

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Kimbolton St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	
Kimbolton, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0HQ	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Hereford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Herefordshire
Date of inspection	21 June 2018
Date of last inspection	5 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 116890
Executive Headteacher	Adam Breakwell
Inspector's name and number	Colin Howard 517

School context

St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a smaller than average rural primary. There are 82 pupils on roll. St James', along with another church school, is led by an executive headteacher. As well as serving its immediate catchment of Kimbolton it draws in pupils from the market town of Leominster. Almost all pupils are of a white British background. It has below average number of children eligible for free school meals and those whose first language is not English.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James' Kimbolton as a Church of England school are good

- The clear vision of the headteacher, governors and staff which contributes to promoting whole school improvement and effective teaching and learning about Christianity and the diversity of other cultures and faiths.
- The positive relationships between all members of the school community, allied with high levels of care, guidance and support leads to excellent behaviour, an inclusive learning environment and the effective support of children's personal and social development.
- Religious education (RE) is well led and make a significant contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character.

Areas to improve

- Involve the governors more formally in church school self-evaluation and its associated training so that they may more effectively drive forward the school's church status.
- Develop links with an urban school so as to provide opportunities for pupils to experience Christianity as part of a multi-cultural and faith world.
- Create a shared definition of spirituality so that individuals can express its impact upon their lives.
- Review the planned programme of worship so as to promote future pupil and parental involvement.

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

St James' core values which are linked to Christianity are truly evident in the life of this happy, caring school. It is a place where high quality relationships between all members of its community lead to excellent behaviour and support for children's personal and social development. The school is inclusive and has high expectations of how pupils should interact with one another. This is exemplified by the school's values and ethos statement which promote a desire to 'treat others as you would like them to treat you'. Parents acknowledge that pupils are happy and safe. Parents suggest the school has positive relationships which allows children to thrive. Pupils' understanding of diversity is enhanced by the school's links to Nambala primary school, Tanzania. This provides pupils with an opportunity to understand how people's lives can be different and how gender roles may vary in different countries. The school's Tanzanian links also serve to allow pupils to support their Christian charitable mission by fund raising to purchase grain so that individuals may become more self-sufficient. Multi-cultural days enable pupils to explore Christianity as part of a wider faith community. Ministers from other denominations such as the Baptist church deliver acts of worship. This allows the children to explore the range and diversity of the Christian faith. Pupils are reminded of the significance of their school's Christian character by the high quality of displays around the school. The children speak proudly of their illuminated Lord's prayer, whilst the 'Angels Tree' display allows pupils to consider the protection and guidance provided by God's messengers. Classrooms contain visually engaging displays which allow pupils to consider other faiths such as Judaism. The school has started upon its journey to promote an understanding of the concept of spirituality. This has included staff meeting time being given over to an exploration of the meaning of spirituality. The school community does not have a shared definition of spirituality on which they agree. This limits the extent to which individuals can articulate its impact on their daily lives. The school through its open door policy and supportive approaches such as 'attendance Ted' are keen to improve attendance levels for its pupils. Such strategies have a positive impact upon pupil attendance. Celebratory assemblies play an important role in acknowledging pupils' personal and academic achievements. This includes for example, celebrating pupils' written work.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

St James' holds daily acts of collective worship which are led by staff and the local clergy. These are clearly linked to biblical study. Children talk freely of their involvement in supporting the retelling of biblical stories, for example the Good Samaritan, as part of 'Open the Book' acts of worship. The current collective worship policy is accessible on the school's website and is up to date. This shows the value placed on its development. During collective worship seen pupils' behaviour was exemplary and this resulted in an extremely respectful engagement with worship. During the inspection, pupils sang beautifully and were keen to join in with celebrating their peers' achievements. Pupils were still during quiet reflection and these moments allowed the children time to reflect upon the Christian message being celebrated. Candles are lit and a focus table is prominently placed in the school hall along with other worship symbols. Though acts of worship are planned for, they are not regularly reviewed so as to promote future pupil and parental involvement. The big frieze linked to the Christian story is prominently displayed in the school hall. This helps to tie pupils' thoughts to the overtly Christian message of worship. The worship committee play an active role in shaping the content and format of worship. Acts of worship provide a focus for Christian festivals, beliefs and other faiths with the school community using St James' church for a range of services such as celebrating Christingle. Such acts of worship allow pupils to understand for example, that 'Jesus is the light of the world'. Parents value and have the opportunity to attend these acts of worship. They also cherish acts of worship that extend to sites of worship beyond that of the local parish church. For example, the joint prayer day and harvest service at the local priory. Pupils have an awareness of the Trinity and they are able to start to talk about this idea with some degree of understanding. Such a concept is reinforced by the lighting of a tri-wick candle during collective worship. The creation of prayer books and boxes in classrooms allow pupils to engage spontaneously with creating prayers. Pupils are proud of the prayers they have created and these are available for others to read in the school's prayer book and during the school day. Pupils talk of prayer as a means to 'sending a message up to heaven'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is viewed by the school as an important core subject. Work in RE books is good and allows children to reach a high standard of achievement comparable to English. The RE co-ordinator is extremely passionate and knowledgeable about the RE curriculum. It is well planned for and this ensures a full range of coverage of curriculum content. The RE co-ordinator benefits from working together with the RE co-ordinator of St James' partner school to drive forward new initiatives. For example, implementing the scheme of 'Understanding Christianity'. RE is therefore seen as being developmental and part of whole school improvement. The RE co-ordinator has correctly identified strengths and areas for development. The Hereford Agreed Syllabus combined with 'Understanding Christianity' provides opportunities for children to encounter a range of learning foci and

religious ideas. For example, work undertaken by pupils in years 5 and 6 has meant they have explored the big question 'What does it mean if God is holy and loving?' RE is well resourced and such items provide for a valuable contribution to Christian distinctiveness of the school. Teaching observed was predominately of a high standard. These lessons allowing for a deeper consideration of Christian stories and other cultures and faiths. The lessons observed were creative, engaging and fun. This included making plaited bread to understand its significance in the Jewish Sabbath, making Diwali lamps and acting out the story of David and Goliath. Such teaching allows pupils to become engaged learners who are lively participants in lessons. The school through its developing tracking system of RE has a good overview of pupil's attainment. These judgements are supported by the examination of books which are used to challenge the standards of pupil's written work. Pupils are positive about RE lessons and the school's creative teaching, which has resulted in children making good progress in RE from their starting points. Teaching through RE allows for pupils to develop an awareness and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. This is limited without links to the sort of urban school which can show them at first-hand how Christianity is part of a multi faith and cultural world. The teaching of RE makes good links to collective worship and this clearly impacts on the Christian values of the school.

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

The vision and drive of the headteacher, staff and governors leads to strong leadership and the promotion of high levels of Christian values in school life. As a result, the school is the heart and soul of the community. The headteacher's executive leadership of St James', alongside another local church school, is seen as being mutually beneficial. Staff from both schools share each other's good practice so as to continually drive forward whole school improvement. The school has positive, strong links between the local clergy and this serves to enhance the worshipful Christian life of the school. For example, this has meant the school community attending an Ascension Day service at one of the local surrounding parish churches and holding a Harvest Hunger lunch. Parents talk of a welcoming school suggesting it feels like a 'happy family' that has an 'open door policy'. St James' is extremely inclusive and parents support the development and promotion of its core values whole heartedly. These include values such as honesty and kindness. These are underpinned by links which are made to scripture. Documentation and additional information may be found on the school website relating to its church status. Pupils actively support national charitable works such as 'Children in Need'. The worship committee alongside the eco-committee also support the development of more school based initiatives such as their friendship benches. All of these examples allow pupils to promote and understand the school's Christian mission. These activities also help children to be actively involved in supporting the leadership drive for whole school improvement. Governors make regular visits to school and are dedicated to the school's wellbeing. They provide critical support to the headteacher and his leadership in order to promote the school's Christian values and vision. Governors have insufficient formal systems of self-evaluation in place so that they may drive forward the school's church status. Governors do not access the diocesan support available to them around their role and for Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist (SIAMS) school's training. RE is given a high priority by school leadership and this ensures suitable priorities are set for school improvement. The RE co-ordinator has had the opportunity to go on relevant training. This enhances the co-ordinator's leadership responsibilities and allows her to share current good practice. The school's leadership has successfully addressed the issues raised in the previous inspection and has accurate self-evaluation.

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