

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Colwall Church of England (VC) Primary School

Mill Lane, Colwall, Malvern, WR13 6EQ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Hereford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Herefordshire
Date inspection	8 February 2018
Date of last inspection	26 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 116797
Headteacher	Helen Webb
Inspector's name and number	Revd Huw Bishop 344

Context

The school has 160 pupils on roll. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a small number are from other ethnic groups. A small but significant number of pupils are supported through additional government funding known as the Pupil Premium grant. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Since the last inspection, there have been changes in senior leadership as well as the opening of a new school building. It was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2017 and judged to be continuing to offer pupils a good standard of education.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Colwall Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- This Church school family nurtures each individual person. As a result of effective leadership at all levels, pupils and adults now thrive emotionally and spiritually in a stimulating learning environment, underpinned by the Christian values of faith hope and love.
- The outstanding and principled leadership of the headteacher, which is recognised by pupils and parents as offering stability, security and renewed direction for the school community and drives forward its journey of learning and faith.
- The effective leadership of collective worship and religious education (RE) which plays a key role in expressing the school's inclusive Christian character and pupils' personal development.
- The focused partnership with the Rector and parish of St James's Church that enriches the worshipping life of this school.
- Pupils who have a good attitude to learning. Behaviour and relationships are good because the children look out for each other with a strong sense of empathy from belonging to this church school family.

Areas to improve

- Embed the monitoring of Christian distinctiveness by the whole school community, so that this key aspect of church school development is understood by all through shared evaluation.
- Deepen learning in RE, with a clear focus on key Christian concepts, festivals and specific Anglican traditions and practice so that pupils can show confidence in their understanding of their knowledge and the importance of these aspects in the Christian character of the school

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

Colwall Primary School is a successful and inclusive school which, through its Christian values, builds on its strengths to create a school that embodies its motto as 'a place of great learning and great love'. It is undoubtedly a safe and caring Christian environment which has a friendly family feel and where pupils are nurtured and are empowered to nurture each other too. The school has developed a strong core of Christian and school values in consultation with pupils and as such, pupils' unique personalities are encouraged to develop and grow. Pupils develop leadership skills in school through positions of responsibility as house captains, school council members and Year 6 Directors. These skills contribute to pupils' moral development, good behaviour and relationships which are based on the qualities of forgiveness and justice. This positive behaviour policy has been reviewed and reinforced recently as the school moved in to its new building. Pupils and staff wear slippers in the building – this has a dual purpose of emphasising the 'at home' feel of the school as well as preserving the life and quality of the soft furnishings! Pupils' chosen values of respect, aspiration, resilience, responsibility, community and compassion underpin all school policy and practice. Pupils clearly respect each other and comment, 'we try to make everyone happy'. Although the school has experienced some challenging times, parents and pupils have remained resilient. They confidently say that the headteacher's leadership and her Christian commitment has put renewed 'heart and soul' into the school's distinctive Christian ethos and the wholesome success pupils now enjoy. Attendance is high because pupils want to be in school. The recent Ofsted inspection confirmed that 'pupils make good progress and enjoy learning'.

The school's Christian vision is that every pupil is treated as unique and so all pupils feel valued. Also, pupils collect gems for demonstrating values around the school day by day. They take their collected gems to present at the celebration worship each week. Foundation governors, including the Rector of St James's Church, see themselves very much as part of the school team and have an important presence and engagement in the school. As well as leading worship, the Rector has helped with classes in RE, whilst other parishioners come to school to help with pupils' reading and other activities. Pupils are helped to grow in their social understanding, awareness and respect for diverse communities through Christian action in raising money for various local and international charities, including supporting pupils in personal endeavours. Pupils supported one of their peers who was raising money to support a local hospital where she was being treated. Pupils are also helped to be aware of the diversity of different cultures and communities specifically through their RE work. More locally, pupils use St James's Church for seasonal worship and are joined for these events by their parents. The school also has growing links with a local community church. The school is mindful of extending such experiences to enrich pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The RE leader is a member of the school's senior leadership team and this ensures that the subject has a high profile and is recognised by pupils as an important part of their learning. The school also recognises the need to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of certain areas of learning in RE, including specific features of Anglican belief and practice.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship at Colwall is distinctively Christian and evokes a sense of gathering and believing. It has a focus on the person of Jesus Christ and the Trinity through the use of biblical material. Worship is inclusive, spiritual and accessible and makes a good impact upon reinforcing and embedding Christian values within school life. Worship is led currently by senior leaders and the Rector, although extending this leadership to include other Christian denominations and faiths is already planned by the school. Pupils are engaged and sing enthusiastically in worship. Lighted candles are used as a focal point to emphasise God's presence. Pupil involvement in leading worship is seen through their participation in lighting the candles and leading prayers. Collective worship is planned thematically using Christian and the school's values. These are often connected to Bible stories. They are also rooted in both British and Christian values for life. As a result, worship creates a good learning environment through its moral messages which influence pupils' actions, attitudes and behaviour. Pupils have a positive attitude to worship because it relates to their understanding of Christian values. Pupils, through the school council, regularly discuss and review worship and help to plan key events. The school has recently introduced RE ambassadors to represent pupils in delivering elements of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development but it is too early to evaluate its impact. Key Christian festivals are celebrated in St. James's church which reinforces the spiritual link between church and school. This is not sufficiently linked to the RE curriculum to support pupils' personal spiritual journeys. The church also supports the school by leading Messy Church as an after school club.

Pupils' spiritual development is reinforced and encouraged through focused displays and artefacts for display in the foyer and hall. This is limited at present because of the recent move to the new building. It is also supported through prayer and reflection areas in classrooms which visually express the school's Christian distinctiveness. Prayer is an important part of school life. Pupils use prayer trees and prayer stones to help them to reflect and classes have written their own prayers for lunchtime and the end of the day. In some classes there are prayer

leaders who lead the others when reciting. Pupils are provided with a range of approaches for reflection and quiet prayer. Samuel, the school's 'prayer bear' has helped pupils to become more confident in private prayer – 'he listens to pupils' prayers and keeps them safe just as God listened to Samuel in the Bible'. Pupils spoken to during the inspection understand the purpose of and the impact that prayer has in their lives. Similarly with staff and parents who said how privileged and uplifted they felt when, during difficult times, they knew that prayers were being offered in school on their behalf. Evaluation records of worship from pupils' questionnaires provide some feedback to enable staff to have a clearer indication of how to plan and improve the overall quality of worship. The school plans to develop class and pupil led worship to include parents and the community now that they have a more suitable worship space.

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

The headteacher, supported well by other leaders, is committed to the school's Anglican foundation. Her personal faith is very evident and drives the school's vision forward. This allows her to model Christian distinctiveness and reinforce the same high expectations from her staff. It also enables the school's Christian ethos to flourish, particularly in difficult times. The simple vision of 'Loving and Learning' is shared and has a profound impact upon the school and is recognised by pupils and the wider Christian community. Parents, those of faith and of none, know that the distinctive Christian values are core to the school's vision and mission even though their understanding of exactly what that means may be more defined by a personal view. However, this knowledge does recognise a Christian caring ethos that is reflected by the whole school community.

The move to the new school building has given the school an opportunity to re-invent itself and the chance to ensure that the distinctive Christian root of all learning is explicitly interpreted and embedded in everything the school does. This work is already under way. The Rector, as a regular visitor, nurtures the close links that exist between church and school. Leaders have a challenging view of the future developmental needs of this school. They are supportive of the strategic drive to continue to improve academic progress for pupils and their wellbeing and the need to securely develop and embed the Christian distinctiveness. These decisions are informed by the school's Christian mission to the community and impacts on the way that the school is enabled to live out its Christian vision. Currently, a self-evaluation process to monitor Christian distinctiveness does not extend to the wider school community.

A significant contribution by the headteacher has already strengthened the capacity to plan for future development including planning for future church school leadership by teachers at the school. Collective worship and RE are led well and the creativity allowed for in the delivery of worship allows for an enthusiasm which radiates through to the staff and pupils. A structured planning of collective worship to foster a deeper theological understanding of Christian festivals is not well developed. RE is effective in fostering and enhancing self-awareness and respect of Christian values and beliefs. RE also develops an understanding and knowledge of other world faiths such as Hinduism and Islam. Pupils' books are scrutinised and standards monitored by senior leaders which ensures that RE has a high profile within the school.

Purposeful partnerships exist with the wider community which helps to meet pupils' learning needs and there is a will to build a further proactive relationship with the diocese to secure a deeper embedding of Christian distinctiveness. Relationships with parents are positive and effective which enhances pupils' learning experience. One parent commented, 'my child feels loved in this school'. Parents are confident and happy with the school as a church school and state that their requests and issues are dealt with efficiently and appropriately so that pupils' needs are met. Parents appreciate the care and concern shown to their children and the very professional way in which staff work. Parents know the school is a safe and secure environment which enables their children to flourish socially, spiritually and academically. Development issues from the previous inspection have been met in part and have secured recent improvements, but these need to be embedded deeply to maximise their effect. Collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements.

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