

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Buckland Newton Church of England Primary Academy	
Buckland Newton, Dorchester, Dorset. DT2 7BY	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Dorset
Date of academy conversion	1 July 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	Sherborne Area Schools' Trust
Date of inspection	27 June 2017
Date of last inspection	9 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	144413
Headteacher	Nicola Ralph
Inspector's name and number	Revd David Hatrey 844

School context

Buckland Newton Church of England Primary Academy is a smaller than average school. Most of the children come from a White British heritage. The number of children who are entitled to pupil premium funding is below national expectations. The number of children who have special educational needs is above national averages. On the 1 June this year the school became part of the Sherborne Area Schools' Trust.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Buckland Newton Church of England Primary as a Church of England school are good.

- The school's Christian distinctiveness is clearly reflected in the high quality of care for the well-being of all which has a significant impact for a number of children. This is passionately championed by the headteacher.
- Some children now have greater ownership of worship through the Jigsaw group which plans and leads worship.
- Behaviour is of a high standard and children make good relationships in the caring school community.
- Children have a growing understanding of Christian values and their distinctive Christian meaning which is increasingly making a contribution to their personal spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Develop children's understanding of the relationship between spirituality, Christian values and school vision so that they are able to explore their personal spirituality in greater depth.
- Embed the school's monitoring and evaluation systems as a church school ensuring that children contribute more fully to this and which leads to ongoing improvements.
- Enable children to experience a wider range of prayers and consider how prayer can contribute to their daily lives and spiritual journey.

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

The impact of Christian distinctiveness is good and steadily growing. This is because children's understanding of Christian values is deepening as they articulate their meaning in greater depth and talk about their significance for daily life. The school agreed values which are fundamental to them; generosity, compassion, courage, forgiveness, friendship, respect, thankfulness, trust, perseverance, justice, service and truthfulness. In January of this year a new approach to how they are promoted was introduced through collective worship where each half term a value is progressively explored. Key biblical stories now link to each value which reflects their distinctive Christian meaning and children are increasingly able to make these links. Children talk with growing confidence about the four values covered so far. They describe what these look like in daily life and recognise where they use them. This is supported through the Good Samaritan box where children and adults nominate others who show these values. They explain the reasons why the award is given so that everyone can appreciate the impact values have in different contexts. The behaviour of children and the quality of relationships they make is one of the strengths of the school. This is influenced by the way staff model these relationships in their own daily interactions where they lead by example. This is based upon the way Jesus treated those He met. Children recognise this and seek to emulate this in the way they treat others. Children know one another well in this warm caring family, older children realise they are role models for younger peers and take this role seriously. Therefore, bullying and name calling are extremely rare and where they occur, are swiftly dealt with often referring to values. At present children are not confident to link the quality of their behaviour to Christian values. The provision for spirituality is developing to meet the raised expectations of the current inspection framework. This year a new framework, 'Windows, mirrors and doors' has been launched which is helping children consider their ideas through a more structured approach to reflection. Children say that this enables them to consider who they are and what they can achieve, but there is a more limited understanding of other aspects of spiritual development. Staff agreed their understanding of spirituality and children talk about this. However, opportunities for spirituality are not yet identified in planning nor has the relationship between spirituality, values and vision been sufficiently explored to enable a greater depth of understanding. Academic attainment is a strength of the school; children consistently make good progress often achieving above national expectations. This includes disadvantaged children who often make comparable progress to their peers. Children develop good attitudes to learning whilst their self-confidence is nurtured so they believe that they can be successful. The school recognises the importance of developing children's understanding of other world faiths and is extending this through visits to a range of places of worship and learning from members of their faith communities. Children are beginning to make thoughtful comparisons with their own beliefs which are enhancing their own understanding of what faith means to them and others. Children show a high degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own. At present children have a limited appreciation of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith. Religious education has a good profile in school life. The recent introduction of new approaches, for example, 'Understanding Christianity', is making a positive contribution to developing an understanding of Christian values and spirituality. Some lessons provide real challenge to children's thinking where they reflect and reason through their own ideas which shape their beliefs. This is enabling more children to appreciate the significance that RE can have for their daily lives.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

The quality of collective worship has improved because of the increased ownership children have in this area through greater involvement in planning and leading worship. This year a children's Christian distinctiveness group has been created, Jigsaw, with children volunteering to take this role. They have been thoughtfully nurtured by the leadership team and are taking increased responsibility within worship. They are drawing upon various resources and becoming more confident to write their own dramas that deliver messages in worship. These children challenge others through thoughtful questioning asking what they might do in a given situation in response to the value considered. Feedback from children indicates that they are engaged and enjoy these times as they understand the language used by their peers and cover issues that are relevant to them. Astute evaluations by the headteacher identified that children's understanding of Christian values could be deepened. This has led to new termly plans for worship where aspects of the value are progressively explored. Woven into this are the main Christian festivals and seasons which are celebrated either in church or school with classes making a variety of contributions which steadily enhance their appreciation of these and their significance for Christians. Planning enables staff to lead worship whilst informing visitors who can then contribute to children's understanding of values. A good range of leaders now contribute to this including clergy. They have a variety of approaches which children appreciate, engaging them in worship. The Open the Book team are a good example where children are eager to take part in role play. Their responses show that this brings Bible stories to life which helps children recall them and their significance. This has enabled children to develop a good knowledge of Jesus and His teaching with young children recalling these in some

depth. Notes made by staff during worship regarding children's responses confirm the extent of their knowledge. Children show an understanding of the Trinity, grappling to understand and articulate what this means for them. Children generally feel that collective worship helps them. They make some references to specific acts of worship they could recall that made them think. Collective worship has a high profile in daily life, children recognise this as a time to come together and share with God. Children know that prayer is sharing ideas with God and that they can do this anywhere. They have been introduced to 'teaspoon prayers' which have a thank you, ask for something or praise God. Some children are confident to spontaneously say a prayer at the end of worship; older children are beginning to relate this to the theme of worship but this is still developing. At present many of the prayers focus on thanking and asking with fewer examples of children using prayer to praise. Children find it difficult to articulate how prayer can support people when they ask for help and how it contributes to their spiritual development. There are focus areas in each class for children to reflect. Their impact has not yet been evaluated. Monitoring of collective worship has largely been undertaken by leadership with governors at a more informal level. Whilst this has led to some changes, the headteacher recognises the need to develop this further, which the governors' Christian distinctiveness team have now begun to do and to which the Jigsaw team contribute.

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

Leadership and management is good because of the experience and commitment of the leadership team and to the Christian ethos. The headteacher is committed to the care for the school family. She has created a cohesive team who take their role responsibly as part of a church school. This is clearly reflected in the care and concern for each individual child and this is a particular strength of the school's Christian distinctiveness. A number of case studies demonstrate the impact this provision has upon the lives and achievement of children. The nurture and love shown has changed attitudes, overcome barriers to learning and enabled children to be successful. This is not just in their academic achievement but responding to the needs of the whole child, notably building self-esteem. Skilled staff are in place who effectively meet a diverse range of needs and is another of the strengths of the school. The school has an established vision, "Every child, Every chance, Every day." Leaders articulate a Christian interpretation of this based soundly on Christian principles. Each person is recognised as being special and valuable to God, for whom the school seeks to provide the very best education. The aim is for children to experience God's love shown through the Christian values and the difference this makes to how they treat others. Children perceive this as being a Christian family. Children have some appreciation of this and some talk thoughtfully about how this influences their learning. At present children are not as confident to make links between the vision and their Christian values. Some progress has been made towards targets set in the previous inspection in July 2012. The first was to create outdoor spaces to provide additional opportunities for spiritual reflection. This has recently been completed and, as children have had access to this for a short time, it is not yet possible to determine the impact that this has had. The other was to embed a planning and evaluation cycle for the Christian character of the school that enables all stakeholders to contribute. In February of this year a governors' Christian distinctiveness committee was formed to undertake more focused observations and evaluations. As yet they have not fully evaluated the school's wider Christian distinctiveness and actions from this have not been identified that have raised the impact of this further. At present children only make a limited contribution to this process. However, the school is now in a stronger position to gather more accurate information to inform future challenging areas for development. The headteacher is influential in supporting the development of senior staff by providing opportunities and guidance which have enabled them to take up leadership roles in other church schools. Further professional development opportunities are well focused on identified needs. The best example relates to RE and the introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource which has enhanced the quality of teaching. Links with the diocese has strengthened in recent years, with adviser support enhancing good practice. The church makes a good contribution to the life of the school notably through clergy leading worship and celebrating of festivals. In addition, there are valuable contributions to governance and the Open the Book team. Relationships with parents are strong, they celebrate the school's commitment and the impact its ethos makes to their children's lives. The school is well established at the centre of village life with whom it makes a rich and varied contribution. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.

SIAMS report June 2017 Buckland Newton CE Primary School, Dorchester, Dorset. DT2 7BY