

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School

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| Willowcroft Quorn Loughborough Leicestershire LE12 8HQ | |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Leicester |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Local authority | Leicestershire |
| Date of inspection | 27 February 2018 |
| Date of last inspection | 14 March 2013 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Controlled 120153 |
| Headteacher | Judith Boston |
| Inspector's name and number | Sheila Grice (165) |

School context

This is a much larger than average primary school which has grown rapidly over recent years. The planned admission number has increased from 60 to 75. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average at 10%. The proportion of children with SEN and/or disabilities is average and the numbers of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium is below average. The majority (85%) of pupils live in the school's catchment area. The headteacher has been in post since January 2013. Pupil's attendance was 97.3% last year, which was above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Bartholomew's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Outstanding Christian leadership provided by the headteacher and collective worship & religious education (RE) leader, along with the active support of staff, governors and the vicar, ensuring the centrality of Gospel values.
- Highly effective relationships both in school and within the local community, based on distinctly Christian values, enable all children and staff to flourish.
- Pupil voice is extremely strong and children know that their opinions are valued because they are all God's children.
- Opportunities provided through worship, RE teaching and across the curriculum powerfully impact on children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development.

Areas to improve

- Extend opportunities for children to gain a deeper understanding of the distinctive features of different Christian traditions in worship.
- Explore using a variety of settings, including the outdoors, to enhance worship still further.

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

This school is exceptional in nurturing, encouraging and challenging learners so that they achieve their very best. Pupils in all year groups make good progress and when children leave this school results are above national expectations. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disabilities make good progress relative to their starting points. The school's belief that children are 'loved and made in the image of God' drives decision making and underpins all aspects of school life. Staff go the extra mile to ensure the needs of all children are met, whether academic or social, and pastoral care of staff and pupils is exceptional. Consequently, children and staff feel valued, loved and cared for. Children enjoy being 'part of a big family' where 'we feel really safe and well looked after' and the 'buddy system' is an integral part of this care. High quality displays throughout school bear colourful testimony to the importance given to the school's Christian character. Children have a secure understanding of different Christian values such as courage and respect. They can relate these to the Bible and their own lives. Work on linking the school's CARES code to biblical stories further reinforces children's understanding of the teachings of Jesus. Staff, governors and parents are united in their understanding of the importance of the school's distinctively Christian character. As one governor explained, 'This school has a lot of genuine humanity, children feel valued, cared for and loved by God.' Staff also speak of being valued and cared for and they radiate a genuine joy and warmth in their relationships with the children and each other. Children's behaviour and their attitudes towards learning are both outstanding. They speak confidently and articulately about the benefits of attending this school and their views are supported by parents. The weekly philosophy group provides Year 6 pupils with the opportunity to debate moral issues and they relish the discussions which deepen their understanding of life's 'Big' questions.

RE teaching is given a very high priority and it contributes significantly towards the children's spiritual and cultural development. The children benefit from many visits to places of worship and visitors from a range of different faiths, which deepens their understanding of difference and diversity. They show great respect for the opinions and beliefs of others. Frequent opportunities including Prayer Spaces, St Bart's Badger Trail, peace garden, and daily yoga encourage children to deepen their understanding of prayer and reflection. The reflective areas in classes are well used by children as a place where they can 'pray about things' or 'ask God for help'.

Relationships with religious leaders and organisations within the village are extremely strong and children benefit from the support of leaders, both in collective worship and the listening lunch and Bible club each week. Pupil voice is strong at St Bartholomew's and children are encouraged to show initiative in responding to charities by organising their own fund raising activities throughout the year. These activities supplement the whole school charities supported at home and abroad including the local food bank and a hospital in Tanzania, so enabling the children to show genuine compassion for others.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

High quality collective worship, which enriches the lives of both adults and children, is clearly at the heart of this school community. There is a strong focus on Biblical teaching and consequently children are developing a good understanding of Bible stories. As one child explained, 'They help me to be a better person.' The attitude of children towards collective worship is very positive because they are actively engaged and it supports their spiritual development. There is an agreed structure in worship which enables all children to be fully engaged and familiar with what is happening. Singing, prayer and reflection time form an integral part of worship. The use of modern, religious songs enables children and adults alike to engage fully in worship.

Regular visitors including the vicar, Baptist minister and other local leaders, enable the children to have rich, varied experiences, which enhance worship. There are regular occasions when children lead worship and they do so confidently. Older children relish the opportunity to plan and lead complete acts of worship and they do so enthusiastically. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian, due to very personalised, detailed, thoughtful planning by the collective worship team. The collective worship leader provides excellent support which enables all staff to confidently lead worship. Children are developing a good understanding of the Christian calendar and are learning about Anglican practice using liturgies, liturgical colours and formal prayers when appropriate. However, their understanding of the differences between practice in local churches requires further development. Children are developing a good understanding of God as Father and Son, but their knowledge and understanding of the Holy Spirit is less secure. Parents value the opportunity to share in worship and they particularly enjoy attending the weekly Well Done assemblies. Their positive feedback bears testimony to the importance of these special assemblies. Children visit both St Bartholomew's and the Baptist church for special assemblies but use of their excellent outdoor facilities are not sufficiently well used to enhance children's experiences in worship.

The leader for collective worship is inspirational in her dynamic and exuberant approach and staff value the kindness and support she provides. She is an excellent role-model for staff and pupils. There are robust monitoring procedures in place involving children, parents, governors and staff. All evaluations are discussed termly with the

collective worship planning group and actions taken to improve worship, for example, linking the school's CARES code to Bible stories and teachings of Jesus. Pupil voice is strong and following a request by older pupils that they sit on chairs during assembly, this has now become regular practice and the Year 6 children appreciate this change.

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

Leaders at all levels articulate a distinctively Christian vision for the school and they are clear how Christian values encompass all areas of school life. One governor explained how the Christian character 'pervades everything they do, because it is so deeply embedded'. Another adult explained that children know how to talk about God and 'the qualities of Jesus come through in children – being joyful and compassionate'. Children are exceptionally well cared for within a 'family' atmosphere based on Christian love and respect. This is a very happy school where relationships are exceptionally strong and children feel safe and secure. Children of all faiths, and of none, feel valued and respected by staff and children alike.

Leaders are focussed on school improvement. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have been instrumental in securing changes. The school's self-evaluation form provides a wealth of evidence to support their very secure judgements. The foundation governors encourage and challenge the school effectively, working extremely closely with the headteacher. An example of this was a lengthy discussion at full governors meeting on the introduction of the Understanding Christianity resources. Governors are fully involved in the role of monitoring and evaluation and this ensures that the school's Christian character is central to all decision making. Evaluations are reported back through staff meetings, collective worship team meetings and the strategy sub-committee of governors. Recommendations are then fed into the school development plan which ensures improvements are continually being made.

Parents speak very positively about the benefits of their children attending this church school and they value the strong sense of community and family which encourages their children to look out for each other and help others in need. They appreciate the way children are taught to respect others even when they hold different views or have a different faith.

Links with St Bartholomew's church and the Baptist church are excellent, offering mutual benefit to all. The whole school community speak enthusiastically about very positive relationships within the village and the impact of this can be seen both in school and in the churches. The vicar, who is also the link governor for RE, contributes significantly to the leadership and management of this school. He is a frequent visitor and provides valuable support for the headteacher.

The school benefits from the outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher and collective worship & RE leader who both live out the Christian values in their everyday lives. There are excellent links with the diocese and both staff and governors make full use of training provided. Consequently, practice is continually improving. The staff were thrilled that some of their children were chosen to sing in front of the Archbishop of Canterbury recently. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met.

All the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and the school is well placed to continue to thrive as a church school.