

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ranelagh School			
Address	Ranelagh Drive, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 9DA		
Date of inspection	2-3 April 2019	Status of school	VA secondary academy inspected as VA. Bonitas Multi-Academy Trust Limited
Diocese	Oxford	URN	137267

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
Ranelagh School is a secondary with 986 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 well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Since the last SIAMS inspection the school has become lead for Bonitas Multi Academy Trust and the current headteacher was appointed in 2015.
The school's Christian vision
<i>'For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love, and self-control'. 2 Timothy 1:7</i> At the heart of our distinctive culture is our commitment to being a dynamic learning community, rooted in Christianity, where people matter. In this we seek wisdom and pursue excellence.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's deeply embedded Christian vision infuses all areas of the school's community and work. This profoundly and positively influences relationships, decision-making, policy and practice. The Christian commitment, inspirational leadership and relentless determination of the headteacher, along with her dedicated staff, creates and sustains a school in which all can flourish and attain strong academic success. A firmly held commitment to inclusion, support and challenge provides an environment in which pupils are individually known, nurtured and inspired and where all can thrive. RE in the school is well led, has high status and is very much enjoyed by pupils. This leads to them having a clear understanding and appreciation of Christianity and other faiths. Collective worship is carefully planned and effectively sustains pupils' understanding of the school's Christian vision, ethos and values in the context of biblical teaching.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance pupils' experience of collective worship to enable a greater appreciation of the different ways in which Christians around the world worship. Enhance partnerships within and beyond the diocese in order to further share the school's wealth of experience. This will enable others to benefit from the school's effective practice. Deepen pupils' understanding of spirituality to enable them to fluently articulate its meaning and impact on themselves and others.

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

Ranelagh is a school in which a deeply held, strongly Christian vision shapes all aspects of its work. This is embraced, understood and promoted by every member of the school. The school lives out its vision in a harmonious, vibrant, and successful learning community. Standards and expectations are high and there is an air of purposefulness and calm. Key elements of the school's vision, 'love', 'self-control', 'seeking wisdom' and 'the pursuit of excellence' are demonstrated and fulfilled within this environment. The school also ensures that each pupil is valued, achieves and flourishes. Illustrating this one person said, 'We are openly and proudly Christian. This drives what we do.' Governors are knowledgeable and robust in their monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian character, collaborating well with staff, parents and pupils. Strategic developments are rooted in the vision and this secures innovative choices and decisions about the curriculum, finances, recruitment and ongoing professional development for staff. Frequent opportunities are taken to deepen staff understanding of the school vision and to create future Church school leaders. Work with the primary school within the Multi-Academy Trust has been focused and supportive, helping to secure improvements. The areas identified for improvement at Ranelagh in the last inspection have been successfully addressed.

A strong emphasis is placed on the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum, shaped by the school's Christian vision, 'to create a dynamic learning community'. This provides rigour and is accessible and motivating for all pupils enabling them to actively 'seek wisdom and pursue excellence'. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and in the words of one, 'Our teachers have a passion for what they teach. It's great!' Thus, engaging and challenging lessons, which spark curiosity and light fires, are a major contributor to motivating pupils and to the exemplary behaviour seen throughout Ranelagh. It also means that pupils' achievement in examinations at all levels is very good and their progress, regardless of ability, is impressive. This demonstrates the vision of aspiring to excellence. Pupil guidance, and where necessary support and adaptation of provision, is rooted in the understanding that all individuals are unique and valued in God's eyes. There is a clear sense of a spiritual dimension in the school. Lives are enriched through times of reflection, in strong relationships and in the curriculum where awe, wonder, excitement and stillness are experienced. There is, however, a limited shared vocabulary to identify and articulate spirituality.

Staff, pupils, governors and parents speak of experiencing the school's vision through its provision which demonstrates that every individual matters. Pupils' preparation for life is reinforced in many ways and so they develop resilience, become aspirational and make positive choices. Important and extensive work to promote and sustain good mental health and wellbeing for all permeates the school. Ranging from awareness-training to planned opportunities in the curriculum, it also includes skilful, targeted support for those who need it. Pupil Empathy Ambassadors look out for those who may be experiencing difficulty, offering care and signposting further advice. This helps to ensure that no one who may be struggling goes unnoticed.

The school works with a variety of groups and charities at local, national and international levels. It enables pupils to develop an awareness and passion about issues facing our world and others in different and difficult circumstances. Examples include homelessness, climate change, injustice and inequality. Because of this, Christian love for others and a sense of courageous advocacy is apparent amongst pupils. Each pupil in the lower years engages in a Lent project to learn about a charity of their choosing. Consequently, they take action to support its work. Links have been established by the school in the local community, in the diocese and at a global level. An ambitious, month-long expedition is undertaken by many sixth formers. Expeditions to China, Mongolia, Bolivia, and Southern Africa included a community development project enabling these students to be generous in their gift of service.

Collective worship at Ranelagh is well planned by staff and pupils. Biblically-based and using themes from the church's year, it reinforces the Christian vision and values of the school. Opportunities for pupil leadership, for prayer and reflection are welcomed by pupils. A termly Eucharist is held either in school or at the local church and visitors lead worship at times. The variety of presentation offered does not fully reflect a breadth of Christian worship styles.

Opportunities for formal and informal prayer and different prayer groups are integral to the life of the school. Beyond collective worship, meetings often start with prayer and there is a well-used room for reflection. A regular Prayer Space, supported by local churches, enables pupils to explore different and interactive approaches. Pupils speak of their value of prayer provision and its positive impact on their lives. One pupil leaving a Prayer Space session said, 'Now I have more headspace and am more positive for the next part of the day', whilst another said, 'This has helped me to connect with God.'

Pupils are loyal to their school and to one another. They actively look out for and serve as advocates for each other, thus fostering a keen spirit of mutual support. Restorative justice is well understood and consequently used effectively when required. Clear policies and consistent practice relating to behaviour and equality embrace Christian values, promoting a culture of fairness, forgiveness, reconciliation and responsibility. As a result, pupils are confident, considerate, caring and respectful. They live out the self-control expressed in the school vision.

Throughout the school is a climate which fosters a clear understanding of difference and diversity. This is evident in the curriculum and pastoral system but reaches deeply into the positive relationships which are apparent at all levels. The Christian vision declares that people matter, and all members of the school ensure that each person belongs, is respected and is shown dignity and valued as a child of God.

In RE, strong learning, progress and achievement by pupils are a result of skilled leadership and inspirational teaching. The subject is given a high profile and pupils speak very enthusiastically about their enjoyment of these lessons. They are provided with rich opportunities to engage in thoughtful, respectful discussion and debate. From this they gain a deep understanding of different viewpoints and responses to challenging themes. Provision for RE gives rich learning experiences and a breadth of understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. The school has an effective and high-profile RE Ambassador Scheme, comprising several volunteers from Years 10 and 12. These pupils undertake valuable work within the diocese and with pupils in local primary schools. It supports the further development of the subject in each school and reinforces learning for all involved. In this way, the commitment to 'seek wisdom and pursue excellence' is lived out.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

In RE, careful and thoughtful planning leads to challenging, ambitious and exciting lessons which engage and motivate pupils. Consequently, learning is often very good and therefore pupils make good levels of progress and achievement at all key stages. Lessons are characterised by skilled and enthusiastic teachers with relentlessly high expectations creating opportunities for deep thinking in response to big questions. This enthuses and motivates pupils to engage and grapple with complex ideas and themes. It results in learning which enriches their lives and enables impressive standards in public examinations for pupils of all abilities.

Headteacher	Beverley Stevens
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