

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bishop Cornish Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Lynher Drive, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4PA

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Truro |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Date of inspection | 9 October 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 9 October 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Aided Primary 112034 |
| Headteacher | Sue Green |
| Inspector's name and number | Revd David Hatrey 844 |

School context

Bishop Cornish Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is an average-sized school with 208 on role. The majority of children come from a White British heritage. The number of children who are entitled to pupil premium support is below national averages, whilst the children who have special educational needs is in-line with national averages. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Cornish Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values, worship, religious education, spirituality are creatively and intrinsically woven together so children have exciting daily experiences which enrich their lives and understanding so they want to live these out in this caring Christian community.
- Children are fully engaged and enjoy worship with music providing an excellent range of opportunities to express their responses to God.
- Leadership is visionary and passionate about the work of a church school and Christian distinctiveness stands out in all they do.

Areas to improve

- Extend the use of 'Godly Play' so children develop their responses to questions of meaning and purpose using the higher order thinking skills.
- Strengthen the children's understanding of the school's Christian vision so they are confident to articulate this and recognise where this is evident in their daily lives.

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

Christian distinctiveness is outstanding because Christian values and spirituality are so creatively woven together that children are immersed in experiences which have a profound impact on their lives and achievements. This is evident where children make connections between ideas in collective worship about creation and link this to spirituality. A range of Christian values are explored; friendship, compassion, humility, perseverance, respect, thankfulness, justice, wisdom, service, courage, hope and trust. Children know and live out values on a daily basis and see this as natural. They talk confidently about values explaining what they look like in school. A frequent comment was they recognise values shape the family community that they feel part of even after they leave. They recognise peers demonstrating values and nominate them for a values certificate. This is not a reward rather a recognition. Biblical stories are drawn upon to explain the distinctive Christian nature of values, children's knowledge of these is a strength. Staff encourage children to consider what would Jesus do in any situation; which older children reflect upon. Children understand that values are given to us by God, this, "helps us to make the right choices," was a recurring response. Many see Jesus as a role model who guides us to make, "a better world." Children's depth of understanding of Christian values is consistently enhanced through the quality and nurture of the staff's relationship with them. Behaviour is excellent, whilst relationships between children stand out, they show respect and celebrate others' success. The use of restorative justice enables children to reflect on the impact of their actions and together overcome issues. Through a deepening understanding of values children develop an awareness of being special to God. Children develop excellent attitudes to learning informed by values so they persist with challenges and want to be successful. Recent results indicate children make very good progress with significant numbers of children achieving the higher levels of attainment across all core subjects. The Pupil Premium champion and special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) ensure the diverse needs of children are effectively met. Their nurture is excellent and enables disadvantaged children to make comparable progress with their peers and develop confidence in their own ability. The school has repeatedly built upon good practice in spirituality to offer rich experiences. This is an integral part of learning with strands of this running strongly through all subjects. For example, in RE individual extension questions challenge and deepen children's thinking, where they reflect on God and what this means for them. The farm provides wonder moments to explore the beauty of creation as children care for animals, from alpacas to goats. The youngest children are amazed to see chicks hatch, which prompts questions and ideas so they develop a language of creation. High quality experiences are identified in planning; children consider what the kingdom of heaven might be like expressing this through art. Other opportunities involve drama or song, whilst staff make full use of spontaneous moments to extend this. The school's booklet, '50 spiritual experiences to do at school' is a superb visual starting point. Staff visits to diocesan link projects in Africa are thoughtfully shared with children increasing their awareness of how different cultures shape lives. The best examples of children's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith are seen through the different styles of music and worship. These were introduced to show how Christians celebrate their faith. Use of different instruments and styles brings this to life. The impact of the school's Christian ethos is evident in the remarkable number of children who sought confirmation last year. A further example is seen in pupils who returned to school to share what the school meant to them. Children are baptised in school, whilst weddings are acted out so children appreciate the role of the local church in supporting each person's spiritual journey.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is outstanding because of the quality and children's involvement in worship through music which engages them so that this is a special time. The music leader inspires children's interest and responses through singing and music, creatively weaving children's thoughts into new songs reinforcing their understanding. Worship is regarded as making a response to God. Children sing enthusiastically, leading many elements of worship, notably the junk band who have led worship at Truro cathedral. Their enjoyment is clear! A termly Eucharist is held, using a vibrant African setting or contemplative Celtic style. Children contribute through readings, songs and prayers. Those who do not receive communion share bread at the end of the service. Thoughtful comments by children show they feel part of a family and close to God. The way Christian festivals are explored is a strength. Evaluations by governors and children recognise the impact of the Easter Passion Service. This moving account stimulates questions and brings to life Jesus' death. Children have a detailed knowledge of festivals and explain their significance for Christians. Children enjoy making contributions to worship, involved in drama through the 'Open the Book' worship. Worship leaders plan and lead worship sharing messages which are meaningful to all. Governors welcome school council children to their meetings sharing thoughts about collective worship which strengthens governors' monitoring. For instance, children requested they sang as the school come into worship. Children talk about the relevance of worship, perceiving how it supports their development of values, but equally how it relates to daily life. Children's knowledge of Bible stories is yet another strong feature. Children explain stories in considerable detail,

the 'act parables week' enabled classes to create dramas so children understood their meaning. Older children shared their deepening ideas of Trinity using different images, suggesting what the nature of the Trinity could be. Prayer is sensitively taught, children are aware of the different aspects of prayer and use these thoughtfully. Older children's ideas show a growing maturity. Reflection spaces are another new initiative. These are held termly and provide a series of workshops considering a season which classes explore, which children find thought provoking.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education is outstanding because of the impressive standards children achieve and the contribution it makes to the Christian ethos. This enables children to make links between Jesus' teaching and how we treat each other. The vast majority of children attain age-related expectations with significant numbers achieving the higher levels. Their attainment compares very well with national expectations and other core subjects. Children articulate their ideas well, making connections between values and RE, recognising how difficult it can be to always forgive. Tracking effectively identifies children who require additional support, their work shows that this helps them to make progress similar to their peers. The quality of teaching is at least good and there are a number of examples of outstanding practice. Teachers show a good subject knowledge and a passion to explore RE. Senior leaders undertake rigorous observations, with feedback on strengths and an aspect to develop. Through support these are followed up so the impact of teaching continues to rise. This is evident in the diversity of approaches used. 'Godly Play' encourages a reflective approach. For example, children in Year 2 considered creation and our care of the planet. The use of 'I wonder' questions, such as; "I wonder what God felt like when He made creation?" develops children's thinking and how they might respond. This approach however is not fully developed in other year groups. Experiences outside of the class using the environment make strong links to spirituality. Children use different ways to record ideas, including drama or singing which reinforces their understanding. This has further been enhanced through the introduction of new resources for planning where an enquiry based approach is becoming established. These pose 'big' questions of meaning and purpose, children are encouraged to share their ideas, listening to others and refining their own opinions and being able to justify their conclusions. Responses from children consistently indicate that they enjoy RE, perceiving the contribution it makes to their thinking. The coordinator brings knowledge and experience to leadership of RE. The introduction of the new resources has brought greater clarity to planning with clear progression in concepts. Assessment helps the coordinator to identify areas to be developed. RE develops knowledge of other world faiths through first hand experiences, enabling children to develop an empathy as to how they celebrate their faith. Children make insightful comparisons between these and Christianity which leads them to show a high degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views.

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

Leadership and management is outstanding because it is inspirational and completely dedicated to the life of a church school. This enables children to perceive the contribution spirituality and worship make to their lives. The new headteacher has maintained the high quality provision the school offers and is building upon this, by deepening children's awareness of the school's Christian vision, "Esteem and educate" and their understanding as being children of God. Governors and leadership proclaim a distinctive Christian vision securely based upon the Gospel and reflecting Jesus' teaching. The school aims for children to experience being part of a caring Christian community, adopting and living these principles on a daily basis. Children are developing a secure understanding of this vision and talk confidently about what the school wants them to become. Several talk about following Jesus and learning from Him on their journey of life. Others shared how this gave them a passion about particular environmental issues and the desire to act. The governors have a strategic development plan for 2016-2020 to further embed the work of this vision, this is already making a significant contribution but is not yet fully achieved. Another recent initiative is the appointment of a Pupil Premium champion who along with the SENCO provides effective support for a range of children, notably socially and emotionally. Discussions with staff indicate that they see teaching not just as a career but rather a Christian vocation, whereby they use their talents to support others, just as Jesus would. This vision is clearly seen in the way the school responds to families who are going through traumatic times, supporting both practically and spiritually. Monitoring and evaluation is rigorously undertaken. Governors enhance this through their own visits, discussions with children and with children attending governors' meetings. They take their role seriously with actions to raise the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Examples include the plan to enrich the understanding of all the Christian values and introduce reflection spaces. The head works alongside other staff as they prepare for future leadership roles in church schools. Excellent relationships exist with the diocese, who use the school to demonstrate numerous examples of outstanding practice. Church and school are closely bound, they share worship and church members make a fine contribution to governance.