

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dunbury Church of England Primary Academy

Winterborne Whitechurch
Blandford
Dorset
DT11 0AW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Date of academy conversion	February 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust
Date of inspection	28 March 2017
Date of last inspection	23 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 140561
Headteacher	Ben Barker
Inspector's name and number	Rev. David Hatrey 844

School context

Dunbury Church of England Academy is a smaller than average school situated on two sites. The number of children who are eligible for pupil premium funding or who have English as an additional language are below national averages. The number of children who have special educational needs is broadly in line with national averages. The school became a member of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust in February 2014. The appointment of the headteacher has brought stability to the school after a number of interim leaders and a time of uncertainty.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dunbury Church of England Academy as a Church of England school are good

- Children understand the Christian distinctiveness of the school's values and recognise how they influence their lives and actions.
- The new leadership team have brought a clearer understanding of what it means to be a church school, raising the importance of Christian values and ensuring religious education and collective worship have a high profile.
- Local churches make a significant contribution to the life of the school through governance and leading acts of worship.
- Children's behaviour is of a high standard. Good relationships are underpinned by care and concern which children attribute to the Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- Embed the current approach to developing spirituality by identifying opportunities in the curriculum that support children to express their ideas in innovative ways.
- Involve children to a greater extent in evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness and in planning and leading worship regularly.
- Develop children's understanding of the school's Christian vision so that they recognise where this is demonstrated in daily life.

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

The whole school community has been involved in shaping the school's vision. Children made a valuable contribution to this by identifying friendship, trust, courage and respect as core values that best reflect their interpretation of the Christian ethos. Although twelve Christian values are explored in the life of the school, children decided that the four chosen were at the centre of everything the school did. Children have a good understanding of these values. They confidently talk about what they look like in daily life and give examples of where they influence their lives. Weekly 'gold leaf' awards recognise children using values in action. The award helps children appreciate how values influence thinking and actions in a variety of ways. This understanding of values is enhanced by the daily award of 'dojos' which celebrate achievements that are particularly linked to the value being currently explored. Children understand the distinctive Christian nature of values by linking each one to Bible stories which reflect their meaning. They are becoming increasingly confident to explore a range of different values in stories and talk thoughtfully about their own interpretation of them. Children recognise that Christian values make a difference to their lives and give examples of this as well as how they shape the school's Christian ethos. Members of staff model the core values in their relationships with children and encourage them to recognise each as an important member of the community treated with care and respect. This makes a valuable contribution to the quality of behaviour which is of a high standard with very few instances of any form of bullying. When these do occur they are dealt with effectively allowing children to reflect on the school's values and the consequences of their actions. Children work well together and celebrate each other's successes which help to create a genuine family ethos. They recognise that values support their learning through, for example, courage when they make mistakes and learn from them. Good progress has been made towards developing children's personal spirituality. Working with Diocesan advisers an agreed understanding of spirituality has become established. The school uses, 'Windows, Mirrors and Doors and Candles' to help children think about themselves, others, the world and God. Children use each of these to help them reflect by giving a framework that identifies how they could respond to a challenging question of meaning and purpose. High quality experiences, for example by exploring light and hope through creative interactive workshops help children express ideas in different ways such as art and sculpture. Responses reveal some deeper thinking that creates memorable experiences for the children. Most of the reflection comments seen come from reflection days with limited examples from other opportunities. These indicate children's ideas are developing. Christian values are developed well through Religious education (RE). An enquiry approach challenges children's thinking through thought provoking questions. Children are encouraged to make links between values and how God might want us to live, allowing children to respond and reason through their own beliefs. Children enjoy these challenges and are beginning to understand that RE makes a positive contribution to their lives and thinking. Religious education is expertly co-ordinated, new ideas are initiated to deepen children's understanding and engagement. Religious education days explore other world faiths and hands on experiences of artefacts enable children to engage in their learning and make comparisons between different faiths. Opportunities to learn about Christians in other parts of the world help children to appreciate they are part of a wider church family and how faith is celebrated in different ways. These lead to children showing a high degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The impact of worship has improved since the previous inspection. Leaders have identified examples of good practice by looking at outstanding church schools. As a result, the 'Roots and Fruits' worship programme has been introduced which has led to the planning of values in greater detail. There is now a clearer structure in place that explores values over each term. Each Christian value is effectively developed over the term, with an aspect being explored in greater depth through the week. At the start of each week, a question is set which is then explored through biblical teaching. This means that weekly themes have greater continuity by allowing adults and clergy who lead worship to develop a deeper understanding of values which enriches the experience. Children are generally engaged well in worship; they enjoy contributing to dramas and enjoy the use of visual media. However, at present children do not plan and lead worship. Music is a strong feature of the worship experience with a number of children contributing through musical instruments. A choir is ably managed by a talented member of staff and children sing with enthusiasm which is enhanced with harmonies or solos. Children appreciate that worship is a special time for all to share with God and a time they value. Many children comment that worship helps them in their daily life and provides moments of peace within the reflective atmosphere that is created. Younger children are encouraged to say prayers spontaneously in response to their experiences. They do this naturally and see this as a way of sharing their thoughts with God. Older children have opportunities to express prayers which bring together ideas they have explored in worship and do so confidently and thoughtfully. Leaders use different styles of prayer which children are beginning to use for themselves. Reflection spaces in class offer opportunities to write prayers when children feel this would help them. Their prayers show their thoughts are growing in maturity, responding to local and national events in thoughtful ways. The 'Easter experience' deepens and extends children's understanding

through various interactive workshops which allow them to explore parts of Holy week. For example, children act out Jesus' trial helping to appreciate the value of justice. Another involved nailing messages to a cross in order to say sorry for what we have done wrong. These activities help children develop a deeper understanding of festivals appreciating their significance for Christians. There are good opportunities to reflect on worship themes with children being encouraged to consider what they would do or say in response. Younger children talk confidently about Jesus, His life and teaching. They describe these in some detail and make links to how God would want us to live. During a Trinity day, children created art work and models which helps them to explore the nature of Trinity which children articulate with some clarity. Each RE module ends with the celebrating of a Christian festival which children explain thoughtfully and link to church seasons. Regular monitoring and evaluation involving interviews with children by leaders and members of the ethos team have led to ongoing improvements. For example, class based worship has been established with age related experiences and more opportunities for drama.

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

All members of the school community contributed to the vision to 'inspire, learn, empower.' It is an influential vision that informs both policy and practice. Children have a growing understanding of its meaning and are increasingly identifying where it is evident in the life of the school. They talk about the sense of being a family, the quality of relationships and how Christian values inform this. They explain that the partnership with teachers in their learning, working together, helps them to achieve their potential. Many children appreciate that the school's Christian ethos means that they are valued by God and are developing their understanding of what this means to them. Christian distinctiveness is evident in the sense of being part of a Christian family and in the quality of worship both in school and in church. It stands out in the quality of RE where children make links between Jesus' teaching and everyday life. It is reflected in the care for individuals and in the personal greeting by staff each day. Monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress is robustly undertaken for each child, with individual actions taken to meet particular needs. An emphasis on quality teaching enables children to make good progress from their starting points with standards comparable with national expectations. Disadvantaged children are well supported with flexible programmes so that they make positive progress. The ethos team evaluates the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness and identifies further areas for improvement. Good examples of this are the development of work in spirituality and improving links with the church and local community. Children are beginning to be involved in evaluating the impact of the Christian ethos through reviews of the impact of values, identifying where they are evident and how they could be extended. Governors challenge the school asking, 'how does what we do reflect our values?' They have a good understanding of the church school ethos saying they 'do all that other schools do and more, but our starting point is love, God's love for us'. Close supportive links are established with the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust. The school draws on their expertise for continuing professional development for staff. Training has raised staff knowledge and skills in specific aspects of church school distinctiveness, notably in RE. The RE leader creates a thought for the week which is prominently displayed which children find thought provoking. These have been shared with the Diocese and have informed their approach to reflection. Senior staff are given additional support and experiences which prepare them to be future church school leaders. The school's relationship with church and community is an important aspect of the life of the school. The church makes a strong contribution, through governance, but also through worship and the experiences offered in church, notably at Easter and other festivals. Members of the church community are actively involved in the daily life of the school working with children as learning partners. The school is at the centre of village life welcoming all to celebrations and events. Religious education and collective worship are expertly led and new initiatives continue to raise their impact. They fully meeting statutory requirements.

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