

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Shellingford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Street, Shellingford, Faringdon, SN7 7QA

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Oxford |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Local authority | Oxfordshire |
| Date of inspection | 15 May 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 23 May 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | VA primary 123222 |
| Headteacher | Judith Terrell |
| Inspector's name and number | Angela Wheatcroft 872 |

School context

Shellingford is a small village primary school with 87 pupils taught in mixed age classes. Nearly all pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly lower than the national average. Numbers of pupils entitled to pupil premium are below national average. Most of the pupils live outside the village of Shellingford. Since the previous inspection, the school's pupil admission number has increased, which has resulted in the number of pupils on roll growing significantly. During this time, the leadership of the school has remained stable.

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

- The explicit Christian values, which are understood and shared by the whole school community, impact on the achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils.
- High quality teaching in religious education (RE) ensures that all pupils develop their higher order thinking skills which, enables them to understand Christianity as a global faith and gives them the opportunities to explore major world faiths.
- The emphasis that the headteacher places on the whole school worshipping together means that collective worship is central to school life, engages all pupils, is inclusive and contributes to the strong sense of all pupils and staff being part of God's family.
- There is a strong commitment from all leaders and staff to ensure that the distinctive Christian ethos of the school is at the heart of all decision making, policy and practice.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the agreed understanding of spirituality, that staff and governors share, is fully understood and shared by the pupils of the school, so that they are able to articulate their understanding of their own personal spirituality.

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

The four Christian values of creativity, respect, spirituality and belonging have a profound effect on the daily life of the school. These values are deeply embedded and, as a result, all stakeholders are involved in realising the potential of every individual pupil. Prevalent throughout the school is the sense of family and inclusivity. This means that all pupils are accepted and nurtured to fulfil their academic potential by making expected or better than expected progress. Parents talk about how the values of belonging and respect are evident in all that the school does. They say that all pupils, regardless of their needs, are included in every aspect of school life and they recognise the part that the whole school community plays in achieving this. The school has successfully combined a growth mindset project with its core Christian values and Bible stories by creating the Shellingford school family learning culture. As a result, pupils have been encouraged in their spiritual development and staff say that they have greater determination to persevere. Due to the school's approach of 'peaceful problem solving', which focuses on the school's Christian values of respect and belonging, behaviour of pupils is of the highest standard. Parents rightly say, 'My child is in good hands with teachers, friends and God.' Governors and staff share their understanding of spirituality as being 'an awareness of God and His presence in our lives.' However, the pupils are not yet able to express and demonstrate this shared understanding.

Progress has been made since the previous inspection as the pupils have a significant understanding of Christianity as a diverse global faith. In the early stages of their education, pupils draw from their own experiences and are enthusiastic to share photographs of their own baptisms in a Polish church and Roman Catholic church. This learning is built on throughout the school and older pupils are keen to talk about Christians living in Southern Sudan and Uganda. Integral to the pupils understanding of diverse communities is the 'Children on the Edge' project. The pupils have committed to raising funds to send to children in Syria. They speak passionately about the cost of being able to provide a child with the opportunity of having an education and of the injustice of the situation. They talk with empathy and enthusiasm about their sporting challenge of a run, a climb, a scramble and a hike and were able to discuss what life must be like for a Syrian refugee. As a result of this project, the pupils have an increased understanding of the part that they play in helping to make a difference in the wider world. There is a whole school commitment to the teaching of RE. Staff say that RE is central to the life of the school and, as such, is given as much priority as other core subjects. As a result, the teaching of RE, through the use of big questions, make a highly-valued contribution to the pupil's SMSC development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is held in the highest esteem by all members of the school community. This is demonstrated by all stakeholders participating in the daily acts of worship. This is a highly valued time when the whole school comes together to reflect, to pray and to learn from the teachings of Jesus Christ. A variety of community members lead acts of worship and, as a result, the pupils have a rich exposure to different styles and experiences. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their relationship with Reverend Jeremy and the part that he plays in leading worship. They also speak eagerly about their involvement in pupil led worship and how this helps them to understand the teachings of the Bible in relation to the school's Christian values. They can apply what they have learnt to everyday life and beyond and as a result have made a commitment to serve others through their fundraising efforts. Collective worship is planned in accordance with the church year and parents and pupils speak highly of the worship that the pupils lead at St. Faith's church. As a result of these planned acts of worship, held in the church, pupils are able to identify distinct Anglican traditions. All pupils have an age appropriate understanding of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They recognise, and can articulate, how the school's Christian values relate to the trinity. They use their school badge as a visual reminder of this. One child said 'Our badge lays out the trinity. All parts of our badge link together and at the centre of it is God.'

Prayer is central to the life of the school and to acts of worship. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and say 'I pray when I am worried which makes me feel better. God is right beside me but when I pray, it is like He sits in my heart.' Monitoring of collective worship is highly effective. All stakeholders take part and results are shared at all levels throughout the school community. Due to the impact of this monitoring, the pupils now have numerous opportunities to use prayer throughout the day. They speak of the prayer spaces in their rooms and how they light candles to help them focus on God. Pupils in year 5 shared how they prayed for their year 6 classmates during their recent end of year assessments. Pupils and staff speak favourably of the recent prayer workshop and how this has helped to develop the prayer spaces. They also talk passionately about the lunchtime prayer club and have been able to share ways in which God has answered their prayers. Pupils understand that there are different types of prayer and are confident in using these when they lead worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education (RE) is central to the life of the school and as such is held in the highest esteem by all stakeholders. The RE curriculum is exciting, challenging and pupils are inspired by it. They relish exploring the big questions and have a thirst for debate and discussion. The older pupils are able to talk about how religion and faith impact on their own personal lives and how their learning helps to shape their beliefs. They speak about how Christians' thoughts and beliefs on life after death compare with those beliefs a Sikh may have. The younger pupils are able to apply their learning to their own lives. One boy said 'Jesus helped Zacchaeus to be kind and He helped Zacchaeus to change. You need to be kind and Jesus can help you to do this.' The curriculum is thoroughly planned and is creative, which means that all pupils, regardless of ability, are engaged in their learning. As a result, pupils make rapid progress, from their starting point, in developing their understanding of Christianity and their understanding of other faiths. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the different experiences that they have. Older pupils spoke about a Hanukkah party to explore the big question 'Is light a good symbol for celebration?' Younger pupils enjoyed the opportunity to try on Reverend Jeremy's clothes to help further their understanding of the role of the vicar. Parents also comment on how RE teaching and learning is 'fun' and how their children often share their learning at home. RE teaching helps to promote the Christian values of the school. The inclusive nature of the school is demonstrated when the pupils work in family groups and debate and discuss a big question. Recently the whole school came together to explore the question 'What does being a Christian mean around the world?' Pupils recognise the importance of learning about other religions and say that they need to understand all religions as they may have a friend who has different beliefs to them. Parents also identify the vital role that the school plays in educating their children about different religions in the world in which they live.

RE teaching is of a high standard with the majority of lessons being outstanding. RE is a priority across the school. This is demonstrated by both the quality and variety of work that the pupils produce and the commitment, by the headteacher and staff, to ensure that one morning a week is dedicated entirely to the teaching and learning of RE. Assessment of pupil's progress in RE is effective and informs planning and future learning. Monitoring by senior leaders is rigorous and areas for development are clearly identified and acted upon. The subject leadership of RE is at the highest level. All staff are aware that RE is a core focus for the school and they work cohesively to ensure that improvements are maintained within the subject. Leaders, at all levels, can clearly identify, and passionately articulate, the progress made since the previous inspection.

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

The headteacher's commitment to the church school ethos has ensured that the Christian values of creativity, respect, spirituality and belonging, are integral to the life of the school. This, along with the highly effective governing body and committed staff team, has meant that there is a Christian vision which is understood and shared by all members of the school community. Improvements in RE and collective worship, since the previous inspection, are due to the dedication of the headteacher and staff team. The governing body is passionate about ensuring the Christian ethos contributes to all areas of school life. As a result, the Christian values of the school underpin all policies and practice and pupils make expected or better than expected progress. The headteacher promotes the distinctive Christian character of the school by ensuring that it is a focus on the school's development plan, is a standing item on staff meeting agendas and feeds into the appraisal of all staff. Professional development for staff and governors is a high priority. Staff are given opportunities for professional development relating to the Christian character of the school. The involvement of the school in the 'Children on the Edge' project was due to a member of staff recognising the need to develop the pupils' understanding of wider social problems. The school has effective relationships with the Diocese and has drawn on support to help to bring about improvements. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are being met.

The detailed and rigorous monitoring, at all levels, is highly effective and as a result improvements are brought about. Self-evaluation involves all members of the school community- parents, pupils, governors and staff, which contributes to the sense of belonging and the family feel of the school. The school effectively serves the community. Pupils and parents talk enthusiastically about the picnic they hosted for the village community to celebrate the Queen's birthday. Parents talk about St Faith's church being part of their community and the sense of belonging they have with the church, even if they don't live in the village. This sense of belonging is reflected in all aspects of school life and result in excellent relationships between the school and the wider Shellingford community.