

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Martley Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Martley
Worcestershire
WR6 6QA

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Worcester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Worcestershire
Date of inspection	25 November 2016
Date of last inspection	11 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	116831
Headteacher	Andrew Massey
Inspector's name and number	C. Ann Stone NS812

School context

Martley VC Primary School is situated in a rural location. It has 119 children on roll and serves a wide geographical area. The vast majority are of white British heritage and are taught in mixed age classes. The number of children with special educational needs, or working below their age related expectations is above national average. The school has close links with the parish church of St Peter's.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Martley VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- The ability of stakeholders to articulate and promote a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian values with the result that every child feels valued.
- The strong links between the school and the church community which promote a shared Christian vision for developing and learning.
- The great value placed on worship which is linked to Christian values and impacts positively on the life of pupils and staff.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that a systematic and theological approach is integrated into the teaching of religious education which will enable children to have a greater understanding of the life of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.
- Develop a portfolio of assessed work to enable all members of staff to have a sound understanding of expected standards and those being achieved.
- Provide more opportunities for children to understand that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith enabling all to understand and respect difference and diversity.

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

Christian values permeate the whole life of the school and create an ethos that enables children to achieve well. The behaviour of the children is of the highest standard and the good relationships evident within the school community are consistently attributed to the Christian nature of the school. The core values of 'Commitment, Compassion, Creativity, Courage, Co-operation' are clearly understood and articulated by all stakeholders and children are beginning to link those to ways in which God cares for and supports them.

The relationship between local community, parish church and school is very strong and is characterised by mutual respect and a genuine sense of community. As a direct result of the impact of the school's Christian values, children understand the need, and have the ability to put others before themselves. An example given is the school choir giving their time to sing to residents at two nearby day centres. Fundraising supports local, national and global charities and children understand that Christian values are at the heart of their fundraising. Supporting a school in Tanzania has resulted in children appreciating and respecting global diversity. In all these ways, the Christian character of the school has an impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. Still to be developed is a deeper understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

Parents and governors comment that they are welcomed into school and consider themselves part of the school community. Christian values and Bible stories are regularly discussed at home and parents believe this can be directly attributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. An example given was of a Year Two child explaining how the Trinity can be likened to an apple – the skin, flesh and core representing God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Staff, governors and children recently explored their understanding of 'Spirituality' through meetings, lessons and diocesan training. Children have opportunities to deepen their understanding of spirituality through the use of outside spaces and the developing opportunities provided in the curriculum. An example seen was a collection of powerpoints created by children to explain their views on spirituality, enabling them to make their own links between beliefs, practices and Christian values.

The school has clearly acknowledged the importance of religious education (RE) and it has a high profile within the curriculum. It is recognised by staff, governors, parents and children as being important to the life of the school. The subject leader has an action plan to ensure standards are high and lessons challenging. She attends diocesan training and is preparing for the implementation of the 'Understanding Christianity Project,' which will enable children to have a greater understanding of the life of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. Identified by the school is the need to formalise the monitoring and evaluation of RE to ensure that children and governors have a clear understanding of the standards needed to succeed. Children actively engage in their learning and recognise that it contributes to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The tracking of progress and achievement of all children in RE is still not secure and this is identified as an area for development. Also identified as an area for development is the need for governors to be more formally involved with the monitoring and evaluating of the subject.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Collective worship at Martley Primary School is central to the life of the school and is a springboard to learning about Christian values and biblical teaching. Children speak with confidence about the way in which worship shapes their thinking and actions. The impact of collective worship is informally monitored and evaluated by governors and provides an insight into how worship shapes the life of the school community. Children are actively involved in the delivery of worship through sharing experiences, music making, singing and leading prayers. Symbolic artefacts are displayed on a worship table and the children are able to articulate what they mean to Christians. The five core Christian values of the school are on display in a series of paintings designed and created by the children resulting in the ability of children to explain their significance.

A range of worship leaders offer children a rich and diverse experience of worship. The parish church works with the school to celebrate major Christian festivals and important school events. Parents are invited to attend these acts of worship.

Worship makes a significant contribution towards the spiritual development of all children by challenging them to ask questions and reflect upon their own experiences. An example given was 'If you've got money, you've got choices. If you've got choices you can help.' Reflective areas in all classrooms and the outdoor 'Peace Garden' enable worship to extend far beyond the confines of a set time and place. The newly introduced 'Prayer Bags' allow children to continue their personal prayer journey outside the boundaries of school.

Children have a clear understanding of prayer and are encouraged to pray, reflect, and ask questions. They are able to explain that if they have a problem they know God will listen. The 'Lord's Prayer,' a lively sung grace, learning about Jesus Christ and a secure understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit enable children to make links

between the Bible and lessons for their own lives. Children understand the importance of the Anglican practice of Eucharist at Eastertide but identified is the need to develop their knowledge of its importance throughout the church year. Parents see messages from worship played out in the behaviour of the children at home, for example singing the school lunchtime prayer at mealtimes.

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

The experienced headteacher shows strong leadership and commitment and has a clear strategy for moving this church school forward. The understanding of senior leaders, staff and governors of how Christian values make a difference ensure that these are at the heart of the schools vision. The development point from the previous inspection of involving governors and staff in reviewing the school as a church school has been addressed through the creation of a core worship group, reviewing the school's Christian values and introducing the new five Christian core values to all stakeholders. Governors know their school well and are able to articulate the understanding of their role as strategic leaders of a church school. Governors regularly visit the school informally but not yet embedded is the involvement of governors in a more formal system of recording these visits to help identify ways to improve the effectiveness of the school as a church school.

Parents comment that Christian values shared by the headteacher and staff contribute well to pupils behaviour and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Parents know their views are welcome and valued. The ability to talk to the headteacher in the playground every day ensures that any problems are quickly dealt with. The church community contribute to school life with the result that there is mutual and substantial benefit to both. The parish priest, also a foundation governor, has an effective pastoral role within the school which is valued by staff, parents and children thereby strengthening the links between the school and church communities.

A well - established 'Friends Association' volunteer time and talents as well as financial support to the school enabling parents to become totally involved in the life of a church school. An example given was the involvement of the 'Friends Association' to provide butterfly kits which increased the awareness of the children to the awe and wonder associated with Gods creation of the world.

The development of staff and governors as leaders is achieved through attendance at diocesan and cluster school training and support of each other. The RE and collective worship subject leaders attend diocesan training and have clear action plans to increase the effectiveness of RE and worship within the school. Leaders and governors ensure both collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. The supportive relationships between all members of the school community are clearly rooted in Christian values, providing a good example of a school which is both distinctive and effective.