Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| **Rushall Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School** |
| Rushall, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 6EN |
| **Current SIAMS inspection grade** | **Good** |
| **Diocese** | **Salisbury** |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Date of inspection | 1 March 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 9 December 2011 |
| Type of school and unique reference number  | Voluntary Aided 126410 |
| Headteacher | Marion Harvey |
| Inspector’s name and number | Neil Revell 894 |

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| **School context**Rushall is a smaller than average maintained primary school which serves its local rural parishes. There are currently 119 children on roll. Pupil mobility is high due to the increasingly large numbers from military families. The school has recently re-structured class and staff organisation to meet pupil numbers and needs. Throughout this process a high adult-child ratio has been maintained. The last year has also seen a rise in the number of children requiring additional educational or emotional support. Nearly all of the children are White British. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rushall as a Church of England school are good** * Positive relationships and a caring, supportive ethos, underpinned by the promotion of Christian values, mean that most children thrive.
* Collective worship explores the school’s values in Christian contexts and children and adults talk readily about the way they have grown personally through engaging in worship experiences.
* A commitment to its Christian values, including caring, respect and kindness, ensures that the school is proactive in working with military families and there are good relationships between all members of the school and local communities.
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| **Areas to improve*** To confidently articulate and promote the school’s distinctive Christian vision so that all members of the school community identify and relate to this.
* To ensure that a shared interpretation of spirituality leads to more consistent opportunities for formally monitoring the impact of this on children across the curriculum.
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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good** **at meeting the needs of all learners**A parent commented that Rushall is a school which ‘is in tune with each and every child’. This opinion strongly reflects the school’s focus on Christian values and on celebrating the worth of every individual as a child of God. This approach, which underpins most of the school’s work, is acknowledged by all to have a positive impact on attitudes to learning, relationships and behaviour. The school has adapted its class organisation and structures due to an increase in pupil mobility resulting, in large part, from a rise in the number of children from military families on roll. In an outworking of its Christian values, the school has shown perseverance and resilience in ensuring that high adult-child ratios are maintained while also demonstrating respect, care and kindness in building strong relationships and family support systems for all members of the school community. This has included work with army welfare personnel. The school and its Christian values are widely appreciated and respected. They help create a positive learning environment in which there are good academic outcomes for all groups of pupils. The school has identified any areas where further support is needed for individual children. This has led, for example, to close working relationships with link workers to support a few children with lower attendance. Now, reflecting the school’s Christian value of care, the attendance rate is increasing. Children take part in regular opportunities for spiritual reflection which is a key feature of school life. The impact of these experiences on spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development was summarised by one child who said that they ‘give you time to think what you have done wrong and reflect’. However, despite the high profile of opportunities for reflection in the school, there is not a clear shared interpretation of spirituality which is understood across the whole community. Experiences for spiritual development across the wider curriculum are not clearly defined and there is no effective system to monitor their impact. The school maintains a focus on its Christian values of respect, caring and fairness across all aspects of school life. Children have some understanding of the similarities and differences within and between various faith communities. They recognise the part which religious education (RE) plays in their lives. They also appreciate the link between the relatively high pupil mobility and the work of the armed forces. This helps to shape their SMSC development which makes a valuable contribution to the children’s growing respect and understanding of diversity. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**Collective worship is inclusive, vibrant and inspiring to both children and adults alike. The engagement of everyone is high and worship is transformational. Children and adults readily share how the school’s collective worship experiences have had a transformational impact on their own thinking and lives. Themes for worship are explicitly based on the school’s Christian values and the church calendar. Children have an excellent understanding of the importance of Jesus Christ in the Christian faith as well as an ability to articulate the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Children appreciate that ‘the candle in collective worship represents Jesus because He is the light of the world’ and are able to use Bible stories to exemplify the school’s Christian values in action to an impressive degree. School worship is relevant to the community’s experiences. Children and adults are challenged with questions about meaning and purpose and invited to contribute their thoughts and ideas. They respond with enthusiasm and the children’s levels of articulation, as well as their spiritual and moral reflections, are of a high standard that reflect their deep thinking. They confidently lead spontaneous prayers and have a growing appreciation of the importance of prayer. This is expressed by one child who said, ‘when you pray you know that God understands but you have to keep working at it too; God cannot just make things happen as you still have a responsible part to play.’ The inclusion of Christian reflection time in collective worship provides opportunities for children to develop a personal spirituality. The vicar is a key member of the school’s worship planning team and this ensures that Christian teaching is at the heart of collective worship. Children work closely with the vicar, headteacher and collective worship leader in planning and leading elements of collective worship; this was a focus for development from the school’s previous inspection and has been fully addressed. Children proactively want to be even more involved in leading and evaluating collective worship. The views of parents are also sought in evolving systems for worship which ensures full community involvement. The school community appreciates and values that Christianity is a broad faith group. This is because the school welcomes a range of Christian worship leaders and because worship is held in a variety of settings including different local churches and in the outside environment. |
| **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**Religious education (RE) has a high profile within the school curriculum. This is exemplified by the training for all staff that has broadened the range and depth of teaching and learning opportunities provided for children. For example, Godly Play, opportunities to reflect and the use of challenging questions are now cornerstones of the school’s RE curriculum. All of this work means that children confidently respond to questions about faith, meaning and purpose which are developing their appreciation of moral and social issues. The school’s RE curriculum enables children to acquire a secure knowledge of the Bible and of important aspects of Christianity. Teachers encourage children to use this knowledge to explore concepts in depth. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes better which supports learning that enables children to attain standards which are in line with national expectations. These outcomes compare well with those in other core subjects. The school has responded to the focus for development from the previous inspection about developing increasingly precise assessment systems in RE. Children are less secure with their knowledge of faiths other than Christianity and their confidence to express the main practices and beliefs of a range of faiths is comparatively limited. Moreover, the formats in which children record their RE learning is often determined by the teacher with less scope for individual choice. The RE Leader is well informed on current developments in the subject and ensures that senior leaders, governors and staff are fully aware of expectations. Religious education is effectively monitored ensuring that children’s entitlement to a broad range of opportunities is consistent. Close links are made between themes covered in RE and the school’s Christian values which strengthens the children’s understanding of them. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good**The headteacher leads a team and school community with a strong Christian ethos and distinctive Christian values which encourages everyone to aspire high and be the very best which they can. This has led to good standards of achievement for all groups of children. The school’s fundamental Christian vision, underpinning all of this, namely ‘with Christ we can’, was explored with all members of the school community in September 2016 following input from the Diocese. Although this review has helped the school to have a better understanding of its vision, it has created a less succinct statement which is not so easily interpreted by the wider school community. Not everyone is sure of the vision. It does, though, shape the work of some foundation governors who said that ‘it makes us aware that we must always think what we would say if we had to defend our decisions about the school to Jesus Christ’. Governors are closely involved with the staff in some elements of church school self-evaluation. Monitoring and the quality of evidence to inform this evaluation are often based on informal methods.The RE and collective worship leader is supported well and opportunities are welcomed for developing all staff as leaders within church schools. Whole staff training days have focused on meditation which has had a positive impact on practice and well-being. The school has worked well with the diocese and enjoys close partnerships with local churches, parents and carers including those from the local military base. The school has a good understanding of local needs, supporting both children and families effectively and with care. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. There is a passion amongst the school’s leaders to continue improving as a church school with opportunities constantly being researched and sought to develop this work.  |

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