

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bishop Stopford School

Vision

Unlocking unique potential. Lived out through the core values: Faith, justice, responsibility, truth and compassion. Encapsulated in scripture: 'What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6:8)

Bishop Stopford School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling students and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Notable Strengths

- The Christian vision drives the school's mission to unlock potential academically, spiritually as well as socially. Consequently, students grow as confident individuals who proudly celebrate their unique gifts and talents.
- The sense of belonging is driven by the vision as students and adults treat each other with compassion and kindness. As a result, the school community flourishes as it lives out its Christian values.
- Spiritual development abounds through carefully planned opportunities to explore spirituality and faith through the curriculum and highly effective chaplaincy. Consequently, students and staff richly experience what faith and spiritual nourishment means to them.
- The support for students, including those who are vulnerable and/or disadvantaged, is exceptionally strong. Well-crafted resources, readily available support from adults and expert teaching are removing barriers to unlocking potential. Consequently, these students are being enabled to succeed.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is extremely well planned. It is a living expression of the vision. Learning is deep and students make good progress in the subject. Outcomes are strong in external examinations as a result.

Development Points

- Extend the opportunities for students to become more actively involved within the Year group collective worship assemblies. This is to enhance the extent to which they experience the diverse and richer forms of worship that they do elsewhere in the school.
- Build routine monitoring processes to enable the governors, alongside leaders, to explicitly evaluate the impact of the vision and collective worship. This is to further enhance the work of the school as a Church school.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

The school's Christian vision, to unlock the unique potential of its students, is the cornerstone of its work. It drives strategic planning within this large, successful secondary school. The vision is lived out through the school's values, which underpin the way the entire school community lives well together. Alongside a strong focus upon unlocking academic success, leaders place significant emphasis upon their desire for students to grow in their individual talents. Therefore, the school has designed a well-considered curriculum beside wider opportunities for students to explore and celebrate their God-given identity. School leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision and take action as a result. For example, to invest in non-teaching heads of year who now provide more pastoral support. Equally, governors are highly proactive in supporting and challenging the work of the school. They regularly visit to ensure they work with school leaders effectively. However, they do not explicitly evaluate the impact of the vision, and collective worship, on the school as a Church school.

Vision and Curriculum

The vision is lived out as students demonstrate a passion for learning. Adults inspire curiosity through their innovative methods of teaching. They skilfully adapt approaches for students, including those who have additional needs and those who are vulnerable and/or disadvantaged. Teachers know their students well. Through tailored support groups, skilled staff design activities that help students to develop as successful learners. For example, with targeted reading groups to support literacy development. Consequently, academic potential is unlocked. The school has developed an extensive extra-curricular programme, including sports, performing and expressive arts, residential visits and day visits. These are instrumental in enabling students to develop new talents and interests. Furthermore, recognising the importance of unlocking spiritual potential, the school has recently refined its approach towards spiritual development. As a result, carefully planned opportunities to experience spiritual moments are wide-ranging throughout the curriculum. Students and staff are routinely encouraged to recognise these moments of 'something more'. This is enabling them to confidently debate and articulate their spiritual journey and how this applies within a diverse world. Students and adults express in detail how these moments nurture them spiritually.

Worship and Spirituality

Daily times of worship are part of the life of the school. Through year group 'gathering assemblies' and form-time worship, the school community joins daily for reflection and opportunity to pray. Leaders carefully plan the assembly worship programme, ensuring that it focuses on Christian values and follows a clear, established structure. But during 'Year group gathering assemblies' students are not always as engaged or involved as they are within the other forms of school collective worship. In these students plan and lead worship with growing insight and creativity. Leaders have created greatly valued spiritual spaces, such as the chapel and the multi-faith prayer room. These enable students to sit quietly, play music or write as they reflect or pray. Furthermore, there are ample additional opportunities for students to pray and reflect because of the work of the chaplaincy team. Students and staff meet daily to pray for the school and to encourage each other. They worship together with music and Bible reading. Additionally, students and staff have regular opportunities to take part in the Eucharist together. Consequently, worship contributes positively to adults and students' spiritual flourishing. Strong partnerships with local churches enrich collective worship. Church members regularly lead services and students attend the parish church at significant times in the Church and school calendar, such as the school's 60th anniversary. As a result, students grow spiritually and freely express what spirituality and faith means to them.

Vision and School Culture

The Christian vision drives the way that members of the school community interact with each other. Because of the vision's focus upon individual talent and potential, students are inspired to celebrate each other. For



example, they talk with pride about the recent 'culture day', that championed cultural diversity and empowered students to showcase heritage. This is helping them to develop faith in themselves so that they can unlock their own potential as they grow. One parent stated, 'it isn't about fitting in, but they are able to be proud of who they are'. This is enhanced by the school's behaviour policy that focuses upon forgiveness and reconciliation. As a result, students understand the difference that they can make to the lives of those around them. Leaders successfully prioritise mental health and wellbeing. Recently, they have invested in more extensive pastoral support to meet increasing demand by creating quiet spaces to support those in need. Equally, the investment in highly effective chaplaincy is supporting students and adults both pastorally and spiritually. Adults value the openness of leaders and equally recognise that the vision enables them to also unlock their professional potential. They are empowered as they grow in confidence to develop their professional skills. Consequently, staff feel highly valued and well cared for. Furthermore, awards events that celebrate individual achievements are enabling students to shine as they experience success both within and beyond the school.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

The vision that students 'act justly and love mercy' drives works of service. This is because leaders have thoughtfully planned the curriculum to develop students' understanding of personal and community responsibility. Student ambassadors lead others to make positive changes within the school community. For example, developing better recycling and advocating for a more comfortable summer school uniform. More widely, students act justly as they are empowered to take proactive action against the causes of injustice. For example, they tackle food poverty by making Christmas hampers for the local food bank. Equally, during the school's annual faith week, students undertook a wide range of community projects. For example, they work within local residential homes and church welfare groups to help tackle the issue of loneliness. Furthermore, students represent the UK in European youth parliamentary debate. They understand the link between faith and works of service. Beyond this, the school actively celebrates students who individually challenge injustice or undertake acts of kindness outside of the school day. Consequently, students understand the importance of responsibility and service towards each other and within their local communities.

Religious Education

RE is valued and is prioritised by leaders. It is considered a core subject in all years and dedicated lesson allocation reflects this. The curriculum is balanced and well-sequenced. It increasingly deepens students' understanding of a range of religions and worldviews. Students are inspired to think deeply and consider big moral questions. Students radiate enthusiasm, maturity and use excellent subject-specific vocabulary. The subject is important to them. Therefore, RE is a living expression of the vision. Students point to RE as a vehicle that has developed their understanding and appreciation towards those of different faiths and worldviews. They feel well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society and celebrate the vibrancy that this brings. All students are expected to study the full GCSE qualification, following the solid foundation that is built in Key Stage 3. This extends into the Sixth Form, where students can choose to study A level philosophy and ethics. Leaders have thought carefully and successfully about the core RE provision at this critical stage. This builds on relevant religious and ethical themes from before. It ensures that students continue their exploration of RE during their entirety of their time at Bishop Stopford School.

Students make good progress within RE and achieve above national averages in external examinations. Highly effective assessment and feedback enable teachers to support them well. Effective monitoring by leaders enables teachers to develop in their confidence and expertise. Consequently, students are challenged in their thinking and enjoy the debate and exploration of themes like 'Who is God?'. The subject is exceptionally well taught by expert teachers who inspire students to value the subject.

Information

Address	The Headlands, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN15 6BJ		
Date	3-4 February 2026	URN	137036
Type of school	Academy	No. of students	1455
Diocese	Peterborough		
Headteacher	Jill Silverthorne		
Chair of Governors	Brian Withington		
Inspector	Sadie Batstone		