staffing and governance, but everyone is committed to serving the pupils and their families. Over the last eighteen months there has been a fresh impetus to take the school forward on its journey of school improvement. Much has been achieved in a short space of time by the executive headteacher, with the support of clergy, staff, governors and parents. However, there is much still to be embedded. The relatively new governing body does not yet have rigorous systems in place to effectively monitor and support the school. There is energy within the governors to achieve this and make a difference. As yet, not everyone can articulate the school's Christian vision and its integral and unique identity. Therefore the school is less than good. However, adults and pupils do resonate with Jesus growing in wisdom. Staff and governors have benefitted from diocesan support and training so all are appraised of Church school development. Teamwork across the three schools, under the new federation leadership, is now helping to support professional development.

With new leadership in place since September 2017, all are beginning to flourish. Adults and pupils delight to love, laugh, live and learn together. This is because the culture of pastoral care and wellbeing is supportive of all, including the most vulnerable. This results in a feeling of self-worth and the desire for all to become life-long learners. All are valued here, regardless of their different abilities. The quality of learning is now improving, with pupils making better progress and a focus on nurturing the whole child. For example, pupils now have a deeper understanding of mathematics and can work things out for themselves. Pupils are now positive and confident in their approach to learning, often asking, 'Am I working independently?' Vulnerable pupils, including those who have come from other schools, value the support and help of teachers as, 'That's what we love.' One pupil finds, 'collective worship really calms me down' and has discovered a 'new way of praying', modelled by their vicar. In addition, religious education (RE) 'helps me think'.

Outdoor learning is a strength at Beswick. Pupils were involved in a three year pollination project and were shortlisted for a national sustainable award in 2018. More recently, in March 2019, older pupils' concern for climate change resulted in being awarded 'Green Heart Heroes'. Their love for the environment and the world around them included challenging themselves about what could be recycled. This involved a trip to London to the Houses of Parliament where pupils encountered homeless people begging on the tube. This brought home to them the importance of their generosity to the local food bank to support those less fortunate than themselves. Younger pupils too are aware of the effects of global warming and their responsibility for God's creation, a theme in collective worship. Their vicar confirms that these young pupils feel quite strongly about changing the world for the better. Pupils strive for justice and peace, which is reflected in their curriculum work. The school reaches out to its local community, such as holding a successful tea party for senior citizens.

Beswick pupils are given roles of responsibility as part of its investment in people. The school council is active in its fundraising activities, such as the recent World Book Day. Policies now reflect the school vision, including the new behaviour policy. As a small school, everyone knows each other very well and can 'pick someone up when they feel down'. Older pupils support the younger ones. Pupils express love by 'being kind to each other' and 'laughing with your friends'.

In this small community all are welcomed and treated with respect in a spirit of forgiveness and acceptance. As their vicar confirms, 'They agree to disagree and get on famously.' Reflecting on world peace, an older pupil contributed, 'Everyone is the same but different, with their own strengths and understanding.'

Since January 2018, there has been a clearer plan for collective worship, which involves and engages the whole community. Whilst the vicar has only been in post for eighteen months, he is a welcome and regular visitor. He has explored different ways to pray with pupils. Their Lenten prayers had a focus on one thing they could do to bring them closer to God. Reflecting this rural farming community, which is integral to the school, a number of pupils identified 'helping on the farm more'. Parents especially value the traditional church services at Beswick and Watton, such as Harvest and Christingle. Pupils say they enjoy the church services as they can 'spend time

together with the people that you really love'. They explain, 'You get to go with your friends and learn from God's creation.' The school feels very supported by people in the parish who 'understand who we are and what we are about.' The local 'Open the Book' team have been a welcome addition this year to the leading of worship in school. This enables pupils to be very familiar with Bible stories, especially from the Old Testament. For example, pupils cite Moses as an inspiration because 'He listened to God.' Pupils comment, 'I don't know how they do it, but they act out [stories]. They are really good and make it easy to learn from the Bible.' However, whilst pupils are evaluating worship, their experience of planning and leading worship is limited.

Significantly, the executive headteacher has stepped up to take on the role of RE subject leader this year. The vicar and a member of the parish community have been supporting RE lessons since February 2019. This has included teaching on baptism. Pupils enjoy learning about Christianity and Judaism. Whilst they have met a Buddhist in school, encountering people of faith in their places of worship is limited. All staff teach RE, which now has a focus on big questions and balanced RE. Staff now have a deeper understanding, which is sharpening their assessment. Pupils know how to improve in their work and show good knowledge of the detail of the Christian story. However, their experience of the rich diversity within Christianity is presently limited.

Executive headteacher	Liz Harros
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244