

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Jersey Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. GL52 2JP

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Gloucester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Date of inspection	19 June 2017
Date of last inspection	13 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	115666
Headteacher	Duncan de Gruchy
Inspector's name and number	David Shears (423)

School context

Holy Trinity CE (VC) Primary School is a broadly average sized school with 208 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The headteacher was appointed to co-lead the school from January 2016 and became substantive headteacher in September 2016. For the last year prior to September 2016 the school has been through a transitional period in terms of consistent leadership.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian values are taught well in collective worship and embedded throughout the school. This is having a positive impact on the way pupils behave.
- Pupils have many opportunities to reflect in collective worship and RE and this often results in pupils caring well for each other and reaching out to others in need beyond the school. However, the planning for spiritual development across the curriculum is not as strong.
- The Christian ethos in the school means that staff model a high level of care for all pupils. This ensures that they are treated as individuals and are growing in confidence and self-esteem.
- The leadership of collective worship and RE is highly effective in ensuring that both areas are a key part of the school's provision that is monitored well.
- Links with parents and the local church are strong and activities they provide are enjoyed by pupils and contribute well to their understanding of aspects of Christianity.

Areas to improve

- Develop a distinctively Christian vision for the school that is understood by staff, governors, pupils and parents to provide a clear focus for future development.
- Develop pupils' understanding of a range of different Christian traditions by increasing the number of links with other churches and exploring these within collective worship.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of the distinctively Christian aspects of the school values.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

The school's Christian values are embedded into the life of the school and as a result, pupils are encouraged to work hard and so make good progress and achieve well in their learning regardless of their ability. Just as teachers have 'a deep understanding of pupils' individual academic needs', reported by Ofsted recently, so they also care for pupils as individuals. Parents are keen to share how much the school supports their children, particularly through difficult times with one summing it up by stating that 'pupils are treated as individuals, not as issues'. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Staff model the school's values and so relationships with pupils are highly positive and encourage pupils to respond in similar ways. Consequently pupils are polite and helpful and help each other in their learning. Both teachers and support staff work well together and are seen as a 'team'.

While the school's values support the behaviour and well-being of pupils effectively, the link between these and the school's Christian teaching is not consistently secure. For example while pupils are able to explain the value of service as being kind to others they do not always understand how this value is a key part of how Christians seek to live as part of their faith. While some pupils are able to relate a value to a Bible story or passage this is not yet consistent.

Pupils are easily able to identify the school's Christian values and these are explored with pupils by giving them opportunities to see how they can be put into practice. Consequently their moral and social development is strong. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and behave well, both in lessons and on the playground. Lunchtime supervisors talk about any squabbles that arise being easily resolved. From a moral perspective, pupils are keen to look after each other and also support those who are in need. This includes the support of various charities such as Water Aid and an individual child as part of Compassion. There are opportunities in RE and through the wider curriculum for pupils to learn about a variety of cultures and this helps them to gain a respectful understanding of how others live and what they believe. There are opportunities for pupils to participate in spiritual reflection as a regular aspect of collective worship, as well as through the designated areas in classrooms which focus on the current value being explored. This was in response to a key area for development from the previous inspection. A new spiritual reflective garden has been completed and there are explicit links to the Christian foundation through quotes from the Bible. However, because the school community does not have a shared interpretation of spirituality, the planning for spiritual development across the curriculum is not as strong. While teachers are identifying possible opportunities to engage pupils in spiritual development, planning lacks clarity and they are not evaluated for their effectiveness. The local Anglican church provides specific events such as Experience Easter and Experience Pentecost to help pupils to understand particular Bible events. These are very effective and so pupils remember them well. As part of the extra-curricular activities, members of the local Anglican church run a 'Telling the Story' club for pupils of all ages. Parents talk about this club being over-subscribed. Consequently, all pupils are enabled to participate by taking turns.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school has clear planning for collective worship which is based on the school's Christian values. Each one is explored during a half-term. Often the values are linked with a Bible story and there is a time for reflection to enable pupils to think about how they can shape their behaviour and attitudes. This is then explored more fully in individual class collective worship which sometimes includes the use of short dramas to show how these values can be applied to everyday life. While pupils are able to talk about these and put them into practice they do not recall the Bible stories as well.

Members of the local Anglican church lead worship each week, known as 'Open the book' where pupils are encouraged to act out a Bible story. Pupils look forward to this particular act of worship because they have the opportunity to participate more actively.

There are opportunities for pupils to engage with prayer during collective worship and they know both the Lord's Prayer and the school prayer. There are sometimes opportunities for pupils to pray in classes such as before the lunch break but this is not consistent. There are also other opportunities during break times to pray such as the prayer loom where pupils are able to say their own prayer and thread some fabric into the loom as a reminder of their prayer. Pupils are able to describe what the Trinity is. They understand that Jesus is a key person in Christianity and can recall the Easter story. They are able to talk about God the Father but do not find it as easy to share their thoughts about the Holy Spirit.

One of the areas to improve from the last SIAS inspection was to give all children the opportunity to be involved in

the leadership and evaluation of collective worship. The school has responded well to this by trialling a number of ways in which to achieve this. However, the school recognises that there is still more to be done to ensure all pupils broaden their experiences of the different aspects of worship that they prepare and lead. The school has rightly refined the evaluation process so that it is not as frequent but in more depth and more helpful to the school.

The school makes good use of the local Anglican church to hold services that celebrate the main Christian festivals, including harvest, Christmas and Easter. Pupils say that they enjoy these events and many parents take time out to attend. Pupils also conduct class worship for parents which are based around the current value being explored. However, pupils do not experience a range of worship from different Christian traditions.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good

The school has been through a period of change over the year prior to September 2016 and understandably this has meant that strategic plans for the school have not been fully developed. Nevertheless, good work has been done by leaders to secure a substantive headteacher who is now starting to make clear plans for the future of the school. The school recognises that the school's vision needs to be re-visited by all staff, governors, parents and pupils so that it demonstrates more clearly its distinctively Christian nature and a shared understanding of what it means to be a distinctively Christian school. While there is some mention of the school's Christian nature on the school's website, opportunities are missed to maximise this. Some school policies, however, do demonstrate the school's Christian character well. For example, the behaviour policy talks about forgiveness and giving pupils a new start.

Despite the changes in headship, other leaders in the school and teachers have worked hard to maintain the standard of teaching and pupils' achievement. Similarly the leader for RE and collective worship has continued to focus well on maintaining and developing both of these areas, including their monitoring and evaluation which has led to clear action planning. This has ensured that the arrangements for RE and collective worship continue to meet statutory requirements. In particular, she has been closely involved in developing the RE syllabus for the diocese and is already introducing the new scheme of work for RE with the aim of launching it for all pupils at Holy Trinity in September 2017. The governors, including foundation governors, have also been involved in giving good support to the school. Throughout this time the well-being of the pupils has continued to be a priority. The school recognises that while maintaining the stability of the current school leadership, plans should be made to ensure that the leadership of RE and collective worship is more widely distributed to support its sustainability.

The links with the local Anglican church are strong. They take an active part in enriching the life of the school through leading acts of worship, running an extra-curricular club and inviting the pupils to experience key Christian stories. All of these are having a positive impact in developing pupils' understanding of Christianity. Links with parents are also very positive. They particularly value the way in which pupils are nurtured and supported, especially during difficult times, and are grateful for the support that they have received as part of the school family.

SIAMS report June 2017 Holy Trinity CE (VC) Primary School, Cheltenham GL52 2JP