

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	
Common Field, Wigginton, Tring HP23 6EP	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	St Albans
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Date of inspection	20 February 2018
Date of last inspection	4 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 117463
Headteacher	Sally Roycroft
Inspector's name	Mary Westley 926

School context

St Bartholomew's Wigginton is a smaller than average primary school. The headteacher took up post in April 2015 after an interim period where the deputy headteacher led the school for two terms. The percentages of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and for those for whom the school receives additional funding, are below the national averages. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is also below the national figure and the proportion for whom English is a second language is significantly below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary school are good

- The school's Christian values are widely known and have a positive impact on the daily lives of members of the community.
- The well-being of all members of the community is given great importance and is directly attributable to the Christian character of the school.
- The headteacher models Christian values in her strong leadership. This has led the whole school community to strive to make this school the best church school possible, serving the community with respect.
- The school's Christian character ensures a fully inclusive approach so that all families feel welcome regardless of their point of entry to the school. Relationships are strong at all levels.
- Collective worship has great importance and has a clear positive impact across the community.

Areas to improve

- Governors should evaluate the school as a church school so that the extent of the impact of the school's vision can be understood clearly to inform future planning.
- Develop questioning and recording in religious education (RE) in order to achieve a greater proportion of pupils attaining high levels.

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

This school values its Christian foundation highly. The six chosen Christian values are the first thing seen on entry to the school building. A Year 6 pupil remarked that 'these are the Christian values we follow'. Members across the community are aware of these values and are able to talk of the impact they have. For example, pupils demonstrate an ability to accept challenges and persevere with tasks both in class and in the frequent Forest Schools visits. The headteacher and governors ensure a fully inclusive approach where every individual child is valued regardless of their point of entry into school. Within a Christian context individual pupil achievements across the school are highly valued. As a result, academic standards for most pupils are at least in line with national expectations. Progress for some groups is slower than expected but the school has taken decisive action to improve achievement for these pupils. Attendance rates are high for the vast majority of pupils, due to the fact they feel valued in this school. They also like coming to school. There is a sense of respect running through the community and this is evident in relationships at all levels. This leads to a strong sense of community, with all families feeling welcome and included. The well-being of all members of this community is given great importance and this is attributed to the Christian character of the school. This can be seen in the sensitive planning to support a family joining the school and the strong tradition of supporting local and overseas charities. For example, pupils participated in a reverse calendar through which they donated food each day of Advent for a local cause. Aspects of RE have contributed to an appreciation of all. Additionally, the distinctive Christian values, such as respect, are referred to throughout the school and this has made pupils and staff aware of each other's needs. Christian values are shared through prominent displays around the school and clear links through collective worship and RE. This enables pupils to reflect on these values and see how they relate to their lives. Christian values also shape behaviour throughout the school as they are explicitly referred to in expectations and the policy. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent showing respect at all levels. A pupil who joined the school more recently reported that her behaviour had improved since joining. Pupils know they will be listened to and feel able to say how they feel. Pupil rewards, such as 'stars of the week', reinforce Christian values as well as do frequent acknowledgements by staff. Small acts of kindness occur every day and are common place. The extremely strong buddy system is testament to this as it endures throughout a child's time at school. Pupils do this happily and with pride. The mixed aged classes have helped the school develop a strong culture of children looking after each other. There is a very inclusive atmosphere and when small issues arise, they are resolved quickly so no-one feels left out. A daily lunchtime club run by the headteacher also promotes inclusivity. Children's spirituality is developed through their extensive use of reflection and prayer. Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is developing, for example, they know that pupils in their link school in Zimbabwe 'are Christians too'. They have some understanding of different Christian denominations through their link with a Catholic school in Lewisham. Knowing the Lewisham community has also widened the pupils understanding of diversity as has the schools' membership of the larger sports partnership. The headteacher has worked hard to build the Christian character of the school. As a result, the school is a supportive Christian community caring for the needs of all its members and the wider community. An example is pupils electing which charities to support each year and choosing how to raise money. This term they held a book sale for Cancer Research. There is a culture of giving across the school and pupils are centrally involved in this.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school places great importance on collective worship as shown by the attendance of all staff and a very active pupil church council. This recently established group leads and plans worship daily based on the current Christian value. They tackle this with enthusiasm, commitment and sincerity. Each applied for a place in writing, explaining the importance of worship to them. Membership was over-subscribed. This pupil involvement is considerable and they greatly enjoy this active participation. They routinely read aloud prepared passages and say prayers, written by themselves or other pupils. All stakeholders evaluate worship and findings lead to further improvements. Planning for collective worship is very thoughtful and links clearly to biblical teaching. The headteacher and vicar meet termly to develop this. The Bible stories included are linked to the lectionary and most carefully chosen to illustrate the Christian values. Pupils have a very good understanding of these stories and can apply the meaning to their lives. A pupil reported how 'the Bible stories show us how to behave'. Notable examples are the respect they show each other and their charity work. Pupils engage very well by listening attentively and singing beautifully. Pupils have an age appropriate understanding of the key Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and can explain their thoughts. There are frequent opportunities for prayer in worship and in class rooms. Pupils access these freely and comfortably. There are reflection areas in each class room where pupils write their own prayers, reflect or say a prayer while holding a prayer pebble. There is frequent reflection time in worship. As a result, pupils think about issues with ease and make direct links to their worship. Candles are used to aid reflection both in worship and in class. Parents are made very welcome to the monthly services in church. Many attend regularly. Worship provides a very strong community link with the village through the church. The popular weekly after school café in church is another strong link between church and school. The vicar leads worship weekly in school with zeal. He plays a key part in linking worship to the school's Christian values and how these can influence the daily lives of pupils. Pupils enjoy his worship in school and church and are keen

to participate appropriately. There is a clear pattern for worship in school with very careful attention given to the setting of the atmosphere with entry singing, 'candle' and a worship table displaying seasons of the church year. Pupils are well aware of the church festivals and seasons as documented in the photographic display in the school entrance.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is given great importance across the school. It has the same value and respect as other core subjects, for example, literacy. Regular RE staff meetings, strategic RE planning and generous resourcing all help to give the subject a high profile. Pupils enjoy RE and work well together in pairs, small groups or individually. They are encouraged to reflect and think widely. A good example is Year 5 and 6 pupils being able to imagine how Corrie ten Boom felt when her oppressor asked for forgiveness. Their answers show thought and empathy and the ability to relate the Bible to real life situations. Pupils are taught four world religions in addition to Christianity. They say they enjoy learning about other faiths and they are able to talk about some key ideas. They particularly enjoy the visits to a mosque and Hindu temple. The RE teaching links clearly to worship through the Christian values of the school. Invited visitors are also welcome to share their faith. Pupils' knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is developing and their link with a school in Zimbabwe has strengthened this. Regular visits to Zimbabwe by the rector have made this link real to the children through exchanges of gifts, information and music. They know that the pupils there are Christians too. Pupils can retell some Bible stories and some know what a parable is. They are also able to link the school's Christian values to the Bible stories heard. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in RE lessons. Their attainment is at least comparable to expectation although too few pupils are working at a higher level. The teaching in RE is good and some outstanding. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly and effectively. Tasks are clear and largely matched to the needs of learners. The RE subject leader leads the subject with passion. She introduced 'Understanding Christianity' training and materials to the whole school. Impact has already been noted in teacher feedback showing their greater confidence and enjoyment. She monitors RE teaching effectively through regular learning walks and lesson observations. From these feedback is given to colleagues. She has developed a strong plan to monitor the development of RE across the school.

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

The headteacher has worked tirelessly to build the Christian character of the school. She leads by example in her behaviour. As a result, all staff and pupils share respect across the community. A caring community exists at all levels. Parents and staff remark on this. Parents also say they chose the school because of its nurturing nature. One parent expressed this as the school 'focussing on the people the children are going to be'. Christian values are actively promoted. An example is the headteacher's homework challenge which relates to the current Christian value. This has developed into a popular activity resulting in whole community awareness of the values and beautiful displays in school of art work illustrating each value in turn. The headteacher cares about every child and family in the school and greets them daily. She knows her pupils and families very well and they appreciate this. Both the governors and headteacher value the Christian foundation of the school highly. Together they promote a gentle atmosphere where Christian values shape relationships. RE and collective worship have a very clear profile in the school. They both reflect the Christian values which run through the school and are known by all. These are reinforced through prominent displays around school. Every governors' meeting is started with prayer to set their work in a Christian context. Governors are actively involved in aspects of monitoring, but as yet there is no systematic self-evaluation by the governors of the school as a church school. They are active in school including additional meetings if needed, as when the vision was developed. This vision is promoted by all leaders across the community. The school's relationship with the local church is very strong and greatly strengthened by the vicar who shares the school's vision closely and who gives most generously of his time. This time is spent highly effectively in worship and in his pastoral role in school. Additionally he leads a lunchtime football club. Children feel at ease in church and families attend in large number. Members of the local church make an award to a pupil for service to the school community. The dynamic subject leader for RE has made very good provision for staff training including induction for the Understanding Christianity resource. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through the clear emphasis on Christian values. The school values its active links with the diocese and benefits from the training and support it offers. There is a very strong partnership between parents and school, and parents are very aware of the school's values and expectations. They appreciate the responsibility given to the children and how well the children respond to this. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Leaders are aware of succession planning.

SIAMS report February 2018 St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Common Field, Wigginton, Tring HP23 6EP