

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sherborne St John Church of England Primary School	
Church Lane, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 9HT.	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Winchester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Hampshire
Date of inspection	11 July 2018
Date of last inspection	18 July 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 116315
Headteacher	Karen Payne
Inspector's name and number	Richard Blackmore 857

School context

Sherborne St John Church of England Primary School is a small and rural primary school on the outskirts of Basingstoke. Nearly all pupils are white British and very few pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. The school has benefited from an effective and stable staff for several years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sherborne St John Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian values of 'trust, forgiveness and truth' drive the aspiration for pupils' achievement and their personal development.
- Collective worship is an integral part of the school day. It supports pupils to relate biblical material and Christian teaching to both their daily lives and the school's distinctly Christian values.
- The high-quality leadership constantly evaluates provision and encourages pupils' personal qualities, creativity and broader experiences exceptionally well.

Areas to improve

- Embed reflection more fully in classrooms to encourage more personal thought to support pupils' own spiritual journeys.
- Enable pupils to explore Christianity as a multicultural world faith.
- Give pupils more opportunities to plan and evaluate collective worship.

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

The school uses a range of opportunities to promote its deep Christian ethos widely and to make clear the Christian foundation upon which the school is built. This has resulted in a school that has a strong Christian thread running through all its work and this is impacting very positively on pupils' achievement, well-being and their personal growth. Pupils have good opportunities to explore Christian values in relation to their own lives. This has a significant impact both on supporting the Christian character of the school and on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils value their school, describing it as, 'Amazing, fun, special and creative'. Their enjoyment of school results in behaviour that is exemplary. Pupils have a very well-developed sense of right and wrong. Spiritual development is good, promoted well by teachers and support staff during lessons. Pupils are highly respectful of each other and those who have different views to their own. However, pupils were less clear how

Christianity compares to other world faiths and their understanding of diversity. Personal spirituality is prominent in the school but is recognised by the leaders in their high-quality plans for improvement as a priority. Pupils are extremely thoughtful but classroom prayer spaces as a place for quiet reflection are not as developed as they could be. Relationships throughout the school are exceptionally well developed and positive. The headteacher and senior leaders enable and encourage the highly dedicated staff to focus on developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence by building strong relationships that act as a motivation for learning. The relationship between the parish church and the school is close and pupils have a good understanding of Christian traditions and Anglican practice. Pupils have regular and meaningful opportunities to visit and worship at the church. Religious education (RE) makes a positive contribution to the Christian character of the school because teaching is good. The structure of the planning and teaching of RE ensures that pupils are knowledgeable about Christianity and how it links to the school's values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is widely valued by the school community and has a strong impact upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is because collective worship is well planned, delivered and developed during the week. For example, class worship follows the collective worship led by the rector, adding to their understanding of the week's focus. Pupils enthusiastically take on many roles acting out Biblical characters and reading prayers. They are confident and respectful and enjoy singing during worship. Collective worship is also led by a variety of school staff and has been monitored very closely by the deputy headteacher and foundation governors. Children value the opportunities they are given to actively participate in assemblies, however, opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate collective worship are not fully developed. Collective worship is distinctly Christian. It makes very clear references to the school's values and how the pupils can use these as a guide to their daily actions and words. Collective worship also ensures that pupils understand the teachings of Jesus and Bible stories and can act as a guide for them in their daily lives. Governors and pupils say that collective worship is valued and speak of the positive impact it has upon pupils' attitudes and understanding of how they can act out the school's values. Collective worship gives positive messages about the strong relationship that exists between the wider church and the school as well as providing a good understanding of church tradition and the liturgical calendar. It also ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and means that the pupils are confident with the significance of this in their worship. Pupils value prayer and have a good understanding of reasons to pray and how you can pray at any time and for any reason. They write and share their own prayers thoughtfully in worship and on a school prayer tree.

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

The headteacher's strong vision for the school is shared by the school community. Leaders and staff continually uphold and proactively demonstrate the Christian values in actions and words throughout the school day, providing excellent role models for pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and academic achievement is a priority. For example, pupils have numerous positions of responsibility including librarians and school ambassadors. The impact of the school's values and ethos on pupils' achievement across the curriculum is very positive. This enables pupils to develop their skills well in different subjects. The core values also direct and support decision making, especially in terms of pupil wellbeing and expectations for pupils and staff. The RE co-ordinator has a high profile in the school, carrying out high calibre lesson and pupils' work monitoring. The leader liaises closely with the foundation governors and the diocese to develop RE continuously and maintain it as a high priority. She plays a key role in the assessment of RE and ensures that it is used effectively to plan future learning in detail, including further developing pupils' spirituality. The strong partnership between the school and the parish church has driven forward the many linked activities with the church and the school community. An example is the Sunday school provision where pupils and their families from the school attend. The rector and school leaders have worked hard to grow links and the school leads festival services in church as well as using it to support the curriculum. Governors and school leaders are very effective partners in improving the performance of the school. Their understanding of the school is significant because their monitoring and reviewing are strategically and conscientiously undertaken. Subsequent actions identified to further develop the school are outstandingly well targeted. All staff play a full part in the highly comprehensive school improvement planning process, including monitoring and reviewing that expected improvements are taking place. Self-evaluation is, as a result, highly accurate. Leaders combine self-evaluation and improvement planning exceptionally well to keep the vision and values at the forefront of leaders' drive for ongoing development. Succession planning for church school leadership is taken very seriously and planned well. There are excellent opportunities for staff to lead on key aspects of church school distinctiveness, such as leading collective worship. Parents are very positive about the school. Comments such as, 'It's fab' and 'My child has been really well prepared for their next stage of education', characterise the views of parents. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.