

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Bishops Cannings Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School | |
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| The Street Bishops Cannings Devizes Wiltshire SN10 2LD | |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Diocese | Salisbury |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Date of inspection | 22 November 2016 |
| Date of last inspection | 7 November 2011 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Primary 126395 |
| Headteacher | Jonathan Barber |
| Inspector's name and number | David Hatrey 844 |

School context

Bishops Cannings Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is a smaller than the average rural school in comparison with others nationally. The number of children entitled to pupil premium or who have English as an additional language is below national averages. The number with special educational needs is broadly inline with national averages.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishops Cannings Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Distinctive Christian values are understood by children, who relate these to Jesus' life and teaching.
- Religious education makes a good contribution to the school's Christian character. It is expertly led and develops children's understanding of Christian values.
- The church contributes to the life of the school with strong pastoral support and offers new ideas for learning and worship.
- The school's Christian distinctiveness is clearly shown in the warmth and inclusiveness of the family ethos, where relationships are strong and supportive.

Areas to improve

- Embed the school's Christian values so that children recognise and articulate the difference they make to their lives and attainment.
- Share good practice in religious education teaching across the school, so this challenges children's thinking and raises attainment for the more-able.
- Extend procedures for monitoring to include evaluating the impact of the Christian distinctiveness and spirituality so that challenging and innovative improvements are identified.

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

Bishops Cannings have identified 12 core Christian values. They are trust, compassion, courage, forgiveness, friendship, generosity, justice, perseverance, respect, service, thankfulness and truthfulness. The school has effectively woven these into everyday life and learning. Children generally have a good understanding of these values and recognise what they look like in daily life and others. They have a distinctive Christian understanding of values through links to Bible stories which reflect their meaning. This is reinforced through strong links with parents as children are encouraged to explore their meaning at home. For example, with trust, families created boats to remind them of Saint Peter walking on the water and trusting Jesus. There are many pictures, models and work related to values shown around the school that highlight their importance. Children are beginning to recognise that these values make a contribution to shaping their school. They are not always confident to articulate how this happens and do not yet fully understand explicit links between these values and their lives and attainment. Staff and adults model the core values in their own lives and through strong relationships established with children. There is a rich family atmosphere with the school's Christian ethos operating at the centre of this Christian community. Children respond well to staff, showing care and concern for others. Older children, for example, lead a lunch time Lego club for younger children and their commitment to fund-raising projects such as preparing Christmas gifts through the shoe box appeal. Behaviour at the school is at least good and often better. Where any issues arise they are thoughtfully followed up often with references to values. Good attitudes are effectively promoted to help children become life long learners, who in turn want to come to school and be successful. There are opportunities for spirituality and reflection in both religious education and worship. Each half term, children reflect on the current Christian value and what it means to them. Their responses are recorded, although at present these are brief and lack a richness of language to express their thoughts in a greater depth that supports their growing maturity. At present opportunities to develop these spiritual experiences further are not identified in planning nor do they cover a broad range of experiences, allowing children to respond in a variety of ways. Children are interested in exploring other world faiths, developing their understanding of how faith is shown in actions or celebrations. They talk thoughtfully, making accurate comparisons with their own beliefs, showing tolerance and respect for those who hold different views. Their commitment to sponsor a child in the Dominican Republic and comparing her culture and daily life has developed empathy, recognising how other lives are different to their own.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Planning for collective worship is drawn from the 'Roots and Shoots' programme when each half term a value is explored. Every week, an aspect of the value is developed that effectively links to Bible stories giving children opportunities to deepen their understanding. Worship has a prominent role in the life of the school. Most children are engaged in worship through good opportunities for interaction, whether to discuss an idea with a partner, drama and music, as well as using media. Children experience a variety of leaders and different approaches to worship. Whilst some children thought that teaching from worship influences their ideas, they could not do this confidently. Following a thoughtful review of the main Christians festivals, changes were made in how they are delivered. Now, in the week leading up to Easter, classes perform a drama for Palm Sunday and each day of Holy week, culminating in an Easter service. Children understood the story at a much deeper level and realise its meaning and significance for Christians. At Christmas, church and school work together to create a series of experiences related to characters in the story. This involvement brings the story to life. Children want to be involved in these imaginative celebrations and raise some deeper questions, such as, "Who were Jesus' parents?" or "Why did God send Jesus?" There is a real emphasis on developing children's understanding of prayer. Each year there is a prayer week where prayer experiences are explored. These include creating different approaches to prayer, making prayers as models or pictures using a variety of media and asking questions of God. Children say how valuable this opportunity is because it gives them time to think about 'letting God take away things that hurt' them as they dropped their 'worries' into the water. 'It was good to release anger and get rid of worries,' was a typical comment. Displays of these experiences remind children of ideas they have considered. Their prayers demonstrate a maturity of thought in the contribution it makes to their daily lives. Children are confident to share their ideas, knowing these will be valued. Children have a good knowledge of Jesus and His teaching which they recount in some detail, seeking to understand what message this might give to them. Their understanding of the Trinity is growing. Monitoring and evaluation of worship are undertaken regularly by governors, including talking to children to listen to their views and what changes they feel could be made. As a result, more contemporary songs have been introduced and children have more responsibility to participate and interact. There has been an introduction of age related worship in class, which children feel is particularly relevant and thoughtful. Children's evaluation of worship is at an early stage. At present children do not have sufficient opportunities to plan and lead worship for themselves, so they do not feel they have ownership in this area.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The leadership and expertise of the new coordinator is one of the strengths of religious education (RE). Her appointment as an additional member of staff demonstrates the school's commitment to raise the profile of RE. Since her appointment new initiatives have been successfully launched which are now coming to fruition. The quality of teaching and learning has risen as has staff subject knowledge. Members of staff are exploring Christianity in new ways using different approaches, such as helping to reflect using stilling strategies, which enables children to think about key issues. Lessons are interactive and use a variety of ways to record ideas, through art and drama. For example, responses to the question, 'Why did God send Jesus to Earth?' were explored through the image of a bridge which children then created. Linking these responses to the core values deepens the children's understanding of them and their relevance to their own lives. Opportunities to discuss ideas in lessons nurture the children's understanding at a very thoughtful level. They acquire a broader vocabulary which they are confident to use to support their arguments and views. Their good knowledge of RE helps them to explore their ideas to shape their belief and make better sense of them. Teachers challenge through higher order questioning that requires children to justify their views. The increased emphasis on discussion and raising questions is partially due to the introduction of Discovery RE. This has given a structured approach to develop an understanding of other faiths, through the eyes of children, which they find helpful. Other initiatives have developed the teaching of Christianity through 'Christian concepts unpacked' whilst encouraging staff to trial modules from 'Understanding Christianity'. In school training has been thoughtfully delivered, extending staff knowledge. 'Windows, mirrors and doors,' a Diocesan approach to spirituality is being developed. Monitoring of lessons has identified strengths whilst developing existing practise. Children now use specific books for RE which are regularly marked by teachers and indicate how they can improve further through challenging questions. However, at present children do not respond to these individual questions, so some of the impact of this is lost. The overall quality of teaching is at least good and rising. Interviews with children inform the RE leader of the impact of recent initiatives which is used to inform further developments which are documented in a detailed action plan. Children recognise the contribution RE can make to their lives and thinking. The RE leader's decision to deliver some of the RE lessons in blocks of time has enabled more focused study. Standards in RE are rising with more children achieving age related expectations in line with national expectations. However, the number achieving higher levels of attainment is not as good. One of the targets from the previous inspection was to refine assessment procedures. With the introduction of assessment without levels the school is steadily establishing a rigorous approach.

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

The headteacher and leadership team are passionate about developing a vibrant church school. Their vision is for children to achieve their potential and be successful whilst experiencing being part of a caring Christian community. This means that children and adults have daily experiences of Christian values and recognise how this creates a warm caring community of which they are proud. The school's Christian distinctiveness is apparent in its concern for the needs of all children, their well being and welfare. The response to children's diverse needs is evident, particularly those who have been excluded from other schools or who are experiencing other problems. All are made to feel valued and important. Teaching assistants play a significant role in this alongside their invaluable contribution to teaching and learning. Support for children's social and emotional needs has increased, a range of evidence shows these have been influential. The school's work through the Achievement for All programme has been nationally recognised, staff establish links with parents who together enable children to make better progress, creating more positive attitudes to learning. Standards at the school have been variable in recent years, although broadly in line with national expectations. Any concerns are swiftly addressed, for example, disadvantaged children are closely monitored with a range of interventions put in place. Governors are committed to their role, they are aware of strengths, challenge the school where appropriate and monitor initiatives. In some areas governors monitoring is focused. They are involved with each class and share in the half term reviews of pupil progress, noting what interventions or support is to be put in place and then evaluating the impact. Whilst collective worship and RE are monitored, there is no evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Therefore, leaders and managers are not fully aware of the impact this has. There have been some developments in this area, but these have not been informed by monitoring or talking to children. The church makes a full contribution to the life of the school. The local minister's enthusiasm for the church school stands out. She has been a key figure in creating the journey for life celebrations relating to the main Christian festivals. These are prominent and influential times in the life of the school. Her pastoral support for families, children and staff alike are invaluable. The Open the Book team and others contribute well to daily worship. Links with the diocese are constructive, making effective use of expertise through further professional development. Parents hold the school in high regard, aware of the contributions staff make to their children's lives. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.