

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Berkswell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Lane Berkswell Coventry CV7 7BJ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Coventry
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Solihull
Date of inspection	30 January 2018
Date of last inspection	February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 104093
Headteacher	Tracy Drew
Inspector's name and number	Reverend Alison M. Morris 759

School context

This is an average sized primary school with 234 pupils on roll aged from 4-11 years. The school is located in the village of Berkswell although most pupils come from the surrounding rural community. A small number of pupils receive support for their special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and fourteen pupils qualify for the pupil premium grant. Both of these figures are well below the national average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with 5.97% of pupils originating from ethnic minorities. The school has very close links with the clergy, St. John's church and its community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Berkswell as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The distinctive Christian vision, based on Christian values is effectively promoted through the insightful, astute and experienced leadership by the headteacher to ensure Berkswell is a fully inclusive school.
- Effective RE teaching allows pupils to speak eloquently about Christian values and how they impact upon their identity, belonging and spiritual journey within this church school.
- Exemplary relationships based on Christian values are embedded through the effective pastoral care system and the significant parish church link.

Areas to improve

- Implement the new Understanding Christianity resource into the RE programme to make the subject more appropriately challenging and accessible to all pupils.

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

This explicitly Christian school is outstanding in the work it does. It expresses its distinctive Christian character and ethos through a creative environment that impacts positively upon all pupils. The distinct Christian vision is deeply embedded with both explicit and implicit Christian values which are rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The promotion of core Christian values sets the expectation for how all should live. There is a rich vibrant Christian environment in which learning and achievement flourish. Pupils' understanding of the school's Christian character is enhanced by artwork on Christian representations of Christ. The Christian distinctiveness shapes and supports the holistic approach to meeting the needs of each child. As a result, pupils make excellent progress and achieve impressive standards which are well above national average.

Highly effective intervention strategies, such as 'Calm Me' and 'Jigsaw' impact greatly on pupils' learning, especially for those with specific learning challenges. Excellent pastoral care for welfare and personal development demonstrates the school's strong commitment to each child. For example, work by the child family mentor has impacted upon the emotional needs of specific pupils to optimise their learning potential. Pupils are treated by all staff with dignity and respected as unique individuals within this inclusive school. Teachers' expectations have a significant impact upon pupils' lives because they positively influence their attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Harmonious relationships which are based on Christian values and attributed to the school's Christian character provide excellent Christian role models. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding. Religious education (RE) makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' SMSC development as belief matters in this school. The subject enables pupils of all faiths and no faith to understand that beliefs are important to individuals and communities and that Christian values make a difference in their school. As such, RE impacts on the school's distinctive Christian character. Pupils are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. They have good understanding of and respect for diversity and difference between and within faith communities. Current effective strategies supporting this include a global Christianity day and planned visits to places of worship.

Standards of behaviour are exemplary due to a learning charter which is underpinned by Christian values. Maturity and team work are encouraged through posts of responsibility such as in the school council and as worship leaders. These enable pupils to mature into confident, articulate and self assured young people who are well mannered. Attitudes are excellent because pupils receive an inspirational curriculum which offers a rich variety of spiritual learning experiences. Together with high quality teaching, this motivates pupils to attend regularly so absence is minimal.

Classroom reflection areas, spiritual corners and a peace garden make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Focussed displays and artefacts create a distinctively Christian environment in which all pupils flourish.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is distinctively Christian and evokes a sense of belonging and, for some, gathering in God's presence. There is a strong focus on the person of Jesus Christ and the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of the Trinity. Worship is very well planned based on biblical material with emphasis on Christian values, festivals, beliefs and the church calendar. Pupils come to understand the relevance of such Christian values in their lives through good use of specific Bible stories

Worship is greatly valued and makes a substantial impact upon and contribution to exemplary spiritual development. The engaging and affirming nature of worship together with its clear values-related messages influences beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in the school community. Great care is taken to ensure that worship is accessible for pupils through use of inclusive language which allows all pupils to listen, reflect and respond appropriately on their own lives. Pupils' attention is captured through the use of prayer, silence and music, all of which are creatively interwoven within the worship. Their understanding of worship is further enriched through the use of visual images, symbols, lighted candles and liturgical colours which evoke for some an atmosphere of God's presence and a sense of belonging. One pupil explained that they felt worship was a sacred space where they could feel a 'greater presence'. As such, pupils are enthusiastic and keen to sing, pray and be involved. Pupils' involvement in planning, leading and reflecting on worship is both embedded and effective since the last inspection.

Links with the clergy, parish and foundation governors are very strong which ensures that pupils hear of and have opportunity to speak about the Christian values which are understood and reinforced by such actions. This nurtures pupils' attitudes to faith, provides support for their spiritual journey. Key Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas, which are celebrated in the church, reinforce the church school link. Pupils receive a rich experience of Anglican traditions and practices through different settings and leaders. This allows pupils to learn about Anglicanism. Prayer and reflection are integral parts of daily worship which foster spirituality and allow those who want to, to explore a relationship with God. Appropriate use by pupils of class prayer books and spirituality corners demonstrates their understanding of the purpose of prayers and the impact that prayer has in their lives. A greater sense of spirituality is also enhanced through quiet moments which are built into worship to allow pupils to be still and reflect. Response to

prayer is enthusiastic. One pupil said, 'The most important thing is praying because I like talking to God.' Detailed plans underpin the worship and provide an excellent tool for monitoring and evaluating practice. Self evaluation methods, such as exit poll, interviews and reflections are effectively used to evaluate worship and inform ongoing development. .

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a high profile which has led to teaching and learning of the highest quality. Standards of attainment in RE are in line with expectations of the Solihull RE syllabus and a significant number of pupils reach higher levels. RE makes a significant contribution to pupil's development and the Christian character of the school.

Methods of teaching and learning are varied, age appropriate and effective, enabling pupils to make exceptional progress. This is confirmed with a very good analysis of assessment which monitors the pupils' progress. Effective use of props in an observed lesson on the feeding of the five thousand engaged reception pupils to focus their thoughts. Pupils are very enthusiastic about RE and are challenged by questions of meaning and purpose, for example, through the topic, 'Big Questions'. Implementation of the Solihull RE Syllabus provides a well-structured thematic scheme which enhances academic rigour and also fosters deep respect for Christian and other beliefs, practices and values. However, the school has identified the need to integrate even further the Understanding Christianity resource. Pupils' knowledge of the Christian story is excellent as is their awareness and understanding of other faiths and cultures such as Judaism.

Religious education (RE) makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the lesson on Taize provided a positive, spiritual and reflective experience for pupils. Afterwards a pupil said, 'It is nice, quiet and calming to think during the flickering of the candles.' Subject leadership in RE shows a high level of skilful expertise with purposeful development and focussed action plans. Excellent support and annual training have impacted upon staff development and their spirituality. RE books are consistently scrutinised. Such monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in RE enables leaders to be confident that they are consistently at least good. This has led to improved standards of pupil's attainment. As such, the quality and effectiveness of RE to provide fully for the needs of all pupils are strengths of the school.

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

The inspirational and astute headteacher has worked with vision, insight and commitment to develop an explicit Christian vision which pervades the school. She articulates this vision which has a strong emphasis upon Christian values and influences the schools' attempt to be caring and inclusive, respecting diversity and enhancing partnership with the community. It encompasses all that the school stands for and gives rise to the mission statement of 'Inspiring Children to Shine'. Thoughtful focus upon the specific values of Christian love and care for each other is interwoven into the daily life of the school. Purposeful and professional partnerships exist between all staff to promote and articulate this Christian vision. The staff have a sense of vocation to work in this Christian school.

Governors are very supportive of the headteacher's experienced leadership. Self-evaluation and reflection are rigorous as skilled governors effectively set the strategic direction for this Christian school which is informed by the distinctive Christian vision. They accurately evaluate the school's effectiveness as a church school, acting as critical friends in school improvement. Improvement plans fully reflect at every level monitoring and evaluating the school's progress as a church school, taking account of its Anglican foundation. Significant contributions by the headteacher through targeted professional development and succession planning have strengthened the capacity to maintain the high level of success. Issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed.

Statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship are met. Purposeful and effective support for the RE leader enables this subject to be highly effective. The enthusiasm with which both areas are led spreads through to staff and pupils. As a result, it means that RE impacts across the whole school curriculum with positive links through SMSC development. It also impacts upon the distinctively Christian character of the school. Monitoring and evaluation of books by senior leaders and governors ensures they have a good understanding of standards in RE.

Effective partnerships exist with the diocese, several agencies and the wider community, in particular the South Solihull Collaborative, which results in mutual benefit for all. Regular visits by the clergy nurture the close links that are interwoven between the church and school. For example, preparation lessons on the Eucharist help to explore the communion service and confirmation. Exemplary relationships throughout the school show the key role that Christian values play in the community. Relationships with social agencies and parenting support projects are very strong and extremely effective in overcoming economic disadvantage. All parents have confidence in the school, feel included and recognise the welcoming Christian faith that underpins the school. Berkswell has a strong identity as a school because Christ's teaching is at the heart of everything. This enables all pupils to flourish spiritually, socially and academically.

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