

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Newnham St Peter's Church of England (VA) Primary School

Station Road, Newnham, Gloucestershire GL14 1AT

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Gloucester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Date/s of inspection	16 January 2017
Date of last inspection	3 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 115694
Headteacher	Claire Cook
Inspector's name and number	Cottia Howard 898

School context

Newnham St Peter's Primary School is a smaller than average voluntary aided primary school. Pupils have varied socio-economic backgrounds and the majority are drawn from the rural community surrounding the village of Newnham. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of children joining the school after the start of reception, or leaving before the end of Year 6, is greater than the national average. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives extra support funding (Pupil Premium) is less than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newnham St Peter's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Leaders and governors work together as a strong team driven by a shared vision rooted in Christian values, and this enhances learning outcomes for all.
- The inclusive vision of the school ensures that all pupils are supported exceptionally well in their personal wellbeing.
- The strong links with the church enable pupils to understand the Christian view of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The rich curriculum, with regular opportunities for children to reflect, has a positive impact on spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Further develop the theological basis for the vision and values so all stakeholders appreciate and can relate the centrality of the teaching and example of Jesus to the school's Christian character.
- Widen children's involvement in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of collective worship in order to enhance their leadership skills and increase their sense of ownership.

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

There is a strong sense of Christian community evident in this caring and inclusive school. At its heart is the belief

that education should promote life in all its fullness for everyone. The four values of honesty, trust, tolerance and patience underpin all its work. Although the values are regarded as being rooted in the Bible, their theological basis is not fully explored or explained. The core values are complemented by a focus each term on an additional value, and together they make a significant impact on daily life. As a result, children's behaviour towards each other is thoughtful and considerate. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Children are very clear that the school has a Christian foundation, and say, 'we always help each other and we always use values'. They readily give examples of the values in action, describing being trusted with responsibility and being honest in sports competitions. Children understand the values in a broad Christian context, explaining that they 'come from God' and that 'they make you a better person'. They explain that their school is a place where 'we welcome all as children of God'. Parents appreciate the impact of the core values on their children, and acknowledge this as 'part of the culture'. They share in their children's joy at being recognised for showing the values. Pupils are supported well in their learning as a result of both the help that is given to each child and the belief in achievement for all. As a result, pupils with a variety of social, emotional and learning needs are successfully integrated in the school. Different teaching approaches and learning styles are planned deliberately to enable all children to access the curriculum. Consequently, progress is in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The impact of the Christian ethos of the school is clearly shown in the work of the pastoral support worker. She supports families and children, and has a clear focus on ensuring every child knows that they are valued. She sums up her work by saying, 'there is always hope'. Spiritual development has been a focus since the last inspection and is now very well planned throughout the curriculum. Children have regular opportunities to reflect and to work co-operatively through art, drama and dance. As a result, they are developing their ability to consider 'I wonder' questions, and are respectful and tolerant of others' views. Governors report that children make effective use of classroom reflection areas. The school is fundraising for a spiritual garden in order to provide an outside space for thinking and praying. Religious education (RE) makes a highly effective contribution to the school's Christian character and has a high profile in the school. Children describe the subject as 'fun' and enjoy learning about Christianity and other faiths. They have a developing knowledge of Christianity as a world-wide faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is distinctively Christian and plays a central part in school life. It has a discernible impact on pupil attitudes and behaviour. Children state that it teaches them 'how to be more mature'. Planning for worship is based on Christian values and on key events in both the Christian and the school year. During collective worship, Bible stories are used to illustrate the term's value, and pupils reflect on how they can show the value in school. As a consequence, children's understanding of the relevance of the values to their daily lives is deepened. Use of a worship table, candles and music creates a quiet, reverent atmosphere, which pupils respond to respectfully and attentively. Hymns and worship songs are chosen with care to enhance understanding of Christian values. Children and staff sing them with conviction and enjoyment. Children are confident about describing the cross and candles as Christian symbols and explain the fish on their school badge in the context of the Bible. They appreciate the central place of Jesus in worship and describe him as 'the light of the world' who 'looks around everyone'. Elements of Anglican worship, such as lighting candles, displaying different colours for the seasons of the church year and the use of opening and closing sentences with responses are all well-embedded in school practice. The termly celebration of the achievement of everyone, known as the Festival of Mistakes, is influential in raising aspirations. Prayer is important, not only in worship, but also in the everyday life of the school. The Lord's Prayer, a lunchtime prayer and the school's own prayer are used frequently. Children describe prayer as when 'you can talk to God, and God talks to you.' Prayer beads of different colours are used in worship and throughout the day, and this has led to an understanding of the different purposes of prayer. Younger children give examples such as, 'you could say a prayer for yourself if someone hurt your feelings.' They also talk confidently about prayer being linked to forgiveness, and say, 'no matter what bad things you do, even if you do it a thousand times, God will still forgive you'. The vicar leads worship each week in school and is involved in planning worship themes. The impact of the support he gives the school is evident in the level of understanding of the Trinity shown by children. The vicar also supports the work of the children's worship committee. This group of older children plan and lead worship with infant classes. They take their responsibilities seriously and are aware of the impact they have on the younger children, explaining, 'in our stories we have morals and they follow them.' Pupils' involvement in other aspects of worship is less well developed. Monitoring and evaluation takes place through the use of pupil reflection journals and informs planning for improvement. Pupils enjoy attending worship at the local church every month. Special church services, for example celebrating harvest, Christmas and Easter are well attended by family members. There is wider community involvement through fortnightly Open the Book worship and through joint events such as the Remembrance service. Surveys show that parents and carers believe worship has a positive impact on their children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is explicitly underpinned by Christian values and has a high profile in the school. Good and outstanding teaching means that children make outstanding progress in the subject, reaching standards at least in line with, and often exceeding, national expectations. The RE curriculum is imaginative and exciting, both in terms of the learning opportunities provided and the teaching approaches used. For example, children in Years 1 and 2 develop their understanding of Hinduism through dance. Older children use drama to help them explore questions such as 'was Jesus the Messiah?' Art and outdoor learning also contribute to a rich curriculum that engages the children. This creative approach is very effective in ensuring all pupils are able to access learning and make progress. RE is planned in blocks and is taught as a separate subject within the school's 'challenge curriculum'. Each block has a common theme across the school, with an overarching aim linked to Christian values and to an aspect of the school's vision. For example, work on 'Harvest' centres on the idea of a community where each person's contribution is valuable. Through their learning, the children are able to link Christian concerns for the planet with their own hopes for the future. Children develop and apply skills of enquiry in the subject effectively. They investigate the Gospels for references to the Christian concept of the Trinity and explain that this means Father, Son and Holy Spirit 'as one'. Younger children talk about Jesus as the Son of God and can relate the school's core values to a Bible story. Older children discuss Bible passages with confidence and are able to explain the significance of light as a metaphor in both Christianity and Islam. Teachers' planning is thorough and takes account of misconceptions in previous learning. This ensures that learning is well-matched to the needs of all pupils. Planning for spiritual, moral and cultural development in RE lessons has a significant impact on children's responses, which are thoughtful and considered. Older children explain how the 'stilling' (a short time of silent reflection they do in every RE lesson) is helpful to their learning and to the way they are able to develop in the subject. Assessment is well-organised and methodical. Teachers moderate their judgements through 'floor books' which show progression through the school for each RE block. Children's self-assessment, however, is less well developed. The RE subject leader is enthusiastic and effective. She monitors teaching and learning rigorously and works with the governors to produce regular action plans which identify specific areas for improvement. She has an excellent long-term vision for the implementation of the new Understanding Christianity materials.

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

The committed leadership of the headteacher drives a vision for the school as a place where all can succeed. Senior staff explain passionately how the work they do reflects the Church of England's vision for education to promote life in all its fullness. Together with a committed and well-informed chair of governors, they form a strong team dedicated to 'learning together, achieving forever', which is the school's strapline. The work to raise aspirations and raise the achievement of all pupils has resulted in the award of the Achievement for All Quality Mark. Children, staff, governors and parents recognise the importance of the core Christian values. They acknowledge that they form the foundations of the school's inclusive ethos. Children who are more vulnerable are given exceptional care and support. They are offered every chance to succeed through the care offered by all staff. Consequently, children feel loved and valued. Governors have a thorough understanding of how the school's vision and values underpin its work. They are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. They gather evidence of the school's Christian distinctiveness very effectively through the work of committees, and their findings inform action plans. When new approaches to learning are planned, governors check to ensure these are in line with the school's Christian ethos and core values. Particular attention is paid to seeking the opinions of children. The view of pupils that they should be acknowledged for showing the core values is now reflected in the awarding of a certificate. The governors have a clear long term vision to develop the school by widening the Christian community through strengthening and growing partnerships. Learning across the challenge curriculum is enhanced by a number of children's working groups, including the school council and the behaviour and Fairtrade committees. As a result, children have a clear idea of what it means to work together as a Christian community. Their understanding of local, national and global issues is also strengthened by the school's involvement in the Global Learning Programme and by links with schools in London and Kenya. The vicar is a regular visitor to school and is well known by the children. His theological expertise supports staff development, and he runs an oversubscribed 'Monday club' for children, which explores scripture through craft activities. The school makes good use of support from the diocese, using resources and training for staff and governors. Parents are supportive of the school and say they are able to contribute to its life. They are regularly involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness through surveys. This was an area for development identified in the last inspection and has been effectively addressed. Parents understand and appreciate the school's vision as not being 'all about academic brilliance, but about behaviour, attitude and best endeavours.' Parents and carers value the additional help given to more vulnerable children. They speak very highly of the outstanding work of the pastoral support worker which they see as 'echoing the values'. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet the statutory requirements.