

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Burbage Church of England Infant School

Grove Road
Burbage
Hinckley
LE10 2AE

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Leicestershire
Date of inspection	21 March 2017
Date of last inspection	21 March 2014
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 120121
Headteacher	Karen Allen
Inspector's name and number	Sheila Grice (165)

School context

Burbage Church of England Infant school is oversubscribed, with 274 children presently on roll. Children are predominantly White and British. The school receives pupil premium funding for a small number of children compared with other schools nationally. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below the national average. However, an increasing number of children are entering school in reception with complex needs. There has been no change in senior leadership since the last inspection but the incumbent at St Catherine's church has only been in post eighteen months.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Burbage Infants as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values are embedded in all aspects of school life with the result that children have a very good understanding of how these values impact on their own achievement and behaviour.
- The Christian distinctiveness of the school has been transformed because of the strengthened relationship between the school and the local parish church.
- Collective worship is of a very high quality and inclusive, engaging children and adults.
- Opportunities provided through collective worship and across the curriculum impact significantly on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).

Areas to improve

- Embed a systematic, formal method of evaluating the school's distinctive Christian character, collective worship and religious education (RE), which involves all groups of the school community in order to inform future development planning.
- Revisit the vision and aims so that they fully reflect the school's strong Christian character.
- Increase opportunities for children to plan and lead acts of worship so that the quality of worship is further enhanced.

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

This school is very good at nurturing, encouraging and challenging learners so that they achieve their very best. Children enter school in line with expected levels. They make good progress and usually they achieve above national levels when they leave school at the end of Year 2. Although there was a dip in results last year, staff have worked tirelessly to ensure new assessments are accurate and there are very good systems in place to ensure all children achieve well. The values promoted by the school, which are linked to the 5 school rules, are now distinctly Christian and clearly linked to the teachings of Jesus. Consequently, children have a very good understanding of what the values mean, how they link to Bible stories and the difference they make to their lives. This also impacts on their behaviour at home and one parent spoke of how their child has changed as a direct result of learning about forgiveness at school. Their child is now kinder, more thoughtful and able to forgive others when they make her sad. Staff and governors are united in their understanding of the importance of the school's Christian character which is clearly evident in relationships, policies and practice across school. However, this distinctively Christian character is not yet reflected in the school's aims and visions which were written some time ago. Genuine love and care is shown to every child, their family and members of staff. The fact that staff 'go the extra mile' is really appreciated by parents who may be experiencing difficult times in their lives. There is a wealth of displays throughout school, both inside and out, which proudly proclaim the Christian nature of this school. Children love coming to this school where, 'Everything is perfect and I know I can tell my worries to God and to the teachers and things will get sorted out.' Children display excellent behaviour, respect and attitudes towards learning and they benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their own spirituality by using interactive reflective areas in each classroom, the willow structure, attendance at gardening club, or through collective worship. The school has an agreed definition of spirituality which is that, 'spirituality is a relationship with God as creator'. Children are developing an understanding that they can have a relationship with God, 'who loves us and cares for all of us, he even forgives us when we've done something wrong'. Children show a great care and empathy for others which is shown in their relationships within school and their generosity in supporting charities which include Save the Children, LOROS, St Catherine's shoebox appeal, a school in India and Syrian refugee children. RE contributes significantly towards children's SMSC development and the introduction of a more creative, practical approach towards RE provides good opportunities for children to think, question and articulate their ideas.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

High quality collective worship which enriches the lives of both adults and children, is clearly at the heart of this school community. There is a strong focus now on biblical teaching and consequently children are developing a good understanding of Bible stories which, 'helps me learn not to do things which would make God sad- like the brother being jealous in the story of the Prodigal Son'. The attitude of children towards worship is extremely positive because they are actively engaged in worship and it supports their spiritual development. There is a clear structure in worship which enables all children to be fully engaged and familiar with what is happening. Prayer and stories form an integral part of worship and the quality of singing enables children and staff to 'really feel the presence of God'. Prayers displayed in class, reflection books and on the prayer tree, show that children are confident to write sensitive and thoughtful prayers. Prayer is the 'heartbeat' of the school and children like to share their prayers in assembly. However, the governor's values committee has identified that there are not currently opportunities for children to plan and lead worship on a regular basis. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian, due to thoughtful and detailed planning and children are developing a very good understanding of the Christian calendar. They are learning about Anglican practice by using greetings, blessings and dismissals which are also used at St Catherine's, liturgical colours and the celebration of key Christian events like Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. Children can recognise and talk confidently about the Trinity following explicit teaching and they are developing their understanding of God as, 'God the Father, Jesus the Son who died for us and the Holy Spirit which God gives us and is a part inside us.' Staff also appreciate collective worship which provides them with a 'time to reflect with our loving family all coming together'. Children are learning that worship 'is fun' as well as a time for learning, talking to God and a time to think. The headteacher is the collective worship coordinator and supported by the deputy and incumbent, she has been instrumental in ensuring that collective worship is continually improving. For example, following discussions within the governors' values committee, the agreed structure of worship now reflects Anglican practice. The very strong partnership with the incumbent has enabled staff to significantly enrich the range of collective worship, including outdoor worship for Remembrance Day and more practical and participatory elements such as washing feet on Maundy Thursday and blessing each child with the cross on Ash Wednesday. There is a 'real richness' of worship which is valued by children, staff and parents.

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

All leaders in school articulate a distinctively Christian vision for the school but this is not reflected in the vision statement. However, they are clear how the Christian values encompass all areas of school life, including behaviour, relationships and the love shown towards adults and children. Staff and governors speak of the huge difference over recent years and the 'growing confidence' of staff in promoting the school's Christian ethos. This is a very happy school where relationships are extremely strong. Leaders are focussed on school improvement and the governors' values committee has been pivotal in identifying the school's strengths and areas for development. It has been instrumental in securing changes, particularly in the quality of collective worship and in promoting and celebrating the school's Christian ethos. However, much of the evidence base for change is anecdotal and there is no formal method of systematically collecting evidence from children, staff and parents in order to identify priorities for the school development plan and secure highly effective practice in all areas. The development plan does include a section on Christian character but this is not linked to an agreed formal monitoring programme so that clear evidence is gathered for the impact of any changes. The teaching of RE has undergone significant changes over the past few years and time is now needed to fully embed the new curriculum, along with the 'Understanding Christianity' resource, so that there is highly effective practice across school. Full advantage has been taken by staff and governors of training offered by the diocese which ensures staff and governors are well supported in their roles. Governors encourage and challenge the school very effectively, working extremely closely with staff. Parents speak very positively about the benefits of their children attending a church school and last year's parental questionnaire overwhelmingly shows that parents consider the school has a distinctly Christian character which is appropriate for their children. They like the fact their children can express their views and opinions about Christianity and other faiths openly in lessons. Links with St Catherine's and other local churches are very good, offering mutual benefit to all. The whole school community speak enthusiastically about very positive relationships with St Catherine's and the impact of this can be seen both in school and in church. Families connected with school are choosing to be christened and married in St Catherine's church and some staff members choose to have funerals of their loved ones in St Catherine's – a truly symbiotic relationship has developed. All the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and the school is well placed to continue to develop as a church school.

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