

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Nicholas' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	
Idmiston Road, Porton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 0LB	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Wiltshire
Date of inspection	13 October 2017
Date of last inspection	12 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 126404
Headteacher	Sandra Smith
Inspector's name and number	Revd David Hatrey 844

School context

Saint Nicholas' Church of England Primary is a smaller than average school. The majority of children come from a White British heritage. The number of children who are entitled to pupil premium funding are below national averages, whilst those who have special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) is above national averages. The headteacher was appointed in September 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Nicholas' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher has brought a clear vision and renewed enthusiasm in promoting the school's ethos which, through significant improvements, is enhancing its Christian distinctiveness.
- Children of all ages enjoy the increased opportunities to contribute to worship and, whether they have a personal faith or not, articulate the difference worship makes to their lives and thinking.
- Distinctive Christian values are steadily being embedded into the life of the school enabling children to articulate the difference they make to their achievements and relationships.

Areas to improve

- Establish a systematic approach for the evaluation of all aspects of being a church school which involves children and which identifies on-going improvements.
- Ensure that high quality opportunities for spirituality are identified in planning and which enable children to express their views and opinions in increasing depth through a rich variety of ways.
- Increase the number of children achieving higher levels of attainment in religious education (RE) so they become confident to articulate the difference the subject makes to their lives and thinking.

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

The impact of Christian distinctiveness is good because the higher profile given to Christian values means they are becoming well established across school life. Following the appointment of the headteacher, staff and governors agreed a set of Christian values; courage, truth, humility, peace, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, thankfulness, wisdom, friendship, service, perseverance, trust and responsibility. Children have a growing understanding of these values and talk confidently about what they look like in daily life and provide examples of where they use them. Children do not just know these values but are increasingly living them out. They are fully aware of how values shape their attitudes and create the caring community. However, as the collective worship rolling programme considers six values in real depth each year, children have yet to explore all values. Children make thoughtful links to biblical stories that reflect a distinctive Christian appreciation of most of the values. Children of all ages talk about values being 'given by God', which helps them to 'become better people'. However, they are not always secure in making links between these values and Jesus' life and teaching. Christian values are thoughtfully woven into learning; children talk about perseverance when faced with a challenging task. Christian values have made a very significant impact on behaviour and the quality of relationships. This is led by members of staff who model these values in their own daily interaction with children and parents, so children experience values such as trust and forgiveness. Children respond to each other with care and respect, treating one another as special. Behaviour is outstanding because a restorative justice approach helps children consider the impact of their actions on others, linking these securely to values. This is also evident in the children's concern for different charities, taking individual action to raise funds. Christian values shape children's attitudes to learning so they have high expectations of themselves. Data indicates that progress and attainment are improving with the majority of children achieving at or above national expectations in core subjects. This is linked to the strong focus on teaching and learning and the importance given to each as a 'child of God'. Disadvantaged children are well supported and their progress is increasingly comparable with their peers. Opportunities for spiritual development have increased with weekly timetabled sessions for classes to reflect on the current value. Children's responses to these opportunities show a growing understanding of the significance of values to their own thinking. However, there are not as many opportunities to consider other aspects of spirituality, nor do children express their ideas in a variety of ways from high quality experiences. A range of world faiths are now studied in greater depth following astute evaluations of provision. Children are encouraged to reflect by looking through the eyes of others at their faith. They are increasingly confident to make comparisons between these and Christianity, which extends their own understanding. This enables children to show tolerance and respect for those of different faiths. Children have some appreciation of the role of the local church through their increased involvement and what the church does in the community. The school recognises that their provision for developing children's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith could be enriched.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is outstanding because the enthusiasm of staff and children in leading worship has a significant impact on children's lives and attitudes. The commitment of the headteacher ensures that collective worship is recognised as being important. Children themselves confidently articulate the improvements to collective worship. They enjoy the numerous opportunities they have to contribute to worship. Older children are increasingly taking responsibility and planning worship. They reflect on the current value and write dramas to explore these, adding their own prayers and select songs with great confidence. Moreover, celebrating the main Christian festivals provides further examples where they lead and plan elements of worship. An excellent example was Christmas where they enabled all children to participate. Children are equally confident to explain why these festivals are important for Christians. An excellent element of worship is the children's enthusiasm for singing, not just the choir, but all children, they use singing as a major part of worship. More significant was children's response to worship. Whilst some children indicated that they did not have a Christian faith they all said that worship enables them to develop a better understanding of values which shapes their attitudes and that they enjoy gathering as a family. The headteacher has introduced a number of initiatives that have improved the quality of planning. Aspects of a value are progressively explored and extend children's understanding of its full meaning. Furthermore, there is a greater use of visual material which engages children. Children have a wealth of knowledge of Bible stories. Younger children confidently articulate a number of these in great detail. There is a growing understanding of the Trinity with children providing deepening insights as to what this meant for them. Leaders have refreshed their relationship with the church re-establishing their previous excellent links following the appointment of a new vicar. This enables a variety of clergy and lay leaders to bring their different styles of worship, which children enjoy. There has been a renewed focus on prayer. Children at an early age are introduced to different types of prayer and are confident to share their thoughts with God. Older children are developing the language of prayer and link these ideas to world events, sharing their deepening thoughts. Children of all ages are confident to pray spontaneously, either in class worship, which is more reflective, or in whole school worship, picking up on themes considered. Monitoring is more focused and gathers children's ideas. Each term, two children regularly ask peers about whether the message of worship is

clear, what they enjoy or would like to change. Governors make visits supplemented by reports from the school council. This information informs future developments.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is good because the quality of teaching is rising and standards are at least in-line with national expectations and other core subjects. This is the result of the headteacher taking over leadership of the subject and introducing initiatives which have raised the profile of RE. For example, a new RE scheme of work, 'Discovery RE' provides planning where themes are progressively explored in greater depth. This enables all staff to teach RE, deepening their knowledge. Christian values are effectively woven into teaching so children's understanding is enhanced as they consider the significance of them in their lives in different contexts. For instance, children are challenged to consider if they could always forgive and how difficult this could be. An enquiry based approach has been introduced where children reflect upon their own ideas about a 'big question' of meaning and purpose. Children are beginning to use higher order thinking skills to respond to good questioning which is requiring them to think more deeply. This works particularly well in some marking. Whilst marking offers some feedback there are some examples where this extends their thinking where challenging questions are posed linked to their responses. Where children respond, their thinking is at a higher level. They talk enthusiastically about some of the discussions this leads to, listening to others' views and refining their own ideas. More children indicate that they now enjoy lessons and recognise how this contributes to their thinking. Children record their ideas in different ways, which they enjoy doing. For example, opportunities to act out their responses are popular, whilst through art children explain the meaning of their responses with growing confidence. Teaching is regularly observed with clear feedback on strengths as well as areas to develop, which because they are followed up, mean that the quality of teaching continues to rise. One of the strengths is the enthusiasm of the teaching, which then enthuse children. There are also good examples of cross curricular work, with RE work undertaken in literacy which strengthens the importance of the subject. Disadvantaged children are effectively supported through work being well matched to their needs and adult support provided, their progress is rising. A new subject leader now leads in this area and she brings a passion and enthusiasm which is extending the impact of the subject. For example, astute observations inform her ongoing improvement planning effectively.

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

Leadership and management are good because the headteacher's strong focus on developing the impact of being a church school has brought a new vision and passion to the life of the school. Astute evaluations identified where improvements were required and decisive action has been taken to address them. This is particularly evident in the school's Christian distinctiveness where Christian values have been established and significantly developed in collective worship. The headteacher has steadily developed a strong cohesive team who are equally dedicated to the school's Christian vision which is strongly articulated by the leadership team, securely underpinned by Christian principles. They see everyone as 'being made in the image of God, treating everyone as Jesus would'. The new school aims proclaim this. Children have a growing understanding of this and talk about everyone as being special. Whilst recognising the importance of academic progress, the nurturing of the whole child ensures that each child grows and develops their 'God given talents'. Last year a new vision was created, "Learn, Achieve, Grow: Together." Children make positive links to this and recognise what the school encourages them to do and be. Older children are beginning to perceive the links between how Christian values contribute to their development as people who shape their community. The school's Christian distinctiveness is apparent in its support for disadvantaged children through the provision and support given to both families and children in times of anxiety. A new governing body is being established and extending their expertise. Governors are regular visitors to the school and track the progress towards academic targets. The school recognises that their monitoring and evaluating of the work of a church school needs to be more sharply focused. Visits have identified strengths in some areas but not identified aspects to be developed, so these have not led to on-going actions or improvements. The diocese provides important support for the school with further continuing professional development training which has been used to extend skills, notably in RE. Links with the church and community are growing. The school actively promotes messy church, whilst the church makes a valuable contribution to governance. The response from parents was excellent, where significant numbers gave rich examples of how the school has made influential contributions to children's lives and attitudes. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.