

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Churchfields, the Village School

Bradford Road, Atworth, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8HY

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Wiltshire
Date of inspection	5 October 2017
Date of last inspection	15 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	130388 voluntary controlled
Headteacher	Simon Futcher
Inspector's name and number	Marcia Headon 761

School context

Churchfields is a smaller than average primary school based on two sites in the villages of Atworth and Monkton Farleigh. Overall there are 127 pupils on roll aged 4-11. Approximately two thirds of the pupils are at the Atworth site. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average. The proportion with special educational needs/disabilities is average although this varies across year groups. A new headteacher was appointed from January 2014 and since then there have been significant changes in staffing. In March 2017 Ofsted judged the school to be good.

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

- Leadership and managers are fully committed to enhancing the development of the church ethos of the school.
- Strong links with local churches contribute to the school's development as a Christian community.
- Very supportive relationships within the school show how the school lives out its Christian values of friendship and compassion.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' awareness of how teachings in the Bible link to the school's core values so that they apply them to their own lives.
- Involve pupils more in planning and leading collective worship so that they have more regular opportunities to explore concepts in greater depth.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of the nature and concept of prayer by developing their use of reflective corners so as to enhance their spiritual growth.

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

The school's core Christian values are displayed prominently and are well known by pupils, staff and parents. They reflect the growing Christian distinctiveness of the school because pupils know how values affect their lives. Even the youngest explain how important friendship is to them and how the value of forgiveness guides their relationships with others. Older pupils appreciate how difficult it can be to forgive but know that within school if they 'do something' wrong they will be forgiven. The value of compassion is evident in the help the staff and pupils show towards any pupil or family who is in difficulty. Pupils show their wider compassion through considerable charitable fund-raising activities such as 'Genes for Jeans' or 'toilet-twinning'. Pupils' behaviour overall is good and is influenced by the values that they are taught. They are polite and considerate. While the school policies incorporate the values of the school, not all of them make explicit links within the text to the Christian nature of the values. Nor are pupils easily able to explain how values link to biblical stories or why they make their school a distinctive church school. Relationships within the school are very harmonious with all showing concern for one another. This is shown in the care that older pupils take for younger ones especially when they are new to school life. The school is an inclusive community where members of staff provide the best for all pupils that allows them to succeed. In 2017, there were significant improvements in outcomes for pupils in all year groups including at the end of each key stage. This is a direct result of the individual attention given to pupils and the support provided for those who have additional needs. Attendance is high because pupils enjoy coming to school and know they will be listened to and their opinions treated with respect. The school has made a conscious effort to 'drip-feed' wider Christian values through the curriculum and, as a result, pupils know that tolerance is a key value. As yet there is no agreed definition of spirituality or mapping of it across the curriculum but teachers take the opportunity to encourage pupils to ask big questions of meaning and to discuss them as they arise. Opportunities for spiritual enhancement are developed by visitors and 'WOW' experience days and pupils are beginning to express their ideas with more confidence. The development of outdoor learning and newly created spaces in classrooms is allowing pupils time for reflection and spiritual growth. Religious education (RE) makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. It gives pupils the opportunity to explore their own beliefs as well as those of others. They are developing an understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Their knowledge of other faiths is increasing and pupils drew some similarities between Christian values and those of other faiths, particularly the values of kindness and love.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of worship are carefully planned and are beginning to allow pupils to explore and develop their own thinking about Christian concepts. They follow themes which in the past have been linked to the school's values but this term themes have been exploring the idea of God as Father using stories from the Old Testament. Pupils clearly enjoy the stories they listen to in worship and especially like the visits from the 'Open the Book' teams or when they themselves are actively involved. They are especially keen when participating in drama. In discussion they expressed the desire to become more involved with the leading of worship. Over a week, the given theme is developed and considered in different ways thus giving pupils the opportunity to experience different styles of worship. In an exceptionally well-planned class worship on Psalm 139, its meaning was explored through poetry, music and video using three slightly different sets of words. Pupils' engagement and reflection on this was of very high quality and they could see the relevance to their own lives. However, not all pupils can identify the messages which collective worship gives to them. All worship begins with the lighting of a candle and pupils easily explain the meaning of this as showing Jesus as light of the world. Whole school worship includes simple responses to words of greeting and dismissal, Bible stories, singing, reflection and prayer. An indication of the school's commitment to improving worship is the work which the vicar has been doing with pupils to rewrite the school prayer to make it more meaningful. The school, through collective worship, is developing pupils' understanding of the nature of the Trinity but for some pupils this is at a relatively early stage. At major festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter school services are held in the local churches. These are very well attended by parents who consider them highly important in developing their children's understanding of the Christian year. The school leavers' service in church is a much-loved event in the life of the school and the service to welcome Reception pupils is very well attended. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of all types of collective worship by a senior member of staff and a group of Year 6 pupils are involved in this. Currently, this does not focus sufficiently upon the impact of worship. While all pupils enjoy the stories in collective worship not all recognise worship as a time of stillness and reflection or prayer. Some do not yet fully appreciate the significance or purpose of prayer. The school has developed reflective corners within classrooms and while these are used well by some pupils, others were uncertain as to when they could be used.

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

The determination of the headteacher has ensured that the school's Christian character has made significant progress since his appointment. Working closely with staff, they have developed a vision which is rooted in the Christian belief of serving others, nurturing pupils to achieve their success, health and well-being and that all children are unique in the eyes of God. Following extensive consultation with parents, governors, pupils and staff the core values have been clarified and are now much more central to the school's thinking. They are giving a much greater focus and meaning to the work of the school. Staff support the headteacher fully. He and his leaders know the school well and accurately diagnose its strengths and areas for development as a church school. Staff have undertaken considerable professional training to enable them to develop as leaders of church schools. This has included attending training on how to lead collective worship, in the new 'Understanding Christianity' resource as well as working with other schools and advisers from the diocese. Many members of the governing body are relatively newly appointed but they have quickly appreciated the needs of the school, have set the strategic direction, carefully monitoring its work and are holding it to account for its progress. They are very conscientious in their roles and are regular visitors to the school. They are determined to ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness is enhanced further. This is now included in the school's development planning. The foundation governors are very supportive of the school and enhance its links with the local churches. They report back to the parochial church council regularly. Links with the local churches are very effective. Both St Michael and All Angels and St Peter's are used by the school for collective worship on occasions and pupils from the school have been given places at the holiday clubs run by St Michael's. Last Christmas, pupils from the school made the decorations for the church Christmas tree at Atworth. Clergy from both churches are regular visitors to the school and contribute to collective worship. They also provide pastoral support for the staff which is appreciated highly. Connections with the diocese are also strong. Parents are highly supportive of the direction of the school, of its welcoming nature, of the care given to their children by all staff and of the compassion the school has shown to those who face difficulties. The school used a number of creative strategies to involve parents so developing their understanding of the school's vision and values. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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