

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bellefield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Windermere Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8TE

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Wiltshire
Date of inspection	21 March 2017
Date of last inspection	1 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 135484
Headteacher	Steve Wigley
Inspector's name and number	David Hatrey 844

School context

Bellefield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary is a larger than average school, with 287 children on roll. The number of children who are eligible for pupil premium support is in line with national averages. The number of children who have English as an additional language is above national averages whilst the number of children who have special educational needs is significantly above national expectations.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bellefield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary 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.
- Children have a good knowledge of Jesus and His teaching and are confident to articulate this in some depth.
- The church makes a strong contribution to the life of the school notably through governance but also through worship and the Easter experience.
- The headteacher and leadership team have created a dedicated cohesive team who are committed to the development of the school's Christian vision.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that high quality experiences to develop spirituality are identified in curriculum planning to support children's ability to reflect on big questions in greater depth.
- Involve children to a greater extent in evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness and evaluate, plan and lead worship regularly.
- Extend the monitoring and evaluation undertaken by all members of the school community to include all aspects of being a church school which identify ongoing improvements.

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

All members of the school family were involved in deciding which Christian values are important to the community and reflect them. Children led this process which identified five core Christian values: respect, responsibility, friendship, courage and honesty. Children have a good understanding of these and explain what they mean with increasing clarity, giving examples of what these look like in daily life. Every week, members of staff nominate a child for the values award which recognises where they have seen them in action. The award helps children appreciate how values influence thinking and actions in a variety of ways which deepens their understanding of how they impact on their everyday life. Children understand the Christian nature of values by relating them to selected Bible stories which reflect their meaning and talk about them with confidence. Christian values are being woven into teaching and children are beginning to recognise the contribution they make to learning. For example, children explain that courage helps them to persevere when work is challenging. They also give examples of where values influence their lives through relationships. Children show care and concern for each other regardless of age. The buddy system where year six become role models and friends to younger children is a good example of this. They explain the importance of respect recognising its contribution to a caring community. One child commented that, 'values make you a better person.' Children's behaviour is of a high standard. Instances of bullying are rare and, where they occur are swiftly dealt with often by linking through an empathy with others. The school council takes a leading role in identifying projects to support the local community through charities such as the local food bank at harvest. They sponsor a child in Tanzania which contributes to their understanding of different cultures and life styles as well as how faith is celebrated in different ways. Weekly opportunities to reflect on self, others, beauty, God and beyond have enhanced the provision for spiritual development. A reflective atmosphere is created using music and candles and time is given to reflect on a question. Staff support children to record their thoughts helping them to acquire a vocabulary to express their views. The children's comments show an increasing depth of thinking and the confident use of language to respond to questions as they become more challenging. At present children only respond to spirituality in writing with limited opportunities for music or art. Children are confident to share ideas as they know their ideas will be respected. Religious education (RE) makes a valuable contribution to the children's growing appreciation of other world faiths. They make thoughtful comparisons with their own beliefs which enhance their own understanding and have tolerance and respect for those who hold different views. Religious education makes some contribution to deepening children's understanding of Christian values by considering what Jesus tells us. However, opportunities to extend children's understanding of Christian values are not always taken during lessons. Most children show an interest in RE explaining which aspects they like, although some are not confident how this has a relevance to their daily lives.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a high profile in the life of the school. Children appreciate this is a special time for the school family to come together and share with God. The planning of worship themes focuses on Christian values. Whilst there is a key value for a term, each week explores a different aspect through other values which effectively deepens the children's understanding. The headteacher is experienced and skilful in leading worship and creates thoughtful experiences that engage children. Children are involved in worship through responding to questioning and opportunities to participate through drama. The headteacher leads singing, playing his guitar to which children respond enthusiastically. The school song, which is often sung, reinforces links with both values and school vision. Although staff do not lead worship, a variety of other leaders support worship including the vicar and groups who lead 'Open the Book style worship. Class based worship allows children time to reflect on ideas at an age appropriate level and children value this as a time of quiet. Children record ideas about worship in a class worship book. Comments from these books show how children respond to new messages they have heard by applying values to daily life. Worship informs their thoughts and influences their actions although not all children make links between values and Christian teaching. Celebrating Christmas and Easter are important occasions in the life of the school. Children play a significant role with older children planning large elements which explore these important festivals from a child's perspective. The 'Easter experience' led by the local church provides a series of interactive workshops covering the last week of Jesus' life. Children's understanding of the significance of Easter is deepened as they appreciate its importance for Christians. Prayer is well taught with younger children realising that this is a way of sharing ideas with God. Teaching helps them to understand the Lord's prayer and what they might say to God, such as thank you or to ask for something. There is some evidence of a growing maturity in how older children reflect on prayer in relation to current events in the world. A growing number of children are becoming aware of how they could use prayer in daily life. The school prayer is well known and links to values. Each class has a reflection space which some children find helpful. These have not been evaluated so how these might be developed further is unclear. A range of stories about Jesus' life and teaching are known by younger children and older children recognise a range of values which are found in Bible stories. At present they have a limited understanding of the

nature of the Trinity. The school council plays a key role in evaluating worship and make suggestions for change such as requesting more opportunities for involvement. They use questionnaires and class discussions which are fed into future plans. Governor monitoring is at an informal level. These have led to some changes in the choice of music and in recording ideas in thinking books. However, as these are not recorded governors are not always able to evaluate their impact.

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

The school has an established, astute and knowledgeable leadership team who bring differing talents which together help shape what it means to be a church school. There is a cohesive and dedicated staff team who work well and are open to new ideas and approaches. This is a strong feature of the school. A mission statement influences the school's policy and practice, although children are unaware of it. Instead, the school promotes the strapline, 'Being the best that we can be'. Children see the links between this and their own progress and achievements. This is securely woven into the school song and prayer. Increasingly, children perceive that being the best that they can be relates to how they live and make relationships with others. They make links between values and how they influence their lives. Christian distinctiveness at the school is very apparent in the warmth of relationships which exist between all members of the community. It is equally apparent in the care for each individual as they are seen as special to God. As a result of this the school has a range of strategies to support children's diverse needs. Examples include pastoral managers who work closely with parents with whom they create good relationships raising the level of attendance, often going beyond expectations. The support for children who have English as an additional language makes a significant impact and these children feel welcomed and valued being given the opportunity to share how their faith is seen in different ways. The impact of the school's care for all is reflected in the good progress that all children make from their starting points. The progress made by all children is good and they develop positive attitudes to becoming life long learners. Termly meetings review each child's progress in considerable depth involving most of the leadership team. Where concerns are identified swift action is put in place to address this. The school's tracking of academic progress and the monitoring of new initiatives are robust with governors contributing fully to this. The monitoring and evaluation of being a church school is less well focused and undertaken at a more informal level. Whilst some evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness has been undertaken this is not routinely done nor has this always informed future development plans. The school provides opportunities to develop church school leaders. The appointment of the new RE coordinator is a good example as she builds upon the previous post holder, introducing new ideas which are enhancing the impact of RE for the children. Further professional development is well matched to needs, such as the launch of Discovery RE, and a more enquiry based approach which brings greater relevance to the subject. Expertise from the diocese is drawn upon, notably support for the coordinator. Strong relationships with local churches enrich the life and effectiveness of the school, with foundation governors taking a major role in governance and challenging the school. They contribute well to worship and particularly the 'Easter experience'. Parents say that they feel part of the school and are well informed, valuing the quality of education which the school provides. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report March 2017 Bellefield CE VC Primary School Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8TE