

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Brightwalton Church of England Primary School

#### Vision:

Nurturing Every Child to Shine their Light Brightly in the World. 'Shine Your Light'.

'You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' (Matthew 5:14-16)

Brightwalton Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

#### Strengths

- The Christian vision to 'shine your light' is woven deeply into school life. Pupils are given opportunities to show their light and learn about the light of others.
- The vision impacts positively on the rich curriculum and extensive extra-curricular provision, recognising and celebrating pupils' individual strengths and talents. This empowers them to shine.
- Collective worship is varied, inspirational and inclusive. The opportunity to gather together is highly valued by the whole school community.
- A strong partnership with the local church enriches collective worship at the school. It especially enhances spiritual development, inspiring adults and pupils to reflect on the teachings of Jesus.
- A sense of love and care for one another permeates throughout the school. This supports an environment where good mental health is prioritised and positive relationships abound.

#### Development Points

- Extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of injustice and how they can improve lives for themselves and others. This is so that they may broaden their sense of personal responsibility beyond their local context.
- Embed the recent changes made to the assessment of religious education (RE). This is to enable staff to have a consistent approach to supporting pupils' progress in the subject.



## Inspection Findings

Brightwalton Church of England Primary School is a beacon of light for both adults and pupils. This means that they are able to shine and flourish academically, spiritually and emotionally. The deeply embedded Christian vision, rooted in biblical teaching, is the foundation of the school's work. Aspirational leaders put the vision at the heart of their strategic decisions and evaluate its effectiveness with rigour. Governors are a visible presence and support staff exceptionally well. Close collaboration with local schools and the diocese strengthens the outworking of the vision. Pupils and adults strive to embody their core Christian values of service, perseverance, wisdom, friendship and trust. They articulate confidently how they live the vision and values in their daily lives. For instance, examples of perseverance include 'trying again and again' to master new skills in maths and sports. One pupil remarked, 'I never give up, perseverance pays in the end.' Parents have great trust in the school because they know their children are loved and nurtured.

Reflecting the Christian vision, the school curriculum is broad and rich, inspiring a love of learning. A wide array of extra-curricular activities, such as sports, music and a popular podcast club, extend opportunities for all. Many visitors, including the fire service and professional musicians, enrich the curriculum further. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported in classrooms to shine their lights. Staff ensure that barriers to learning are addressed, enabling pupils to access the curriculum and experience success. Mixed-age classes allow close relationships to form across the school. Collaborative projects with other schools support the spiritual and personal development of pupils beyond the classroom. These include taking part in maths workshops, trips and joint music events. 'Wow' moments are frequently noted and celebrated. Although in its early stages, the new shared approach to spirituality, using 'lights, camera, action' provides opportunities for spiritual growth. Year 6 pupils broaden their horizons by taking part in an annual residential trip to Wales. New friendships are forged here and pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that allow them to shine in different ways.

Collective worship is a valued time of coming together. It is carefully planned with the vision shaping it. An inclusive approach invites pupils and staff to engage in reflection and song if they so wish. They actively participate by offering 'teaspoon prayers' and sharing their thankfulness. Music is especially uplifting at Brightwalton. Singing is a moving, spiritual experience for those who are present. The pupil worship team has a positive impact. They help to set up the hall and meet weekly to develop and lead class worship sessions. They take pride in their responsibilities and are good role models for pupils. The school enjoys a close relationship with the local church and celebrates major Christian festivals there, alongside parents and parishioners. Clergy regularly lead worship in school and in the church, adding to the range of opportunities for adults' and pupils' spiritual development.

There is a deep-rooted sense of community and compassion at Brightwalton, showing that adults and pupils are treated well. This permeates all aspects of school life and is seen in positive relationships. For instance, in the way pupils, parents and visitors are greeted warmly. The school's vision and values reflect its rural context. Pupils are proud to relate how their classes are named after beautiful trees growing in and around the school grounds. Members of the school community work together with great enthusiasm and enjoyment in the school's wellbeing garden. This provides a haven of peace and calm. The school has a therapeutic approach to behaviour management. As a result, there is a culture of forgiveness and reconciliation. Pupils receive enhanced emotional support from dedicated staff, which is particularly valuable during challenging times. They especially enjoy taking part in the morning sensory circuit. This 'wakes them up' and helps prepare them for the day's activities. The



school dogs are much loved, helping to calm pupils and regulate their behaviour. Staff are supported in expanding their expertise to develop their careers and therefore shine as individuals.

A culture of fairness and responsibility is shaped by the vision's drive to 'let your light shine before others'. This inspires pupils to take on a wide range of leadership roles, such as school councillors and PE ambassadors. Year 6 pupils particularly enjoy helping the younger ones in the Reception class every Wednesday. Service and charity are key aspects of the school's Christian vision. Pupils take part eagerly in initiatives that help others, including supporting the West Berkshire food bank and the annual poppy appeal. This outreach work develops pupils' understanding of how they can live out the vision and values in the wider community. The school promotes sustainability and environmental responsibility through successful projects, such as the school's highly innovative solar energy scheme. Pupils' understanding of injustice, however, is less developed.

Effective leadership has established a cohesive, challenging RE curriculum. It ensures that pupils gain comprehensive knowledge of major faiths, worldviews and Christianity as a global religion. They are encouraged to ask big questions and are able to compare world religions confidently. For instance, they link how to live a good life to the teachings of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils record and express their learning effectively through writing, drama and art. Visits to places of worship such as the mosque, enhance RE provision further. Local clergy enrich the RE curriculum by providing their expertise about aspects of Christianity.

RE has a high status and is well planned, meeting the requirements for the subject in a Church school. Training needs of teachers are prioritised. They benefit from engagement with diocesan networks and appropriate support. Consequently, staff receive regular guidance, most recently for the updated syllabus. This ensures that RE is taught and led effectively. Lessons are engaging and pupils make good progress. The way in which attainment is formally measured is less developed. However, a new assessment system is currently being implemented, but is not fully embedded.

## Information

Address	Common Lane, Brightwalton, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 7BN		
Date	18 June 2025	URN	110008
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	87
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Sara Slade		
Chair of Governors	Denise Herrington		
Inspector	Jenny Earp		