

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| Bomere Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School | |
| The Crescent Bomere Heath Shrewsbury SY4 3PQ | |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Diocese | Lichfield |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Shropshire |
| Date of inspection | 6 th July 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | May 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Controlled Primary 123495 |
| Executive Headteacher | Julie Ball |
| Inspector's name and number | Reverend Alison M. Morris 759 |

School context

Bomere Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a small village primary school. There are 119 pupils on roll aged from 4-11 years. It serves the village of Bomere Heath. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils represent other cultures. The school has a strong reputation in the local community and links with Holy Trinity Church. The school federated with a local school in November 2015. The executive headteacher leads both schools, with each school managed on a daily basis by a deputy.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bomere Heath as a Church of England school are good

- Insightful and effective leadership by the executive headteacher who is motivated by her personal faith and is instrumental in the creation of an inclusive, welcoming and harmonious Christian community.
- The effective implementation of Understanding Christianity in religious education (RE) which plays a key role in expressing the school's inclusive Christian character, seen particularly in the pupils' ability to speak about Christian values and how they impact upon their daily life within the school.
- Significant and purposeful relationships between the clergy, the church and the school nurture and foster the Christian distinctiveness within the wider school community.

Areas to improve

- Engage all governors in the process of implementing more rigour and a robust formal system of monitoring for church school development which is in line with the process for monitoring core subjects.
- Foster further partnerships and strategies which will allow pupils to encounter lifestyles from different faith traditions to deepen pupils understanding of a multi-faith and multi-cultural world.
- Engage pupils in the process of planning, leading and evaluation worship to refine and further develop the expression of worship as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

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

A distinctive Christian character and ethos are immediately apparent. Core Christian values, such as hope, love and respect, which are rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, are being successfully embedded into all aspects of this happy and successful school. The Christian vision, which is clearly rooted in explicit Christian values, is impacting upon the Christian distinctiveness and character. This strong and clear vision permeates both policy and practice. This is articulated by the school community. A statement from the mission statement 'Our pupils are the heart of everything we do', reflects the Christian vision and the values that emanate from this that enhance pupils' learning. Staff are supportive of all pupils and strive towards an inclusive practice within a Christian ethos. Pastoral care in this welcoming, nurturing school family ensures Christian values are modelled well. Pupils are encouraged and inspired to enjoy their learning and to achieve well. High expectations by all staff enable pupils to have positive attitudes to learning and to reach full potential. All are treated with dignity and valued so that individual pupil needs are met. Effective intervention programmes, such as Volcanoes in my Tummy and exemplary nurture provision have a direct life-changing impact on all pupils and particularly those with deep seated needs. Good use of The Beach Hut successfully provides quiet time and support for pupils to become independent in dealing with personal difficulties. The awarding of the Gold SEN Quality Mark reflects the effective practice. Pupils do achieve consistently well, in line with or above national expectations. Relationships are very good, showing how Christian values are used by pupils' as they work and play co-operatively together. For example, older pupils lead Jumping Jax activities for younger ones. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is effective, the latter being effectively promoted in RE as well as embedded in the school ethos. It is nourished and challenged by core Christian values. Older pupils understand what it means to be a pupil at a church school and make the link to Christian teaching in the Bible. Pupils are secure in their understanding of core values. For example, one pupil said, 'You treat people as you like to be treated'. Four school councils encourage pupils to take responsibility in the school through representation. Pupils participate in the mission of the wider community through fundraising for charities such as the Deaf awareness charity. Pupils are proud of their school. They are polite and courteous. Pupils want to achieve well and are motivated to attend school because the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school are very good. Both the behaviour policy and system is underpinned by Christian values, positive responses and a clear reward system. The Shropshire Agreed Syllabus for RE provides an effective learning scheme so that pupils have a deeper respect of Christian values and beliefs. It also impacts on Christian distinctiveness through its links made between the beliefs, practices and value systems. Very effective implementation of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource has provided the space for pupils to express their thoughts and opinions in a deeper and philosophical manner. They demonstrate fluency in their ability to explain their belief and to consider the 'big' questions about life and faith. Pupils' knowledge of the Christian story is good with some understanding of other faiths. Classrooms have worship tables, multi-faith symbols showing an appreciation of diversity and 'worship walls' which, when, used effectively, make a significant contribution to spiritual development. Displays in the foyer such as 'The Lost Sheep' and the RE through art project express the school's Christian distinctiveness. Pupils have a strong Christian identity. They are starting to think globally and to be culturally aware of diversity within the world. Around the school, displays which focus on world faiths, such as Judaism, enhance understanding and encourage discussion. Current effective strategies to celebrate diversity include links with Wrekin College, and sports activities with Adcote school. The school recognises the need, however, to enhance further pupils' knowledge and understanding of other world religions to prepare them for life in a multi-faith society. A peaceful and purposeful atmosphere is promoting a learning environment which has the capacity to raise achievement further.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily worship is distinctively Christian and evokes a sense of gathering. It has a strong focus on the person of Jesus Christ and the Trinity. Using a biblical approach with explicit Christian values, worship, through its moral messages, influences pupils' actions and behaviour. This creates a very good learning environment which enables pupils to learn well. It makes some contribution to pupils' spiritual development through reinforcing Christian values. Worship is received enthusiastically by pupils who enjoy it and are positively engaged by it. The varieties of worship experiences are appropriate and significant to the pupils' needs, age, development and interests. An additional activity such as 'Open the Book' broadens pupils' knowledge of Bible stories and reflects the increasing impact that worship has upon the pupils' understanding of worship. As a result, pupil attitudes to worship are good because it provides some meaningful experiences that are rooted in Christian beliefs. A lighted candle representing the Trinity is used as a focal point, with other Christian artefacts and Anglican symbols or liturgical colours that are introduced as appropriate. Worship is well-planned on a two-year programme using Christian values, Values for Life and Social Emotional Attitude Learning (SEAL). Worship follows the liturgical calendar combined with additional themes from biblical material. Pupils have increased their involvement in delivering worship, which reflects progress made on the last focus

for development. However, the school has identified this as on-going development to increase more pupil involvement in planning, leading and evaluation. Prayer is an integral part of the school's daily life. Both prayer and reflection in collective worship and RE instils respect and reverence as part of this school's worshipping life. Effective use of prayer boards and reflection areas has been developed since the last inspection so that prayer and reflection is now promoted beyond formal worship. Pupils show the ability to reflect and be thoughtful about their faith and prayer life. Pupils are articulate in using RE vocabulary such as in explaining what it means to be a Christian. This is a strength of the school. Pupils clearly understand that prayer has a purpose and is important in the life of a worshipping school community. Key Christian festivals such as Harvest and Christmas are celebrated in Holy Trinity Church which reinforces the spiritual link between the clergy, church and school community. As a result, Christian values are reinforced alongside Christian traditions, practises and the liturgical calendar. It creates a strong sense of Christian identity, belonging and the importance of church to all pupils and staff. Parents also respond positively to invitations to attend special services, such as the Mothering Sunday service and to share in worship, for example, the Christingle service. Evaluating the impact of collective worship to inform future planning is in place through pupil voice and questionnaires conducted by the governors. For example, the Teaching and Learning Committee gathers pupil views on ways for improvement. This more formal evaluation and monitoring of the impact of worship ensure that worship has a good or better impact. However, the school also correctly identifies the need for involvement from a wider range of stakeholders. This is to ensure the quality of worship offered remains substantial, engaging and relevant to pupils' lives and their personal spiritual development.

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

The executive headteacher and governors have brought stability and unity to this school within the federation. A strong personal vision and commitment by the leadership team brings a Christian distinctiveness which infuses the school community. Through determination and commitment the experienced executive headteacher has worked hard to promote the Christian vision and values within and across the school federation. The governing body has contributed well to the development of a clear and consistent, shared Christian vision rooted in explicit Christian values. Strong leadership at all levels and very good governance ensures the school puts its pupils and their families at the heart of their vision and mission to the community. Through insightful leadership the school is building on the strengths, but also successfully implementing new strategies to bring about church school development. As such, these improvements impact positively upon the way that the school community confidently articulates the vision and lives out the values in their daily lives. Governors are keen to embed even further Christian distinctiveness and are very supportive of the strategic drive to improve academic standards. Self-evaluation is implemented well by skilled governors through a regular cycle of monitoring. Rigorous systems monitor progress information and evaluates whether pupils' needs are met. Together, school leaders and governors plan strategically and have an honest and challenging view of the future needs of a rural school. However, the school identifies that governors need to embed a more rigorous and robust monitoring of overall church school development. Thoughtful succession planning and identified professional development across the federation staff are given training for leadership roles. This has contributed positively to staffing challenges and upon overall school development. The decision to become part of the federation is a key factor in this development, already enhancing the reputation and status of the school as a church school. There are now more opportunities to share good teaching and learning, as well as management processes and practices. Issues identified in the previous inspection have, and are being, addressed. Statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship are met. Both areas are well led with enthusiasm which permeates through to the staff and pupils. Effective and strong partnerships exist between the school and the diocese, multi-agencies and with members of the local community. These strong links contribute to meeting the needs of all pupils. Links with the local church and vicar are exemplary. This ensures pupils develop an understanding of Christian church in a variety of contexts. It also has a positive impact on how the school lives out its Christian vision and Christian distinctiveness. Through the substantial work of the governing body, for example, a detailed worship review, there is now more clarity on the meaning and interpretation of Christian distinctiveness. Respect, self-worth and a celebration of difference in the partnership with parents are all important features of parental engagement. Strong emphasis on inclusion ensures all pupils, staff and parents' beliefs are welcomed, respected and valued. Parents value the distinctive Christian values and ethos and that their children feel safe and secure. They also feel that the open door policy is effective and appreciate the collaboration between home and school learning. Parents speak highly of how their views are sought and considered by the school. They believe pupils' academic and personal needs are met and that personal development is enhanced through extra-curricular activities, such as dance. Parents speak of the care and concern shown to their children which enables their children to flourish spiritually, socially and academically. One parent said, 'This school is the best - it shows God's love to all'.