

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Derry Hill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road, Derry Hill, Calne, Wiltshire. SN11 9NN

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Wiltshire
Date of inspection	13 July 2017
Date of last inspection	9 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 126400
Headteacher	Hayley Roberts
Inspector's name and number	Revd David Hatrey 844

School context

Derry Hill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is slightly smaller than the average school. Most children come from a White British heritage. The number of children who are entitled to pupil premium support is below national averages, whilst the number of children who have additional educational needs is broadly in line with national averages.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Derry Hill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- Children have a good understanding of the school's Christian vision appreciating the links to Christian values through the vision 'vessel.'
- Leadership have brought renewed focus to developing the impact of being a church school by supporting knowledgeable leaders of collective worship and religious education (RE) to introduce new initiatives which deepens children's thinking.
- Children have a growing understanding of Christian values and the impact they have on their lives and attainment.
- Children have a real sense of ownership in worship; planning leading and evaluating worship which has led to significant changes.

Areas to improve

- Embed the school's growing understanding of spirituality so that high quality experiences are identified in planning that provide high quality opportunities for children to articulate their deepening ideas in a variety of ways.
- Embed the new approaches to RE so children have opportunities to share and refine their ideas related to questions of meaning and purpose so they perceive the contribution RE can make to their daily lives.
- Ensure there is a systematic approach to monitoring all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness which involves children and leads to ongoing improvements.

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

Christian distinctiveness is good because children have a growing understanding of how Christian values make a difference to their lives and attainment. The headteacher completed a review of values with all members of the school community who together chose peace, love, friendship, hope, trust and courage. These values are steadily being embedded across all aspects of school life with children increasingly using the language of values to describe what these look like in daily life and how they use them. This is supported by awards to children who display these values. The reason for the award is clarified to reinforce how values make a difference in a range of contexts. Further, the school supports children to appreciate links between values and learning with examples of how courage and trust have encouraged children to persevere and collaborate. Good links are made with the school's work on building learning power, whereby children develop good attitudes and strategies for learning. How staff model these is a strong feature at the school, as each child is treated as an individual who is unique and special to God. Comments made by older children perceptively recognise the role staff have in developing these values and their knowledge and care for each child. There is a growing understanding of the Christian distinctiveness of values through links to Bible stories which reflect their meaning. At present children's appreciation of the Christian distinctiveness of hope and peace are not yet securely based upon biblical teaching. There are few instances of poor behaviour due to the high degree of respect shown and the real sense of the school being a family. This begins with firm foundations when children first arrive at school, where any minor issues are addressed through references to values. The progress and attainment children make is one of the strengths of the school. Attainment is consistently above national expectations in all areas with more children achieving the higher levels. Disadvantaged children do equally well through individual learning programmes that meet their needs. Astute evaluations by leadership identified that the provision for spirituality was not effective and new approaches were agreed. An agreed understanding of spirituality is established which all staff draw from. Opportunities for reflection have increased and are identified in planning. Children respond to these and express their ideas. This is still at an early stage of development, with children's ideas showing signs of deepening. However, few high quality experiences are offered and children are just beginning to consider expressing these in different ways such as through art or drama. As yet the school has not explored the relationship between spirituality and how this contributes to vision and values. Religious education provides opportunities to develop children's understanding of other world faiths. Visitors have shared through first hand experiences how they celebrate their faith in different ways. Children are particularly interested in this and make thoughtful comparisons with their own ideas. Regular diversity days provide a number of examples where this is explored. They show a high degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own. At present, whilst children realise that there are both similarities and differences in the way Christians celebrate their faith, they have a limited understanding of this.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is outstanding because it engages children and has discernible impact on all aspects of relationships and school life. The coordinator is passionate and knowledgeable. She has ensured that new ideas have been successfully implemented which have raised the profile and relevance of worship. Children have a growing ownership of worship through regular opportunities to plan and lead which enriches their understanding of Christian values. Children of different ages work thoughtfully together, developing clear messages about the value being explored and encouraging each other to respond. Observations by governors describe these occasions as significant moving experiences. Children easily recall acts of worship and articulate their thoughts about them in a language all could understand, particularly when expressing their relevance to their own lives. Planning for worship is carefully devised so that an aspect of a value is explored every three weeks. Detailed notes of children's responses are recorded and used to follow up subsequent acts of worship so that children's ideas are extended. The quality of planning enables all staff to lead worship with confidence and with the support of appropriate resources. Younger children have good opportunities to pray through 'jelly baby' prayers to say thank you, to ask for help, being sorry or to say a praise prayer. This starts at an early age and becomes a natural way of sharing ideas with God. Children are confident to pray spontaneously and older children are beginning to link these to worship themes. Their prayers show a greater depth of empathy using a rich language to help them respond to national incidents. A good example was the 'aeroplane prayer day' where families wrote prayers onto a paper aeroplane which were launched, as a way of sending them to God. Celebrating Christian festivals are significant occasions with different aspects explored each year. The 'Easter Experience' involved children reflecting on different parts and characters in the story. Children found this gave them a greater awareness of Easter and its significance for Christians. The nature of the Trinity has developed with children making models which have developed their understanding. Children talk about a number of stories related to Jesus in some detail and what they may mean. They share examples of worship which have made them think recognising how these have shaped their actions.

Younger children monitor worship considering two things they like, with a wish of what they would like to change. Older children use an approach from 'windows, mirrors and doors' which helps them consider what they have learned and how they might respond. A number of changes have been made with improvements to planning and children leading worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is good because the quality of teaching and learning makes an impact on children's attainment which has risen over the last three years and is at least in line with other core subjects. The overall quality of teaching is at least good and often better, particularly with regard to the use of questioning to challenge children's thinking. Recent data suggests that more children are achieving the higher levels due to their ability to ask deeper questions. New initiatives, such as 'Discovery RE' are at the centre of this and are now well established. This has an enquiry based approach where children are encouraged to share ideas about questions of meaning and purpose reasoning through these whilst considering ideas of others which influence their thinking. Children articulate their views well reflecting upon biblical ideas and whether these have relevance for today. This is further reinforced with the ongoing introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' resources. Children's progress is tracked at termly pupil progress meetings and where there is concern, actions agreed to address this. This is achieved through short term targets or support from teaching assistants where language rich discussions nurture their learning. Work is well matched to the needs of individual children who record ideas in different ways with verbal responses taken into account. Marking contributes to this by indicating the next steps in addition to extension questions related to individual responses which deepen children's thinking. Assessment strategies are evolving and provide more accurate information which informs planning. As yet however, these have not been moderated across the school. Religious education lessons are monitored alongside other core subjects with strengths recognised and targets for development accurately identified. There is a strong culture of coaching and a drive to find new ways to meet the needs of all learners. Children's attitudes to RE are mixed although they do appreciate how it contributes to their daily lives. The subject leader provides invaluable support and leads the subject by example. Her support has seen the impact of RE steadily rise being effectively supported by the leadership team. However, opportunities to extend children's understanding of Christian values are not always taken to show where they might contribute to daily life.

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

Leadership is good because of the progress made to raise the profile of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Searching reviews of the impact of the school's current provision were astutely completed which identified initiatives to further develop Christian values and the vision. This has now extended to spirituality. The headteacher has involved all members of the community in this review so that they have ownership of it. A strong cohesive team has been established with leadership now more widely distributed. This enables a greater focus on priorities for development as well as preparing senior staff for future roles as church school leaders. The headteacher's idea of a 'vision vessel' has woven together the school's vision and values. Children talk about this with great enthusiasm. They share the vision that, 'everyone will give of their best in the love of God'. They see values as enabling them to fulfil this vision which creates a rich sense of being a family. Children appreciate that this vision comes from Jesus' teaching. Leaders confidently articulate Christian principles which underpin this. They talk of everyone being special to God of which older children have some appreciation; 'all are part of God's family, where we seek to treat others as Jesus would'. This is a particular strength of the school's Christian distinctiveness. There are effective systems in place to support the well-being of all children and their individual and diverse needs enabling them to fulfil their God given potential. Governors are fully dedicated to their roles and support the school in monitoring new initiatives through their involvement in reviewing pupil progress. Whilst they make evaluations of the impact of RE and collective worship this has not extended to consider the school's wider Christian distinctiveness. This means that they are not fully aware of all strengths or where these could be enhanced. Their growing awareness of the impact of spirituality is a good example of this. Contributions that children make to this process are also not fully developed. Leaders of collective worship and RE are well supported to enable them to introduce significant initiatives that ensure these have a high profile. Further professional development opportunities are well focused on identified needs and support these developments. Relationships with the diocese are good and draw upon their expertise for training and advisory support. Christian festivals are celebrated in church enriched through Easter experience days and others. Parent contributions are significant supporting the school in a variety of ways regularly joining in opportunities for worship. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.