Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| **Sandford St Martin’s CE Primary School** | |
| Sandford, Wareham, Dorset. BH20 7BN | |
| **Current SIAMS inspection grade** | **Satisfactory** |
| **Diocese** | **Salisbury** |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Local authority | Dorset |
| Date of inspection | 15 November 2016 |
| Date of last inspection | 1 December 2011 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Aided 113818 |
| Headteacher | Jerome De Silva |
| Inspector’s name and number | Lesley Turville 732 |

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| **School context**  The school is a larger than average primary school with 351 pupils on role. It serves the area of Sandford, Holton Heath and Wareham Forest. Pupils are mainly White British. There have been significant changes since the last inspection. The school moved into new buildings in November 2014 following a change from being a first school to a primary school. This has led to a large increase in pupil numbers and staff. The current headteacher started in September 2016 following a period with an acting headteacher. The school also has a new acting deputy headteacher and religious education (RE) coordinator. Six governors have started in the last 16 months and the chair of governors took up post 18 months ago. The local church is also in the process of appointing a new incumbent although the school is still well served by The Wareham Family of churches. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sandford St Martin’s as a Church of England school are satisfactory**   * The many changes to the staffing and structure of the school in recent years have slowed the pace of the development of the school as a distinctly Christian school. * Since September 2016 the new headteacher, senior staff and governors, working in partnership with the diocese, have audited provision and begun to move the school forward. This demonstrates good capacity to improve. * The very close and supportive relationship with the Wareham Family of churches has been key to sustaining and developing the understanding of the Christian character of the school in the local community. * The strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, enhanced by the emphasis on philosophy for children (P4C) broadens their experiences and develops their ability to self-reflect and discuss confidently. |
| **Areas to improve**   * Ensure that the newly chosen core values are related to the Christian vision for the school and inform school policy and practice at all levels so that their transformational impact on the community can be evidenced. * Formalise governor monitoring and evaluation of RE, collective worship and the distinctive character of the school so that the school development plan drives improvement in these areas. * Ensure the school has on going and accurate self-evaluation in place to analyse and evidence the impact of changes made. * To introduce, as soon as possible, robust systems for monitoring and evaluating attainment and progress in RE to ensure standards are in line with other subjects and that practice is consistent across the school. |

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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory**  **at meeting the needs of all learners**  Sandford St Martin’s Primary School sees itself as a happy learning community ‘providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice’. This vision has until recently been solely articulated through a wide range of values explored in worship and Christian teaching in RE. For example, all pupils and adults feel valued and listened to because the school lives out the values of respect and welcome. One child says that ‘Christians believe that you should be kind to everyone’. As a result, attendance is good as pupils enjoy school and feel supported and secure. Recently pupils have chosen five values to act as core Christian values to explicitly support the school’s Christian vision and show them how to live their lives. These are friendship, respect, kindness and love. Pupils say if these are followed, they will lead to the fifth value of happiness. All pupils are aware of these values and are proud of their involvement in choosing them, but do not yet fully understand them as Christian or relate them to their daily lives. They are aware that some Bible stories have been displayed with them but aren’t sure what these are. Written school policy and the school website do not yet make these links clear for the wider community or determine how they will sit alongside existing Golden Rules, Rights or British Values. Because these values are not yet fully embedded into school policy and practice it is difficult to monitor their impact on the school community and academic achievement. This is why the school is not yet good.  The school has recently introduced P4C which has enhanced the already strong provision for SMSC development and contributes to the academic achievement and well-being of the pupils. Through discussion skills and reflection journals children are encouraged to understand and embrace their feelings and beliefs and to accept those who think and feel differently. Because of this, children are articulate and confident and relationships across the school are good. Pupils report that behaviour is mostly good and where problems do occur staff are always there to help them. RE in the school also supports pupils’ SMSC development through broadening pupils’ religious understanding of world faiths such as Judaism and Islam. However, RE does not sufficiently develop awareness of the global, multi-cultural nature of Christianity. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**  Collective worship is a valued occasion and its impact on the whole community is strong, providing continuity in times of change. Pupils say it enables them to come together to learn about the Bible, reflect, pray, sing and share their thoughts with one another and with God. Children and adults respond well, listening carefully, participating enthusiastically and responding to questions, showing enjoyment, contemplation and reverence. Parents say that pupils talk about themes at home and often sing the songs they are learning especially the more modern ones. They also say they would like more opportunities to worship alongside their children but understand that space restricts this. They value the welcome service and the leaver’s service which mark the beginning and end of their children’s life at the school. Pupils are able to talk about what collective worship means to them and how it helps them to have a deeper understanding of Jesus and how they apply his teaching to their lives. As a result, pupils show respect for each other and take initiatives in supporting local and national charities.  Themes for worship are based on a wide range of values identified in the ‘Values for Life’ resource. These are carefully woven into a programme that highlights key Christian festivals and seasons. Because of this, pupils are able to relate the termly value to stories from the Bible. Furthermore, pupils use worship themes to explain the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; for example the story of Ascension and Jesus saying He will send the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples. However, this programme has yet to specifically reflect the newly chosen core values and link them to theological teaching which limits their impact on pupils.  Worship sometimes includes symbolic acts such as lighting a candle to show the presence of God. Opening and closing texts such as ‘peace be with you’ and ‘as you go out God goes with you’ are said. These establish a weekly and a daily pattern which enables the pupils to experience Anglican traditions and practices.  Worship contributes significantly to pupil’s spiritual development through the opportunities given to reflect and pray during and outside of timetabled provision. Recent prayer spaces and reflection journals used at the end of each short term engage pupils in personal reflection, prayer and spiritual growth. On the day of inspection pupils and adults were invited to tie a ribbon onto a cross outside of the school as an act of prayer. Children joined in enthusiastically and one parent commented that this was ‘just what she needed this morning’. Plans are in place to create an area outside that can be used for prayer, reflection and worship. This was an area for development from the last report but changes to the school site have meant it is only now being addressed.  Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is not securely established and tends to focus on observation and informal feedback. Children said they would welcome the opportunity to talk to adults about how they feel. They enjoy it when they can take part through drama, song and the reading of prayers and would like more opportunities to plan and lead their own worship. |
| **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory** Pupils have a positive attitude to RE enjoying the discussion nature of lessons which allows them to focus on developing their own views and opinions. Older children recognize the significance of RE in developing their understanding of and therefore respect for people of all faiths and none. One pupil said ‘it makes all children feel valued’ and another that ‘similarities between faiths are recognised’. Due to the cross curricular nature of the curriculum younger children were less clear about what they were learning in RE. Themes planned across the school using ‘The Discovery’ resource ensure progress and that their entitlement for RE is met. However, there isn’t a balance of learning about Christianity and other faiths in all year groups. The introduction of P4C has added to the big question approach and means that pupils of all ages are actively engaged in thinking about their learning. This strengthens their SMSC development and learning from religion as well as learning about religion. Pupils as young as five are able to engage in conversations about how characters in the story of the feeding of the five thousand were feeling and how this effected their behaviour. Older children use their analytical thinking skills to discern the character of Mary from symbolism used in historical images. This helped them think about ‘Why Mary was chosen?’  The school has not yet developed a way of capturing the discussion based learning that takes place in lessons. This means that the evidence of learning in books is only part of the overall picture which makes it difficult for the RE coordinator to monitor coverage and depth of learning. This, coupled with the lack of formalised assessment processes, means the school is unable to reliably compare attainment and progress in RE to other subjects. A recent learning walk by the headteacher confirmed that the majority of teaching of RE is good. Marking of RE work follows the recently introduced marking policy but often identifies learning objectives from literacy rather than focusing on learning objectives from RE. The new RE coordinator has identified assessment, monitoring and evaluation as being in need of development and there is an action plan in place for future class room monitoring activities. This shows a commitment to improving provision and standards across the school. She has also attended recent diocesan training and is aware of the new requirements and Understanding Christianity materials. The new values have yet to impact on the RE curriculum. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory**  Sandford St Martin’s Primary school has implicitly lived out its Christian vision over the last few years by continually serving the needs of a changing community through a period of rapid change and growth. This means that very little is as it was at the time of the last inspection so areas for development identified then are no longer relevant. The school has a new headteacher and governing body who have a determination to strengthen the Christian character of the school. As a result, the school has quickly developed a good working relationship with the diocese which is shaping school policy and practice. The central importance of the Christian vision and values on school improvement is increasingly considered in all planning and meetings. There is good capacity to improve rapidly.  Appropriate induction and training is in place for new staff members who feel welcomed into the school and confident in their roles and in delivering collective worship. They feel well supported by their peers in a family atmosphere where they are able to ask for help if needed. The new and very enthusiastic RE and P4C coordinators have already impacted on practice and improved the learning experience of the children across the school.  School leaders at all levels and governors are increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school. However, this does not include formalised processes for governors to monitor of RE and collective worship or the impact of the Christian character on the school. This means these aspects do not regularly appear on school development planning and there is no ongoing self-evaluation of these aspects of the school.  The long standing and mutually beneficial links with The Wareham Family of churches is key to the way the school is seen as being central to the community. The church is now integrated into the actual school building. This physical link and the provision for collective worship are central to how parents, staff and pupils recognise the Christian nature of the school. The parish school worker is a well-loved and frequent visitor to the school. She and the rest of the team are seamlessly ‘filling the gap’ during the current interregnum and working with the school to appoint a new incumbent.  Parents are supportive of the school, feel involved and consulted and speak highly of the pastoral care given to their children and themselves. They see this as the school living out its Christian character. They commend the level of engagement and support received from all teaching staff who act immediately to solve any problems.  The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. |

SIAMS report November 2016. Sandford St Martin’s Primary School, Sandford, Wareham, Dorset. BH20 7BN