

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bletchington Parochial Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Whitemarsh Way,
Bletchington,
Oxfordshire.
OX5 3FD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Oxford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Date/s of inspection	21 March 2017
Date of last inspection	January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VA primary 123115
Headteacher	Louise Hatton
Inspector's name and number	Joanne Daly 843

School context

Bletchington Parochial Church of England School is a small rural primary school with 76 pupils on roll who are mainly from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is high while the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is low. The school became voluntary aided in 2014 and moved to a new site in 2015. Ofsted graded the school as 'good' in an inspection in March 2016 from a position of requires improvement. The school has been through a period without an incumbent until recently.

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

- Bletchington is a welcoming, inclusive Christian community which nurtures and serves all its pupils and the community.
- Christian values that come from the Bible are clearly expressed and strongly underpin the school's Christian character resulting in achievement and behaviour that is good and relationships that are positive.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong with a wealth of opportunities in the curriculum for learners to explore spirituality.
- The Christian character of the school has developed pupils who are thoughtful and reflective and have strong moral values.
- The strong partnership with the local church and its community, despite a period without an incumbent, enhances and strengthens the Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- To strengthen and drive improvements in Christian distinctiveness, RE and worship by establishing a more systematic and formal system of monitoring and evaluation that include the views of all stakeholders.
- To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of diversity and difference by planning and implementing a programme of visits and visitors from other faiths and cultures.
- To enable further development of pupils' spirituality, create reflection areas outside.

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

Bletchinglydon has created and established at the heart of its life a strong Christian ethos based on Christian values of 'love, honesty, respect, courage and unity' which are directly linked to Biblical teaching. It is a welcoming and nurturing community which serves its children and families well and holds important the vision of 'Learn to Believe-Aspire to Achieve'. All stakeholders know the school's core values and most can say why they are Christian in character. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their school and how much they enjoy coming to school and consequently attendance is good and exclusions are rare. They speak confidently and articulately about how the school values shape and define their lives, 'This school has taught me to respect other people' and 'we look after each other and help each other when we get stuck'. Parents value the school and the sense of community and praise the nurturing environment where their children are keen to come and learn and feel safe. They say that the school creates 'confident children who have strong values and know how to treat others with respect and kindness'. They speak about how the Christian character of the school is transferred to the home with siblings debating spirituality and young pupils singing hymns they sing in worship. Displays around the school including in the entrance area of the school show the importance of belonging to a Christian community and make links to Biblical texts. The website clearly reflects the distinctive Christian character of the school and has a 'Christian Distinctiveness' section which gives information on Christian values, prayer and reflection, RE, service to others and services in the church. Pupil understanding of the school as a Christian community is enriched by links with and visits to the local church. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision is strong with many opportunities in the curriculum to develop this. The RE leader and governors monitor RE through learning walks and book scrutinies to gather evidence of standards in RE. Teaching and learning is well planned and makes a good contribution to the Christian character of the school. Teachers give memorable experiences to the pupils who talk excitedly about their learning. They speak of 'learning new and fun things' and go on to say that 'teachers always encourage us to do well'. This results in all groups of pupils making good progress especially vulnerable pupils. RE and a global learning partnership in Africa are beginning to enrich pupils' awareness of other communities and cultures. However, there is currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to interact with people from other faiths and cultures.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Christian worship is an important part of the day and all members of the community appreciate the impact it has on bringing everyone together to pray and reflect and how it affirms and strengthens the school vision and values. Pupils say they enjoy worship and describe it as 'therapeutic and calming' and an 'opportunity to think about and reflect upon God and our values and how we should treat one other'. The focus on values, prayer and reflection in worship and in the school day impacts well on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships and their moral code. They know Bible stories extremely well and can link them to the school values and talk about their deeper meaning. They speak confidently about the personal characteristics of Jesus and they talk about following his example and being more like him by living out the school values. Worship opens with the lighting of three candles and a welcome and response and ends with the traditional version of the Lord's Prayer giving pupils a good awareness of Anglican worship. This awareness is further enhanced through visits to the church for services and by weekly visits by the church community to lead worship in school. Parents feel welcome to attend worship but this mainly happens with services in church. Prayer is a strength in the school. Pupils across the school write and say prayers and confidently offer spontaneous prayers to the school during worship. They say lunchtime prayers and pray at the end of the school day. They understand the purpose of prayer and say 'we talk to God' and 'prayer is like a telephone to God'. They go on to say that they can 'talk to God anywhere at any time and he listens and that he also talks to us'. Pupils are encouraged to write prayers in worship for the local prayer group who share and pray for the school. The whole school community has worked together to develop prayer spaces for the whole community to experience and share. Pupils have opportunities to reflect in worship and in areas inside the school but developing quiet areas for reflection outside would develop this further. Worship is planned using the school values and the Christian calendar. Pupils plan and lead worship although this has become less regular recently due to a change in staffing. However, the school has plans to make this more regular again. Pupils have a basic understanding of the Trinity and can say that there is God, Jesus and the Holy spirit but they do not talk about it in greater depth. Monitoring of collective worship by governors and the headteacher takes place, but it does not involve all groups and it is not clear what impact this monitoring has had on improving collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education (RE) has an impact in the life of the school. It is currently led and managed by the headteacher and taught by all teachers. This enables cross curricular links to be made in other subjects. Pupils speak very positively about RE and say they are excited and engaged by RE and especially by the 'Big Q' days. During these days, big questions are raised that enable pupils to learn from and about other religions with a focus on Christianity. They

speaking about how they turned their classroom into a sacred space and how they are always learning new things about Christianity and other faiths. Teachers develop pupils' thinking through effective questioning skills and most teaching and learning is good. For example, in Year 5/6 pupils through big question pupils were finding out about other religions and beliefs by researching the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity. Discussion with pupils shows that they have a secure knowledge of the Bible and the Christian story. Higher attaining pupils in RE are very knowledgeable, thoughtful and reflective in their oral contributions and all pupils confidently and articulately can talk about their learning in RE and their views on some of the topics they have learnt about. Teaching assistants are used to effectively support pupils' learning. Staff training and the development of RE has been well supported by the school and the Diocese. Assessment is in place and informs teaching and learning and indicates that achievement is in line with other subjects and progress is good. RE is discussed with parents at parent meetings and in annual reports. The headteacher and governors monitor RE through learning walks during 'Big Q' days and by monitoring the outcomes of pupils but this needs to be more rigorous in clearly identifying next steps to identify future improvements that are then measured for impact.

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

The headteacher and governors have worked hard to develop the Christian character of the school since its last inspection and raise standards. All previous development areas have been addressed and since the last inspection the school has involved all stakeholders in its new vision of 'Learn to Believe-Aspire to Achieve' and in developing the Christian values of the school which are firmly rooted in Biblical teaching. These values now support the school's development and improvement. The resulting impact of the vision and values is clearly seen in the high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes of the pupils for whom the adults in the school provide good role models. Discussion with the children, parents, staff and governors gives a picture of a very caring and supportive school which provides opportunities and a framework for, and in which, pupils love learning and are aspiring to achieve the best they can. Parents describe it as a 'fantastic school'. The school leaders currently monitor and evaluate the impact of Christian distinctiveness, RE and worship. However, monitoring and evaluation of Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE needs to be more regular, robust and systematic and involve all stakeholders so that it leads directly to a continuous cycle of strategic planning and improvement. Staff and governors have benefitted from professional and personal development through strong relationships with the Diocese, further strengthening the school's distinctive Anglican character. The headteacher, as leader of RE and collective worship, also receives strong support and training for this role. Professional development of staff is planned and supports future church school leadership development. The arrangements of religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Strong beneficial partnerships have been established with the local church and with the Woodstock partnership of schools. Through close involvement with the senior citizens and charitable giving, the pupils are developing a very good sense of their roles and responsibilities as citizens of a wider community. The school has links with the NASIO Trust, a Christian based charity in Africa. Through this link pupils exchange emails and develop a greater understanding of their role as global citizens.

SIAMS report March 2017 Bletchingdon Parochial Church of England VA School, Springwell Hill, Bletchingdon, Kidlington, Oxford. OX53ES