

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Shiplake Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Memorial Avenue
Shiplake
Henley on Thames
RG9 4DN

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Oxfordshire
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Date of inspection	8 December 2016
Date of last inspection	October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 123203
Headteacher	Katherine Page-Howie
Inspector's name and number	Alan Thornsby 137

School context

Shiplake is an averaged size school with 199 pupils on roll. The majority of these are White British, with a small number from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds. Numbers of pupils entitled to Pupil Premium and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are below national averages. The school has undergone a number of changes in staffing and governance since the last inspection. As a result, the headteacher and deputy headteacher are joint leaders for Religious Education (RE) and Collective worship. There is also a new link governor for these areas.

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

- Explicit Christian values, understood and used by everyone create a successful learning environment in which children are nurtured in their academic and personal development.
- The headteacher, governors and staff have a passionate commitment to continually develop the distinctive Christian character of the school.
- Collective worship and religious education have a significant impact on the thinking skills, attitudes and spiritual development of pupils.

Areas to improve

Ensure that the explicit distinctive Christian character found in the school is fully reflected in all documentation. For example, ensure that all policies refer to a distinctive church school and include church school status as a separate standing agenda item for governors' meetings.

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

The school has a powerful Christian ethos based on the values of compassion, wisdom, friendship, truthfulness, peace and equality. The whole school community agreed these and use them consistently, with adults and children being role models for each other. The ethos is reflected in the school verse 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' Children understand and readily explain what it means to be part of an inclusive church school. They recognise Christian values in action and make links to the life of Jesus. For example, a child commented 'the inn keeper showed compassion to Mary and Joseph.' As a result the distinctive Christian character impacts on every aspect of school life, creating a family like learning situation where all work together. Relationships, behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Children are confident and articulate. Their contributions and discussion show how they engage with issues because of their deeper thinking processes and reflective skills. They recognise the work of teachers, who 'challenge us but make learning fun.' There are rigorous tracking procedures that identify the needs for support. Children also recognise that it is safe to make mistakes and learn from them. The ethos of the school has resulted in progress and achievement that are consistently above national expectations. Pupils make a significant contribution to developing the life of the school through the buddy system, the school and eco councils. The election of a school Prime Minister and council helps pupils to recognise democracy in action. Pupils have shared their reflections on the links between British and Christian values at a governors' meeting. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a high profile and impact on the personal lives of everyone in school, with cross-curricular links and a wide range of out of school activities. Staff recognise a range of spiritual capacities across the curriculum that are reflected, for example, in the school garden with the symbolic planting of bulbs. The School Councillor supports the emotional wellbeing of both pupils and adults. Pupils enjoy and understand the place of worship and RE in their church school, and readily describe the differences these make to them. They understand that Christian values 'are not just for Christians but can be shared by other faiths.' They also describe religion as being 'about how a person feels and acts.' The curriculum and a range of visits support children's knowledge of cultural and religious diversity. They recognise and respect the global nature of Christianity and major world faiths. Pupils fund raise to support local national and international charities

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a key part of life to exploring Christian values and events in the church year and the impact of these on the life of the school community. Interactive themes and the use of a similar format by a range of leaders help children to understand the links between Bible stories and values. They explain how learning about these stories impacts on the lives of people including their own. Pupils experience a range of worship formats, including whole school, class, singing worship and celebration. The range of leaders includes staff, clergy and governors. The school has strong links with St. Peter and St Paul's church, with pupils being involved in the appointment process for the new rector. Before the appointment of the rector, the associate priest maintained links between church and school. The church is used for festival services. Children recognise the changing colours of the church seasons that are displayed in school. The coordinated clothing of the associate priest reinforces these to staff and children. In addition to leading worship, the clergy are also involved in aspects of the curriculum and learning about the church and its grounds. Worship reflects the Anglican tradition, with the lighting of three candles to reinforce the Trinity. Children enter worship and create a reverent atmosphere, with a sense of anticipation and share a signed greeting. They are fully engaged by lively delivery and opportunities for participation. Pupils have a good knowledge of stories from the Old and New Testaments and can relate stories of the life of Jesus. They recognise that Christian values can also be thought of as Jewish values. They are particularly proud of being able to explain the differences in the well-known Christmas Story and the Nativity stories in the gospels of Luke and Matthew. Children and adults value worship as a time to join together in a shared experience and listen to and reflect on Bible stories and their messages that impact on spiritual development. Prayer has a high profile in the daily life of the school. Pupils are aware of the traditional and modern version of the Lord's Prayer. Children are familiar with different types of prayer and confident to express them aloud or in silence. They have decorated their Christmas tree with prayers and messages of hope, reflecting their understanding of prayer and the need to think of other people. A range of monitoring procedures, including observations by foundation governors, evaluations by leaders, pupil interviews and post-it notes from pupils are collated to identify developments.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education has a central role in the life of the school. The knowledgeable subject leaders have successfully introduced the new diocesan syllabus, based on 'Big Questions' and have set high expectations for staff and pupils. This is now securely embedded following staff training, diocesan and clergy support. Recent appraisal targets have

ensured that staff confidence and knowledge have made a significant impact to how RE is delivered in school. The new syllabus encourages deeper thinking and the development of enquiring minds by pupils. There is a great feeling of a learning journey shared by staff and pupils as they respond by breaking down questions such as 'Did God make man?' and 'Is everyone special?' into smaller, more readily answered questions. At the end of each unit of work, children can answer the question, with explanations. The questions also allow beliefs from other faiths to be included, for example the study of light includes Diwali and Hanukah. The links between RE and Christian values, especially respect and tolerance, create challenging dialogue between pupils and teacher. These affirm that there is often no right or wrong answer, just a personal opinion. New staff are supported by the subject leaders and share the confidence and support of colleagues. Lessons are well planned. Pupils know their success criteria because learning objectives are shared. Teacher knowledge allows for lively pace, direct questions and opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect in pairs and small groups. Their responses add to the growing answer. Differentiation is achieved by groups of pupils of similar abilities working together to enable them to pursue answers at a similar level. Year two children explored the significance of religious symbols. They shared their knowledge and interpretations of symbols representing Christmas before facing the challenge of creating and explaining the significance of a Christmas symbol for Christians. Older pupils were engrossed in discussion of incarnation in the Nativity story, before discussing their responses to a religious painting 'Arizti's Incarnation' as part of the question 'Did God make man?' Work in books is well presented and shows a range of ways recording. A class RE book provides a record of RE activities and progression through the year. These are to follow each class through the school. The marking of work follows the school policy, although teachers recognise that the thinking skills of some pupils exceed their literacy skill. Children are given time to review their learning by responding to marking comments by teachers. Subject leaders use a range of procedures to monitor the impact of RE. These include learning walks and observations. They recognise that standards are comparable with those on other areas. Teachers are given individual feedback in addition to more generalised findings shared with all staff and governors. Although the school has successfully addressed the development points from the previous inspection, the school is currently exploring assessment procedures to fully reflect the needs of the school and the new syllabus.

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

The headteacher provides dynamic leadership that shows trust and confidence in the whole school team and has enabled rapid and secure development. Christian values securely underpin the distinctive Christian character of the school. As a result there is a shared vision to provide the best learning situation for academic and personal development of all. The whole school community lives out the vision to develop life skills and attitudes in well-rounded children. Although many are new in post, governors are very conscientious and passionate. They have tackled a steep learning curve to ensure they understand their roles in a church school and are effective critical friends with high expectations. Governors' awareness of working in a church school, through being linked to a class, has resulted in a commitment to the on-going development of the distinctive Christian character. Observations, discussion and interviews by foundation governors, along with headteacher's report maintain the high profiles of collective worship and RE. Governors' meetings minutes reflect the impact of Christian values, for example, compassion when discussing a change to the intake number. Governors are involved in a number of well-organised and accurate self-evaluation procedures. The recommendations from an interim review have been actioned. The school development plan has elements of church school distinctiveness, although these are not brought together as a single section. Staff describe the school as 'a wonderful place to work because we are valued. There is no hierarchy as we are all part of a team'. Relationships are excellent because of mutual respect, support and compassion. They recognise Christian values as being the solid foundation of the school that also enable the spiritual development of everyone. The commitment to curriculum and personal development ensures experiences are identified to nurture all staff to become potential future leaders. Parents share the passion of the whole school community for the school and the obvious impact of the distinctive Christian ethos of the school. They recognise the total commitment of adults to nurture each individual child that often goes beyond what might be expected. They are proud of the way children readily share their learning and prayers at home. The active Parents Teachers and Friends Association organises a range of activities that bring the school and local communities together. The school has strong links with the church and village communities and is part of the Henley Partnership of schools.