

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Tewkesbury Church of England Primary School

Chance Street, Tewkesbury, GL20 5RQ

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**Gloucester**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Satisfactory

Local Authority

Gloucestershire

Name of multi-academy trust

N/A

Date of inspection

10 January 2018

Date of last inspection

28 February 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled 115654

Headteacher

Carolyn Scott

Inspector's name and number

Carolyn Banfield 610

#### School context

Tewkesbury Church of England Primary is a larger than average, two form entry school that serves the local town. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding is below the national average as are those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. In July 2017, a Community Centre and pre-school provision opened on site.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tewkesbury as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Embedded Christian values shape the life and ethos of the school. This has a direct influence on the excellent standards of behaviour, positive attitudes and high quality relationships enjoyed across the school.
- Tewkesbury school is a place where every individual is valued as one of God's children, respected for who they are, and carefully nurtured so that they are encouraged to achieve their full potential.
- The unique and exceptionally successful partnership with the local church and Abbey significantly enhances the school's Christian distinctiveness whilst also enriching the social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development of its pupils.
- Collective worship is affirming, regardless of faith, and provides the basis for personal reflection and a deeper understanding of pupils own spiritual development.

#### Areas to improve

- Using a range of strategies, extend the opportunities and experiences for pupils to take on greater responsibility for the planning and leadership of collective worship to further drive the vision and values.
- Embed the new Religious Education (RE) syllabus alongside the Understanding Christianity programme to ensure that all teaching and learning in RE is of the highest quality, so that its impact on the deepening Christian character of the school is maximised.
- Extend the monitoring and evaluation process to include a broader range of stakeholders and ensure that it is carried out in greater depth so that understanding of how the school develops and strengthens its Christian distinctiveness is increased.

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

The school has made significant progress since the last inspection. This is primarily due to the explicit focus leaders have given to the establishment of a clearly expressed vision and the development of a set of distinctively Christian values. This is immediately made apparent through documentation and displays which very successfully provide direction and drive school improvement. There is a real sense of team and a whole school commitment to promoting the agreed values, which have defined and enriched this community considerably. Consequently, the six core values underpinned by the all-embracing value of Christian love, are interwoven into the very fabric of the school. Because the values are firmly rooted in biblical teaching, pupils naturally relate their own experiences to the life and teachings of Jesus. This provides relevance and a consensus on what constitutes the collective moral imperative. The impact is clearly demonstrated in the choices pupils make, the relationships sustained and the positive interactions they engage in. As one pupil described, 'Jesus made such a big difference to the world, we can easily make a difference to our own community if, together, we follow Jesus' example.' As a concept, this is given further credence through the newly installed values tree. The small jig-saw pieces naming each child and adult form the growing bark of the tree, providing a powerful image of this community as a Christian community united in responding to God's teachings. From this basis, approaches to attendance and behaviour management are consistently informed. As a result, attendance is above national expectations and exclusions are avoided. The school makes a huge investment in the personal development and welfare of its pupils, ensuring that pastoral care is exemplary. Unique in the sight of God, and as an embodiment of the school's vision, each is 'valued, challenged and nurtured to aspire to reach their full potential'. Staff at all levels, skilfully implement a range of strategies and interventions. The Growth Mindset approach is a good example, contributing to raised expectations and aspirations for all. Through excellent leadership and creativity, a range of nurture groups and bespoke support programmes are sensitively implemented. As a result, barriers to learning are reduced, inclusivity is assured and levels of self-esteem increased. Consequently, pupils increasingly recognise the influence of the distinctive Christian character on their personal development, attitudes to learning and academic achievement. Vulnerable groups and in particular, those who experience deep-seated difficulties, begin to flourish. This is reflected in progress data which indicate that gaps between these groups and all pupils is minimal and relevant to individual starting points. Published data for 2017 demonstrates improving attainment at Key Stage 1, but outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate levels below national averages. However, current school data reveals a more positive impact of interventions on outcomes of attainment. A broad and enriching curriculum is characterised by inspiring opportunities and memorable experiences, fully utilising the arts, sport, themed weeks and moments of awe and wonder. Because a clear definition and understanding of spirituality has been agreed, opportunities for reflection and spiritual development are planned for. Spiritual diaries document individual responses to shared values and, over time, indicate pupils growing ability to explore their personal thoughts and feelings. As a result of evaluation, a more recent introduction to the window, mirror, door approach has helped to structure these reflections. Where pupils have acquired a language of expression, their thoughts and ideas demonstrate increasing depth and insight. For others, the process remains at a less developed stage. Provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development is a key component and strength of the curriculum and is extensively supported through acts of worship. Pupils are regularly exposed to a range of activities and experiences with the impact being celebrated in the 'black book' owned by each class. Through RE, pupils are encouraged to explore Christian values from a range of faith perspectives and to ponder on human predicament. This is leading to a clearer understanding of what motivates belief and the responses engendered. Christian Aid and an exploration of other similar charitable organisations helps to cultivate the understanding pupils have of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The high value placed on worship is reflected in the fact that leaders have specifically organised the timetable to allow worship to be the first experience of each day. This sets the tone and ethos, and evokes a sense of belonging and gathering in the presence of God. Its importance is recognised as a key component for sharing the vision, values and ethos, thus providing a consistent thread in the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Consequently, pupils convey that worship is 'our very heartbeat, it's what keeps us alive and describes who we are'. Because worship is engaging and inspirational it makes an outstanding contribution to the daily experiences of pupils and staff. The Gospel message continues to reinforce and embed the core values into the vision of this community. As a result, pupils readily attribute their attitudes and behaviours to those teachings and articulate life changing moments as outcomes of the messages shared. Parents comment on how this spills over to influence family life. Additionally, the contributions pupils make to the various value stations, is testament to the levels of spiritual and moral development taking place. A cohesive worship plan ensures continuity and gives focus to Christian belief and practice. The themes challenge pupils to take responsibility for effecting change and they often feel inspired to go out and show care and compassion toward others. Charitable giving and acts of service within the local community are the outward expression of Christian response. Because of the variety of input from staff, clergy and parish

partners, worship is both creative and interesting. This has a positive impact on pupils' growing spiritually. It also kindles a desire to take on greater ownership for planning and leadership. Both the parish church and Abbey have a powerful presence in the life of this community. The diversity each brings allows pupils to understand that approaches to God may be made in different ways and contexts. The church year and associated Anglican traditions and practices are made clear through participation in, and celebration of, key Christian festivals. As a result, pupils have acquired an appreciation of core Christian belief and for many, this is instrumental in strengthening their own faith. The Open the Book team very effectively breathe life into the stories and messages shared. This immediately increases accessibility and is why members of the pre-school are introduced to worship in this way. Hall displays depicting Bible stories capture the essence of arts week and aid understanding of Christian principles. Consequently, biblical literacy is impressive. Worship is Trinitarian and biblical, rooted in the person and character of Jesus Christ. Through it pupils understand how Christians regard God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer and Christian reflection is part of the daily rhythm of the school. As a result, pupils understand its purpose and appreciate the impact that prayer can have. This is why they happily contribute to whole school worship through the prayer box or meet their personal needs through classroom reflection areas. Worship in church and class led worship at school, are well supported by parents. Monitoring and evaluation activities take place regularly and ensure that worship continues to be accessible and inclusive.

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

The journey the school has travelled since the last inspection has been extensive. The commitment and resolve of the headteacher, governors and church community has been instrumental in remodelling the school's approach towards its distinctive Christian character. As a result, leaders and staff at all levels consistently and confidently share a vision that informs practice, influences policy and determines strategic planning. The core Christian values form the bedrock of its work and describe its mission. The school's inclusive approach gives opportunity to all, irrespective of background, culture or physical ability. Consequently, decisions such as those to re-appropriate the community centre, offer pre-school provision, appoint a nurture leader and provide enrichment activities, all come from the same desire to challenge and nurture the God-given potential of each pupil. The benefits of such decisions are obvious and add significantly to the opportunities available to this community. In particular, the work around vulnerable groups has proved highly successful in overcoming difficulties. The impact of this is felt by the whole community and builds a reputation for outstanding practice. Pupil performance and progress is carefully tracked and leaders take swift and appropriate action to target areas of under achievement. The 'in-reach' unit is an excellent example of positive intervention. As a result, standards of attainment, which until now have been lower than would be expected, are beginning to rise more rapidly. An emphasis on SMSC development contributes to the unique experiences implicit to a creative curriculum. It supports the whole child and provides an extended day through breakfast and after school clubs. The on-going development of the church school distinctiveness forms an important strand on the school development plan. Consequently, an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluation is in operation and is informed by the SIAMS self-evaluation document. The well informed Ethos Committee have an established role in facilitating this process and as a result, leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and contribute to focused development priorities. The professional skills and expertise brought to this group by the deputy head has also enhanced the quality and depth of evaluation. This has brought into sharper focus the measurement of impact. As a result, action plans are becoming more specific and underpin school improvement. This is particularly evident in the way in which leaders have described and monitored their actions to successfully address the issues raised at the last inspection. The outcomes are significant and encapsulate effective leadership of this church school. However, not all aspects of church school distinctiveness are given the same depth of focus or take into consideration the views of all stakeholders. Staff are empowered by relevant professional development opportunities to take additional responsibility and grow as leaders. The outcomes feed directly into the school's vision. The school engages well with parents who say that issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. They appreciate the distinctive Christian values and ethos, frequently supporting this with home/school challenges. They say that their children feel 'loved and secure because of the pervading Christian atmosphere'. A thriving parent prayer group extends the prayer life of the school by using the prayers left by pupils in the box. The school effectively draws on diocesan expertise for professional development for both staff and governors. The RE lead is supported well by senior leaders and has engaged in training on the new syllabus and Understanding Christianity programme. This has resulted in successful implementation and early signs of positive impact. The high profile given to RE and collective worship results in statutory requirements being fully met. Mutually beneficial partnerships between school and church enrich the lives of both. Notably, pupils have a deepening sense of Christian identity as a result. This gives them the confidence to initiate clubs such as the Tewkesbury Learning about Christ group. There are strong links with other schools through the Balcarras Teaching Schools Partnership and the regional RE Hub. Wider opportunities are readily accessed and good practice is shared.