



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bromham Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School	Grange Lane, Bromham, Beds MK43 8NR
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	St Albans Diocese
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Bedfordshire
Name of multi-academy trust/ federation	n/a
Date of inspection	19 October 2016
Date of last inspection	12 September 2011
School's unique reference number	109611
Headteacher	Virginia Gilks
Inspector's name and number	Juliet Lyal 829

School context

Bromham Church of England (VC) Primary School is a large mainly two form entry school with 307 pupils from Reception to Year 4. Formerly a 'Lower' school, it changed status in September 2016 and will be accommodating Year 5 pupils from September 2017 and Year 6 from September 2018. At this point the school will become three form entry, starting with Reception. The school buildings are on two sites, joined by a footpath crossing a large public field. This is the only church school in the benefice and draws pupils from the wider community as well as from Bromham. Pupils are mainly White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs support is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding by the pupil premium.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bromham C of E (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The commitment, drive and vision of the headteacher, staff and governors have energised the distinctive Christian character of the school. The impact on behaviour, attitudes to learning and pupils' enjoyment of school is very strong.
- The impact of the Christian character and values on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners is very strong.
- High quality acts of worship, shaped by Anglican tradition and valued by all, are creative and inspirational and influence behaviour in and beyond the school.

Areas to improve

- Formalise and focus discussion on the effectiveness of the school as a church school during full governing body meetings in addition to the responses to the twice termly report from the foundation governors.
- Deepen learners' understanding of the Christian theology on which the school values are based so they are able to discern the relevance of Christianity to modern life.

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

The bedrock of this school is the distinctive Christian ethos which is engrained in how everyone lives and works. Its impact on the school and local community is strong. The broad and creative curriculum, ethos and links between religious education (RE) and worship have a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners. They also have a strong impact on pupils' behaviour, progress and attainment. This is evident in the good and excellent progress pupils make. Their 2016 end of Key Stage 1 attainments results were well above national and Bedford Borough average scores, particularly in maths. Pupils are confident and articulate and know that they belong to a church school, explaining that 'we are part of the church family' and that 'our school cares about God.' They are aware of the diversity that this involves because 'we all do some things differently.' They understand that some of their peers have a different faith or belief to their own and are fully aware of Christianity being a multi-cultural world faith. Pupils refer, with excitement, to the recent visit of a group of Massai Christians to the school. Parents easily recognise the inclusivity and high degree of respect that the school shows towards those from other world faiths and beliefs. They stress how this is a key example of 'living out' the school's Christian values. Pupils can explain the values giving examples of how most of these are acted upon and many are confident enough to articulate their link to stories about God and Jesus. Through the RE teaching about inspirational leaders, Year 3 pupils were challenged to identify the explicit Christian values held by Martin Luther King and how these impacted on others. They were excited to be able to make links to their previous learning in Black History Month. The monthly values have a positive impact beyond school with parents acknowledging that the 'home task' benefits the whole family. The nine school council pupils take their elected role of making decisions on 'behalf of others' and being 'part of making the school better' very seriously. They understand their democratic role and how the school's Christian values impact their decision making. Pupils understand what is meant by 'spiritual' and say that they enjoy their class reflection corners as places to 'think about God and our values', although explicit Christian theology is not always clear. They find the school remembrance area, known as Sheri's Garden, a peaceful place to visit and feel inspired by displays around the school, some supported with Biblical texts. Pupils treasure their reflection books which they start in Reception and refer to as 'the journey of our life in this school'. The school's aims include 'displaying politeness, respect and tolerance for all... guided by the principles of the Christian Church' and behaviour of pupils is seen to be very good. The school's 'Let's Talk' programme based on restorative justice supports both pupils and staff and emotional literacy sessions are provided for those who need them. Parents, staff and governors comment on the school being a 'big school with a small feel'. This is because the headteacher knows each child by name, relationships across the school community are strong and the Christian values are shared and embedded.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is central to the life of this school, giving everyone the opportunity to learn about God and Jesus, to pray, reflect and develop spiritually. Held daily on both school sites and following Anglican practice and liturgy, worship is based around the school's Christian values and linked through Bible stories. There is a strong focus on the life of Jesus Christ. Inspirational leaders, saints, festivals and key events in the Church year are also included in the detailed and supportive planning. The Trinitarian nature of God has been embedded and is supported by the 'Out of the Box' worship units in which the Bible, cross and candle are linked to God as father, son and holy spirit. Pupils recognise the pattern in worship and say how these visual clues 'help us to understand' the Trinity. They explain the purpose of the coloured cloth used to represent Church time and the large liturgical clock collage that hangs in the Village Rd site hall. Worship is not confined to the two school halls and pupils clearly enjoy worship in the classrooms, before lunch, Sheri's Garden and in the local Anglican and Baptist churches. Plans for a new specially funded 'outdoor worship' space are in place. The relationship between the church, village and school community is strong and whilst the Anglican church is too small for the whole school to worship together it is still used by all. The school choir sings there once a term and pupils visit as part of their RE curriculum, ending with a time of shared reflection and prayer. Daily acts of collective worship are led by school leaders, staff, pupils and the incumbent. Invited visitors, including the local 'open the book' group also lead worship, all of which develops learners' good understanding of diversity within Christianity. The pupils' collective worship club meets weekly, with the staff coordinator, to plan, develop and evaluate termly pupil-led worship. This highly popular club is referred to by all members of the school community and is now ready and capable to plan for twice termly worship. From the youngest upwards, pupils participate enthusiastically during collective worship showing good listening, stillness during prayer and spontaneous actions whilst singing. They are also keen to contribute with prayers they have written on a scroll, one of which is chosen each day. Pupils say that they know The Lord's Prayer and recognise it as 'connecting Christians all over the world.' They enjoy learning the prayer in different languages too. Pupils feel that they have shared ownership of collective worship and through the school council chose names to best describe each daily act of worship. For example, Friday is 'peaceful reflection' when pupils and adults remove their shoes to sit in a place of their choice in

their candle lit halls. Regular and formal monitoring and evaluation by foundation governors and senior leaders of the impact of collective worship on the school community is in place. Feedback and proposed actions are provided to the school, as set out in the monitoring and evaluation plan. Collective worship themes challenge pupils to reach a high level of child centred spirituality and to develop a strong sense of social responsibility. Governors and parents are invited to attend collective worship, and the school is continuing to seek opportunities to further involve parents.

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

The school has made significant progress since the last inspection in 2011. Leaders and managers have built on the Christian distinctiveness and made it a church school with a strong sense of belonging, Christian identity and involvement. Following a review with all stakeholders about making their values more explicitly Christian, the school launched its new values in a focused Values Week in January 2014. New staff say that they feel welcomed, cared for and included, receiving support as well as training. Parents of new pupils feel likewise. The headteacher describes the governing body as a 'committed driving force' which is 'challenging and supportive'. The governors see themselves as a 'solid group that brings balance' to the leadership and management which is based on the school's Christian values. Twice termly review meetings, between the foundation governors and the assistant head, who is also RE subject leader and collective worship coordinator, are held to evaluate the school as a church school. During each review the group also shares progress and achievement, such as the RE Quality Mark Gold award (December 2015) or the impact of the shared prayer book with another local school. Each review is reported to the full governing body meeting, although there is not yet enough in-depth exploration of the school as a church school at these meetings. All leaders are involved in the plans for school expansion and express their aims to continue and develop the strong Christian character as they 'move forward together'. This includes the induction of any new staff into the expectations of them to support the school's Christian ethos. Leaders identified the desirability that the new hall would be large enough to accommodate all pupils and staff for collective worship. Staff and parents comment that the governors are clearly visible at school social and curriculum events and have responded sensitively to any concerns about the school expansion. All school members say that they have been kept well informed of the plans. The school's close relationship with both local churches has an impact on the whole community and there is regular sharing of premises and time. Pupils enjoy participating in the Sunday services, Messy Church and holiday clubs. The incumbent is a regular visitor to school as are other visitors including diocesan and local clergy thus enabling pupils to develop their understanding of the wider and diverse Christian community. The foundation governors often join the staff on diocesan training days, which strengthens their involvement and support for the school. Leaders ensure that pupils participate in local and diocesan services and events for example the Lifepath of John Bunyan and the Harvest Festival at St Albans Abbey. Pupils' local, national and global understanding is enhanced by these occasions as well as by school trips, visitors and charity events. Community days are very well attended. At the time of inspection Year 4 were on their annual residential at the Christian Frontier Centre. All governors meet termly with their staff subject leaders and thus have a clear understanding of pupil progress and achievement, profiles and targets. They are familiar with the school development plan and say that they are kept very well informed by the senior leadership team. Leadership in RE and collective worship is given a high priority and pupils continue to achieve well in RE. All staff are given opportunities for continuing professional development. Training for the new Understanding Christianity project, for example, will be attended by all teachers, some teaching assistants and foundation governors, including the incumbent. The senior leadership team is now structured so as to enable further development of the staff as leaders in church schools.

SIAMS report October 2016 Bromham CE (VC) Primary School, Bromham MK43