

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Blewbury Endowed Church of England Primary School

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Oxford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Date/s of inspection	9 February 2017
Date of last inspection	27 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 123167
Headteacher	Marion Mills
Inspector's name and number	Lynne Thorogood 799

#### School context

Blewbury Endowed Church of England school serves the villages of Blewbury and Upton. It is below average size and the majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or eligible for the pupil premium are below the national average. The school has six classes; some of the Key Stage 2 classes have pupils from two year groups. The school is currently being led by the substantive head-teacher for four days per week and a co-head-teacher on the remaining day.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blewbury Endowed CE Primary as a Church of England school are good

- All members of the school's community have a sound understanding of the Christian values and appreciate their Christian distinctiveness. These Christian values make a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development and the good quality of relationships throughout the school community.
- Strong community links and overseas links promote social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and effectively raise pupils' awareness of the need to support those in need.
- Collective worship and the strong partnership with the local church have a positive impact upon pupils' spiritual development and the school's Christian ethos. Children engage with collective worship enthusiastically and develop a clear understanding of the nature of God.

#### Areas to improve

- Establish effective systems for leaders, managers and governors to monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's Christian ethos in order to further develop the school's distinctiveness.
- Improve the impact of Christian values on pupils' learning and attainment by embedding effective systems of monitoring, assessment and the evaluation of interventions in order to raise standards.
- Widen pupils' experience of the Anglican tradition including the use of common texts in worship and common liturgical structure to deepen their understanding of Anglican distinctiveness.

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

The school's four core values are based in Christian teaching and are well known by pupils and some adults in the school community. Pupils explain how the values 'appreciation, community, forgiveness and perseverance' help them to be better people. They give examples of how 'perseverance' and 'community' have helped them to achieve goals and supported them in building relationships with their friends. One pupil pointed out that "Jesus is a community person!" The quality of relationships throughout the school is characterised by kindness and care between children and adults. Most pupils behave well, and both parents and children confirm that there is almost no bullying. Pupils enjoy school and as a result, attendance is good. The school's Christian character results in good social care, guidance and support but has a less strong impact on the quality of the pupils' learning and the standards they attain. This is something that school leaders have recognised and they have begun providing improved monitoring followed by appropriate interventions. Evaluation of the impact of these actions is not yet fully developed. The school has identified and provided opportunities in the curriculum to promote the pupils' spiritual awareness. This includes the introduction of mindfulness and opportunities for quiet reflection. Pupils say they enjoy quiet times and using prayer spaces for personal prayer, which enhances their spiritual development. Pastoral care is good, and the school describes itself as 'inclusive'. Parents of other faiths confirm that this is the case. The school's Christian values influence leaders' decisions on the use of the pupil premium grant (additional funding for disadvantaged pupils) and has resulted in a focus on caring and providing for the most vulnerable and deprived in the school community. Staff have provided personalised pastoral support which, for some, enables and eases their transition to the next stage of education. Religious education (RE) makes a satisfactory contribution towards developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. The newly designed RE curriculum provides for the exploration of ideas and 'big questions' through curriculum themes and topics as well as subject focussed RE days, and often includes references to the school's Christian values. Monitoring and assessment of progress in RE is currently under-developed which limits the level of challenge offered to pupils. The school has successfully applied over several years for funding to develop overseas links, and has contacts with a number of schools in Europe, Africa and Asia and regularly hosts visitors. This supports pupils' cultural and global awareness but their understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith is less strong. Links with the local community including the church, the local environmental group and collecting for local and national charities enable pupils to develop as responsible citizens.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

The impact of collective worship has improved since the last inspection through the introduction of a number of initiatives including greater emphasis on the involvement of pupils. This is a good response to a recommendation from the last SIAS report. An additional successful development has been the greater focus on prayer in the life of the school and a consequent growth in the pupils' understanding of the purpose and meaning of prayer. Pupils have occasional opportunities to write their own prayers and they have a greater understanding of different types of prayers because the local incumbent has introduced them to 'sorry, thank-you and please' prayers. The introduction of prayer spaces is a good example of how prayer has a higher profile as a more integral part of the life of the school. In contrast, not all pupils know the Lord's prayer and few know any other Christian prayers, which restricts their understanding of and engagement with the Anglican liturgy and tradition. Pupils say that opportunities to be still and quiet are something that they value as it gives them the chance to reflect on issues and matters that concern them. Pupils say they enjoy worship, and particularly like having opportunities to participate in dramatic presentations. They sing enthusiastically and listen well during services. Collective worship is one of the main ways through which the school promotes its core Christian values. Collective worship is well planned with explicit emphasis on Christian messages delivered through themes that promote pupil's social and emotional learning. Worship themes explore the four core values through Bible stories which deliver messages that support the pupils' moral and social development. Pupils' have a good awareness of a range of Bible stories and can explain how they link to a specific value. For instance, one pupil described the parable of the prodigal son as an example of forgiveness. The rector is a regular and welcome visitor, and leads worship each week. These occasions give positive messages about the strong relationship that exists between church and school as well as providing for the pupils a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The rector is a good role model for pupils who have occasional responsibility for leading worship themselves, including in church. Services are held in the church several times each year, further reinforcing links with the community. Parents appreciate the opportunity to attend church services at special times of year such as Harvest. Governors sometimes attend collective worship and offer evaluation of the experience, and pupil members of the school council are occasionally invited to give their views. However, there is no formal or structured strategy in place to collect reflections or evaluations from a range of stakeholders, which could help leaders gauge the success of the current programme and inform future developments.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory**

The school has been, and continues to be, on a significant journey in its development as a church school. Leaders including some governors, the leadership team and the worship/RE subject leader are developing a clearer vision of how the school is progressing, particularly with its culture of values. The partnership with parents is strong and they feel encouraged to be involved in school activities to support their children. Parents say they feel 'listened to' if they come to the school with a problem. They spoke positively of how their children are proud of their school and have a 'real sense of community', comparing the school's small size and family atmosphere favourably with non-denominational schools their children had attended previously. The school has responded in part to the recommendation in the previous SIAS report and governors have begun to monitor and evaluate aspects of the school's distinctiveness by appointing class governors who visit their link class regularly. They report to the whole governing body, evaluating aspects of provision. However, evaluation of Christian distinctiveness is still at an informal level and not sufficiently developed to fully inform identified priorities for improvement or strengthen the school's ethos and values. Following the recent disappointing outcomes of national tests, leaders have focused on meeting the academic as well as pastoral needs of every learner and the governors have responded to the challenge. Strategies, including more rigorous interrogation of data by the teaching and learning committee, have been put in place and early indications suggest they are bringing about some improvement. The school's Christian principles guide strategic and financial planning and decision making, for instance, investing in the provision of prayer spaces and making the school premises available for community events. Staff development and training has focussed on the school's priorities, particularly on developing subject knowledge for teaching in the core subjects. Links with other local cluster schools have supported this work. Some members of the governing body attend appropriate training, offered by the diocese, each year. The co-ordinator for worship/RE has also attended diocesan courses and has delivered training to colleagues to support both the teaching of RE and the provision of collective worship. The positive impact of this staff development is seen in the higher profile that worship and RE have in the school. The appointment of a co-head-teacher supports the development of staff for leadership roles in church schools. Parents, pupils and others speak of a really inclusive school which draws on the opportunities and strengths of being a church school. For example, all groups speak highly of the involvement of the local incumbent who provides strong direction and support for the school in developing its Christian distinctiveness, including pastoral care for staff. School leaders are committed to continual development of the school's distinctiveness and the leadership and management have a good capacity to further develop the school as a church school. However, recent developments are not yet sufficiently well embedded to have had a positive impact. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report February 2017 Blewbury Endowed Church of England School Westbrook St Blewbury Oxon OX11 9QB