

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

### Whitesheet Church of England Primary Academy

Chapel Lane, Zeals, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 6NL

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Salisbury</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Wiltshire
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust
Date/s of inspection	25 November 2016
Date of last inspection	3 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	140351
Headteacher	Karen Brooker
Inspector's name and number	David Hatrey 844

#### School context

Whitesheet Church of England Academy is a smaller than average rural primary school established on two sites. Key Stage 1 is based at Kilmington and Key Stage 2 children at Zeals. The number of children who have English as an additional language is below national averages. The number of children entitled to pupil premium support is in line with national averages, whilst the number of children who have special educational needs is above. The school became part of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust in December 2013. It serves a number of rural villages in the area.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Whitesheet Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian ethos contributes to the strong family feeling of the community where care and concern is shown for one another.
- Children have a good understanding of the nature of prayer and confidently create prayers spontaneously in worship.
- Effective leadership has raised children's attainment and ensured religious education (RE) and collective worship have a prominent role in the life of the school.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed distinctive Christian values into the life and work of the school so that children recognise and articulate the difference they make to their lives and relationships.
- Embed new approaches to teaching RE developing children's ability to use higher order thinking skills to raise attainment particularly for more-able children.
- Extend the school's monitoring to include evaluation of the Christian distinctiveness and all aspects of a church school, involving consultation, with children which leads to ongoing improvements.

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

Whitesheet articulates its core Christian values through its vision to 'develop our spirituality, believe in ourselves and others, share courage and perseverance, be creative and imaginative and share a love of learning'. These are being embedded in the life and daily work of the school. All children are confident to talk about these values explaining their meaning and that they recognise these in their daily lives and the actions of others. They make strong links between values and their learning behaviours, which they recognise as supporting them to make good progress. The school's Christian ethos helps them understand the importance of belief in themselves as special to God and what they can do and achieve. This is summarised in their strap line, 'climbing to new heights together'. Children make links between their values and how they learn, for example drawing on their understanding of perseverance if they find learning challenging. Children articulate links between values and their learning thoughtfully, but are not confident to do the same with regard to their behaviour and relationships. Their understanding of the Christian distinctiveness of these values is not as secure as they are not able to relate all of them to biblical stories which reflect their meaning. All staff model values in their daily lives and relationships with children, showing real care and concern. Behaviour across the school is high. Any minor issues are readily addressed, with opportunities for children to reflect on the consequences of their actions. Each child is known as an individual with their own talents and are given opportunities to show these and grow in confidence. There are many examples of the children's care for others through fund raising activities with local and national charities benefitting. Children value opportunities to develop their own spirituality through reflection. They use these times to consider their own learning, behaviour and talents, recognising the times of calm and relaxation this offers. There are some other opportunities, notably for awe and wonder, but these are not identified in planning or undertaken in sufficient depth. There was limited evidence of their ideas being recorded, neither are there activities to express them in other ways, such as art. Religious education helps children to understand how the beliefs of others are shown in different ways through worship and religious practices. They show an interest in this, showing tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own. Links with a London school are developing their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith, exchanging letters with children who have a different faith extends their thinking.

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

Planning of themes for collective worship has become more detailed in recent years under the inspiration of the headteacher. There are separate plans for Key Stage 1 and 2, with material relevant to each age group. The main focuses are Christian festivals and Christian teaching, sometimes related to Christian values. A range of stories about Jesus' life and teaching are known by children who recount these in some detail. The school's Christian values are included in the worship programme, but are not given greater significance. Resources are identified in planning including biblical references. This means that all staff are confident to use this and share responsibility for leading worship; children appreciate the variety of approaches this brings. Open the Book worship is led by members of the local church. Children talk about these occasions as they enjoy opportunities to become involved in drama, "which helps me to remember it." All Key Stage 2 children are now beginning to lead worship in the Open the Book style. Groups plan music and prayer and ensure there is a clear message through teaching. This is enhancing their understanding of worship, but is still in its infancy. Children could only recount a few acts of worship and are not confident that these influence their thoughts and actions. Worship has a prominent role in the life of the school at the start of the day. The children's evaluations are that worship is a time of calm 'which helps us start the day'. They see this as a special time when the whole family, including all adults, come together. Children recognised there was no reference to the Trinity in their simple liturgical greeting, so they created a new form making reference to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is used by children at the start of worship, with lighting a candle on the focus table that highlights this as a special time to share with God. An understanding of prayer is developed well; all know that this is a way of sharing ideas with God. Younger children write thank you or sorry prayers and are helped to consider praying for others in their community. For older children this is extended as they respond to national events, thinking of the needs of others, their prayers show a growing maturity. In worship children are invited to create a prayer spontaneously at the end of worship, which draws upon the teaching given. Children are confident to do this, knowing their responses will be valued. Children consider the Trinity and are able to share their growing thoughts about this. Monitoring and evaluations of worship have been completed by governors, which has resulted in improvements. Examples of this include, children beginning to lead worship, more detailed worship planning and moves to make celebration worship more distinctively Christian. Whilst children evaluate worship this is at an elementary level and has not yet identified changes.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards of attainment in RE are generally good in comparison with national expectations. Children make good progress from their starting points, in some instances their achievements in RE are higher than other core subjects as they articulate and explain their ideas well. At present, few children achieve the higher levels, although there are indications that children in other year groups are exceeding expectations. Teaching is generally good, with new initiatives being introduced. Children are encouraged to ask their own questions and are challenged to explore answers and ideas in greater depth. This means that children are more engaged in their learning and are beginning to use higher order thinking skills and justify answers. Teachers' use of questions develops their thinking well, challenging children to refine their understanding. They work collaboratively and listen to each other's views, drawing on knowledge from other ideas. Marking gives children an indication of what they can do next to take their learning forward, although they do not always respond to this. At present RE makes a limited contribution to children's understanding of Christian values. Children are involved in their own assessments, considering what they have achieved, or where they need further time. The school has addressed one of the targets from the previous inspection by successfully raising the quality of RE teaching and the level of challenge for children. They are making progress with assessment procedures as they move to age related expectations. Monitoring of lessons is carried out by governors, who consider progress through book scrutiny; together they ensure that RE has a good profile in the school. Their conclusions, informed by talking to children, lead to actions, such as further teacher assistant support for children and more regular reports on progress and attainment. RE provides opportunities to consider 'Big' issues, for example a day devoted to "den building," which explored what it was like to live as a refugee, children's evaluations show a deepening empathy. A thought for the week created by the headteacher challenges thinking, although not all children respond. A mixed feedback was given by children about RE, some find it makes them thoughtful regarding daily issues. The overall picture was positive as children perceive that teaching was more engaging and making them think and consider their own beliefs.

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

Leaders articulate and promote a clear Christian vision for the school. They have high aspirations for all children to be successful and achieve their potential so they have access to the greatest range of opportunities in later life. It is equally important for children to experience being part of a Christian community where values inform what they do. This means children appreciate what faith and worship are, as well as understanding what being part of a church family means and their relationships with each other. The school's Christian distinctiveness ensures that children are nurtured and helped to understand that they are each unique, special to God and that this is why they are treated with such care. Parents celebrate the strong family ethos where children feel happy and safe. The care and concern is evident in the quality of support for disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs. Interventions at all levels are effective enabling those children to make good progress. There is provision for all aspects of the children's well-being through support for those who have behavioural or emotional needs. A significant number of children join the school outside of normal admission times, as parents are aware of the quality of care provided. This has made at least a good impact on children's lives and attainment. Standards at the school are rising, due to the focused attention on teaching and learning and individual needs. Children make good progress from their starting points, developing good attitudes towards life long learning. Effective pupil monitoring systems are in place to maintain this. Governors are diligent and well informed, they take their responsibilities seriously. They monitor the impact of worship and RE and challenge the school as appropriate. However, whilst the school's Christian distinctiveness has been evaluated this has not been at sufficient depth to fully realise the impact on children's lives, or identified where this could be developed further. Equally they are not fully aware of the impact of the provision for spirituality as children have not been involved in this process. The move to become part of the Diocesan multi-academy trust has been very beneficial. Focussed support has been available to develop teaching and learning, drawing upon good practice from other schools. Further professional development opportunities have been effectively drawn upon, notably in raising the impact of teaching in RE. Church continues to make good contributions to the life of the school, notably in worship with the new vicar, but equally in governance. The school is often at the centre of community life and involves villages in its celebrations. It has a fine reputation and is highly regarded. Parents celebrate this and highlight the quality of care provided by all staff. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report November 2016 Whitesheet CE Primary Academy Zeals Warminster Wilts BA12 6NL