



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

<b>Spellbrook Church of England VC Primary School</b>	London Road, Spellbrook, Bishops Stortford. CM23 4BA
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese/Methodist District</b>	<b>St Albans</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Name of multi-academy trust/ federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	07 October 2016
Date of last inspection	28 September 2011
School's unique reference number	117405
Headteacher	Gillian Vise
Inspector's name and number	Chris Westgarth 44

### School context

Spellbrook is a smaller than average primary school with 111 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There have been extensive changes to the outside learning environment since that last inspection. The chair of governors was appointed in September 2016.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Spellbrook VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The commitment and drive of the headteacher, governors and staff have created a caring and inclusive Christian learning environment where children develop academically and personally.
- Teaching about Christianity in collective worship and religious education (RE) makes a significant impact on the Christian character of the school and results in mature spiritual, moral and social understanding of issues in the daily lives of pupils.
- The inclusive, integrated approach to learning, underpinned by Christian values makes a significant impact on standards.
- Excellent levels of pastoral care and concern result in pupils knowing they are loved and valued as unique individuals in the sight of God.

### Areas to improve

- Establish a more robust system of planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship that includes all members of the school community and has a clear structure for recording and reviewing content, practice and impact in order to inform and monitor its development.
- Improve and strengthen pupils' spiritual development through opportunities for reflection.
- Ensure the website reflects the Christian values and vision for the school in order to communicate more fully with parents.

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

The Christian ethos and values of love, care, compassion, consideration, respect and forgiveness, permeate throughout every aspect of daily school life. This has a significant impact on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) as well as on their behaviour, progress and attainment. Pupils behave well and stress that being polite and showing respect to everyone is of utmost importance. Forgiveness is something pupils readily talk about. They know who to go to if there is a problem but comment *'everyone gets on, there is nobody without a friend'*. The headteacher and staff of the school work hard to ensure that the pupils feel loved and valued as individuals, in the sight of God. This empowers them to achieve their full academic potential. As a consequence standards are consistently high and above the national average. Opportunities to enrich spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are increasing through the creation of the worship team. Religious education (RE) has a high profile in the curriculum and makes a strong contribution to the Christian character of the school. As a result pupils have a good understanding of and respect for other faith communities and cultural diversity. Spellbrook is an inclusive school where all are valued as unique beings. As one pupil explained, *'When I came here, I was shy but I have come over that because everyone is friendly and they have helped me'*. Another added that *'it was because God was watching over everyone in the school'*. Pupils are well motivated, have positive attitudes, and speak with pride and enthusiasm about their school, their teachers and their learning. Friendships are strong. There is indeed a strong family feel within the school, with older pupils happily supporting younger ones and all staff are excellent role models for the children. This results in new pupils quickly becoming established in the school and pupils helping each other when there is a need. Positive behaviour strategies are used proactively and as a result behaviour is exceptional and learners are polite and show respect. Bright and interactive displays are effectively used to make links between Christian values, everyday life and areas of the curriculum. For example the creation display linked the creation story with harvest and the playground wildlife area. In recent years the school has focused on developing the outdoor learning environment. Pupils and staff are proud of their achievements, consequently pupils enjoy caring for their school and grounds. As one pupil said *'We love our playground, we can play music, we can play football, we can sit quietly, there's something here for everyone'*. Charitable giving is strong both locally and nationally with pupils keen to help those in need. Christian values are clearly embedded in the daily routines of the school. The impact of these values on the lives and routines of the school is reflected in the ability of pupils to make good links between the values and the teaching of Jesus. Consequently, SMSC provision is good and opportunities are used well to enhance the learning experience for all.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

Pupils are given opportunities to plan and lead worship and this has enabled them to have a deeper, more mature understanding of why worship is so important to Christians. Collective worship is organised in a varied and engaging way. The church is used several times a year for special services, enabling both pupils and their families to share worship experience and deepen their appreciation of Christian festivals. There is a growing understanding of God as Trinity. This is reinforced by the use of Christian songs and liturgical greetings with responses. There is a strong understanding of God as Father and Creator and pupils readily talk of the love of God. Pupils speak positively of the involvement of clergy in collective worship and also of the opportunities to worship in church as well as school. The present monitoring and evaluation does not lead into a process that demonstrates improving provision or impact. The words of the school prayer are visible in classrooms and the hall. This is known and understood by pupils. Pupils see prayer as important and as one commended, *'It's good to talk to God at any time and about everything'*. Although there are limited opportunities for pupil prayer or space for quiet reflection. The recently created collective worship team is already having positive benefits, but it is not sufficiently embedded in the cycle of improvement. One pupil said, *'We help to make worship better and show people about God'*. Pupils readily talk about worship and God, they are deep thinkers and this is often reflected in their questioning and responses during worship. The school's Christian values are often linked to worship themes and Bible passages. Pupils are able to retell Bible stories and explain how we can learn to live our lives differently because of them and how they are connected to the Christian values.

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

The distinctiveness of the school as a church school has been firmly established by the long serving headteacher. The vicar is a regular visitor to school, she is well liked and valued by pupils, staff and parents. She is described as

fun and helpful. Links with the local church are an integral part of this church school and both parents and pupils enjoy the festivals and celebrations that bring the families together. Despite the distance between the school and church, the relationship with Great St Mary's Church is beneficial and strong. The church regularly prays for the school and members are involved in the life of the school. Equally the school supports the church by publicising services, being involved in festivals and praying for the church. The support and development of the RE subject leader given by senior leadership has led to highly effective RE across the school. The headteacher and governors have a shared vision for the school 'as a church school first and foremost'. This results in a desire for every child to become confident citizens, motivated by Christian values. These values are seen as being woven through the school. Governors and the headteacher see this focus as a driving force in their meticulous monitoring of children's learning and progress in the core subjects. School leaders are developing monitoring, evaluation and planning for developments related to RE and collective worship, reporting regularly to governors. The headteacher leads effectively, ensuring that the vision and values are a significant foundation for all members of the school community. These are evident in all aspects of school life, including the curriculum. As a result, SMSC development is strong. Parents feel confident to approach the school and are full of praise for the way that any concerns are managed. One parent said that although they do not attend church themselves they felt that children were getting a very positive experience of Christianity from the school. Because of the Christian values and vision of the school, all are valued and accepted. A parent commented that the school family and the dedication of the headteacher had been instrumental in her child settling into school, something that had not happened at previous schools. Governors and school leaders have benefited from a range of support, including from the diocese, in order to develop their roles as church school leaders. Governors are keen to build on diocesan links by receiving more training. The new chair of governors knows the school well and governors speak with pride about the school, they visit regularly, are actively involved in the life of the school and as a result are well informed and have high expectations for the school. They provide rigorous and robust challenge and support for all areas. They place great emphasis through their visits and monitoring on ensuring pupils with special educational needs make the best possible start and progress with their learning. Foundation governors carry out their roles very effectively. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are well met as a result of good support for these areas by senior leaders. This is demonstrated by the fact that RE, worship and the distinctive Christian character of the school are regularly discussed at senior leadership, governor meetings and included in the school development plan.

SIAMS report October 2016 Spellbrook C of E VC primary school. Bishops Stortford CM23 4BA