

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Shaw Church of England Primary School

Corsham Road,
Shaw,
Melksham,
Wiltshire
SN12 8EQ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Wiltshire
Date of inspection	10 October 2017
Date of last inspection	15 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Academy Converter 141920
Headteacher	Simon White
Inspector's name and number	Rupert Kaye (906)

School context

Shaw is a smaller than average primary school with 205 children on roll. Almost all of the children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, as is the figure for children who are supported by pupil premium grant funding. The headteacher has been head in post since April 2013. The school joined the Academy Trust of Melksham (ATOM) in April 2015.

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

- School leaders confidently live out the school's Christian vision and values, exemplifying and promoting what it means to be part of a learning community characterised by dignity, hope and wisdom.
- Children's excellent behaviour and care and concern for one another are clearly attributed to the Christian character of the school.
- Collective worship, inclusive of biblical teaching and Christian values, strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Children are enthusiastic about their involvement in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship and clearly articulate the relevance of Bible stories to their own and others' lives.

Areas to improve

- Deepen children's understanding of and respect for religious diversity and difference within the Christian church and other faith communities by organising opportunities for first-hand encounters with people from a variety of faith communities.
- Provide more opportunities for outdoor prayer and reflection, and develop accessible prayer and reflection spaces within each classroom, in order to allow children to respond spontaneously to spiritual experiences and moments of awe and wonder.

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

The school's *raison d'être* is summed up by 'Mission Shaw': 'To explore God's amazing universe, keeping children at the heart of all we do.' This mission statement, together with the Christian values which underpin it, has helped staff, governors and parents to develop a common understanding of spirituality and a shared commitment to children's SMSC development. Relationships between all members of the school community are positive and linked to the 'Mission Shaw' values. Children have a good understanding of these values and most explain what they look like in everyday life. Many children relate these values to stories from the Bible, notably linking them to stories about, or stories told by, Jesus. Children and parents alike talk about Shaw as a vibrant, happy, nurturing school with a distinct Christian ethos. Parents know their children are well cared for and children feel safe. Parents are made to feel welcome, appreciated and listened to.

The school's Christian values and ethos impact positively on children's learning behaviours. For example, children feel able to try new things and take risks, and talk enthusiastically about times when they needed to demonstrate courage and perseverance in order to overcome an obstacle to learning and make academic progress. Many children take pride in their work and talk with confidence about what they are doing well and what they need to improve upon. Children say their efforts are noticed and celebrated. Consequently, children want to be in school and their attendance is above the national average.

The school's values, however, have had less impact on academic outcomes which are below the national average for writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Following the school's April 2017 Ofsted inspection, leaders have taken steps to raise teacher expectations and set more ambitious targets so that more children make rapid progress and attainment gaps, where they exist, are diminished over time.

Behaviour in school is good and children are polite and friendly. The school's behaviour policy makes links with the school's values and aims to encourage children to 'love one another'. The behaviour policy states: 'The school recognises and promotes good behaviour ... This policy is designed to encourage good behaviour, rather than merely deter anti-social behaviour.'

School leaders ensure that religious education (RE) helps children to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith. Children talk respectfully and age-appropriately about diversity and difference. Older children make appropriate links between respect and tolerance, and the teachings of Jesus, British values and their own school's inclusive ethos. Religious education lessons and acts of collective worship provide respectful examples of multicultural diversity and difference. However, in recent years, Shaw pupils have not had first hand contact with worshippers from the full range of religions studied, nor have they had opportunities to visit a mosque, synagogue or gurdwara.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children and staff enjoy participating respectfully and enthusiastically in acts of collective worship. All agree that collective worship is an important part of school life. Regular monitoring and evaluation of collective worship, undertaken by a range of adults and children over the last two years, has encouraged review, innovation and improvement. Collective worship has a positive impact on the life of the school, inspiring children and adults in developing their personal spirituality as well as deepening their understanding of Jesus and the Church.

Year 6 'Assembly Crew' volunteers help to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship. They talk enthusiastically about helping other children to relate what they hear in collective worship to their own lives. Some children talk about how Bible stories help them 'make better choices' and 'remind us what is important'. Children say collective worship times remind them to live out the 'Mission Shaw' values all the time, challenging them to behave well and 'love one another'.

School worship planning is linked to Bible stories, 'Values for Life' and 'Roots and Fruits' activities. Worship times are greatly enriched by the contributions of both the parish vicar and the local ecumenical 'Open the Book' team. Acts of worship are of a broadly Christian nature, based on the church year and include Anglican practice. Whole-school worship times begin with the lighting of three candles and a liturgical welcome. Children comprehend the Christian belief in God as Father, God as Son and God as Holy Spirit – as symbolised by the three candles. They are also aware of the important place that Jesus holds for Christians as 'The Light of the World'. However, whilst children have a good understanding of Christianity as a whole and some Anglican practices they are not clear about expressions of it in Christian denominations other than the Church of England.

Children understand that prayer is about talking to God and is important to people of faith and they sometimes contribute their own written and spontaneous prayers to collective worship. Some of the Year 6 'Assembly Crew' volunteers talked about how they pray in their own time outside school, explaining how it helps them. One said, 'Prayer helps to change the world.' Another said, 'I think prayer changes me. It helps to make me a better person.'

The quality and impact of reflection areas in classrooms is not yet consistent across the school. Where class reflection areas are well-developed and regularly used by staff and children they allow spontaneous moments of awe and wonder to lead seamlessly to prayer and reflection. Children say these special indoor spaces promote calmness, prayer and reflection which, in turn, encourage 'kind thoughts' and 'positive behaviour.' Opportunities for harnessing the school's attractive and expansive grounds to promote outdoor spirituality remain similarly underdeveloped.

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

Parents, staff and governors talk knowledgeably about 'Mission Shaw', saying that it has re-energised the school. Parents praise the headteacher's vision and passion. They note his commitment to ensuring that every child can flourish in every way and achieve their God-given potential.

Foundation governors are fully committed to the school's Christian character and supportive of staff, parents and children. Collectively, members of the full governing body are developing a good, shared understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness based on the school's own self-evaluation strategies. Governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher and monitor day-to-day school life and educational outcomes. The vicar is a governor and provides support to the school in planning and leading collective worship as well as supporting school staff in the teaching of RE.

The school meets statutory requirements for collective worship and RE. The school has good links with the diocese and benefits from its training and advice. All staff are given opportunities for continuing professional development, attending diocesan and local authority courses, valuing the networking and training on offer.

The parish church and its congregation are an integral part of school life. Similarly, the school is valued and prayerfully supported by the church. Members of the parish church congregation run a monthly Messy Church and a Christian holiday club in the school hall to which pupils from Shaw and other nearby schools are invited.

Since the previous inspection the school has made good progress in addressing all three areas for development. Firstly, children are now more involved in planning and leading collective worship. Secondly, an Ethos Committee now monitors and evaluates the extent to which collective worship and RE impact on children's SMSC development. Thirdly, a Reflective Area in the foyer of the school hall now provides a suitably quiet space in which children can think, reflect and pray in their own time, in their own way.

SIAMS report, October 2017, Shaw CE Primary School, Corsham Road, Shaw, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8EQ