

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

<b>High Wycombe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	
Loakes Road High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 2JU	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Oxford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Date of inspection	27 February 2018
Date of last inspection	30 January 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 110463
Head teacher	Celine Hawkins
Inspector's name and number	Rev Canon Tim Harper 827

### School context

High Wycombe Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average voluntary aided school serving a culturally diverse area of High Wycombe. It draws pupils from a wide area. There are 206 pupils on roll with a large number of children from different cultures and faith backgrounds. The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium funding and pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. Since the last inspection there has been significant staff turnover.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of High Wycombe Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the head teacher over many years has driven and continues to develop the Christian ethos of the school and enables rapidly improving outcomes for all learners.
- A committed and effective governing body provides outstanding leadership for the school, delivering creative and highly effective ongoing development planning in all areas of school life.
- A very close and warm partnership with the 6 local churches of the benefice is encapsulated in the excellent work of the parish youth and families' worker, who is also an outstandingly supportive chair of governors.

### Areas to improve

- Ensure an even greater involvement of the pupils in the planning and delivery of collective worship so that the distinctive Christian values of the school are further embedded in its prayer life.
- Continue to develop all areas of staff professional development so that effective leadership is sustained despite the challenge of a high level of staff turnover.

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is outstanding because its core set of Christian values nurtures the academic and spiritual development of all pupils in preparation for life. Every pupil is thus individually valued as a child of God and encouraged to work to their full potential. As a result, individual character and academic understanding is progressed effectively for all learners through a curriculum that is creative, engaging, and purposeful. This is achieved successfully through the application of the Christian values of compassion, thankfulness, trust, forgiveness, friendship, peace, hope, respect and service. Each of these is linked to a Bible verse. They are clearly displayed in various ways throughout the school and frequently referred to throughout the day. The active promotion of the Christian values ensures that they are very well embedded. This can be seen in the way they influence decision making and action, with a consequent strongly beneficial effect on relationships between all key stakeholders, of all faiths and none. Attendance is accordingly above average. Due to very positive relations, bullying is rare at the school. When required the anti-bullying policy is actioned sensitively and effectively to resolve issues. This reflects best practice as detailed in the Church of England's guidance 'Valuing all God's children.' Safeguarding is exemplary, which supports the Christian vision. Parents are actively involved with assessment of this Christian vision and value the impact of the Christian character of the school. This can be seen in the very positive feedback given in parent surveys. They comment that the school 'enables pupils to resolve issues themselves' and how the pupils 'welcome the mixed ethnicity.' In this effective way 'they learn respect and pass it on to their families.' Governors are involved in ensuring the school meets the needs of all learners by attending and contributing to termly Collective Worship (CW) and religious education (RE) planning, monitoring and evaluation meetings. They make regular personal visits and share their observations at full governing body meetings. The strongly positive impact of this on the planning, monitoring and evaluation on learning and relationships within the school is shown in effective curriculum documents, favourable parent responses and clearly informed governing body minutes. Learners are excited and challenged by RE, and the subject makes a very significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Understanding of and respect for others and other religions is thus encouraged and embedded in the life of the school. For example, year 5 and 6 pupils when meeting with the local Council for Christian-Muslim relations asked deeply reflective and thoughtful questions. The pupils commented that they have learned much about the insights, beliefs and customs of others, also gaining an understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Time for personal reflection as well as reflecting on learning is a highly valued dimension of school life. As a result, reflection contributes greatly to spiritual growth and pupil wellbeing.

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

Collective worship is outstanding because a very high value is placed on distinctively Christian worship as a daily priority in the school. Collective worship is age appropriate and inclusive, linking faith with its outworking in the service of others. It underpins the Christian ethos and values of the school, relating them to daily life inside and outside the school community. The impact of this can be seen in the way the children express how greatly they enjoy Collective worship and value the time for personal reflection included in each session. A forum for clergy and year 6 pupils has been established to discuss personal deep questions about faith, the single focus from the last inspection. This has been further developed this year to include the whole school through half termly class 'Big Questions of faith' sessions with a member of the clergy. They comment perceptively that we find 'Some of our values are easy to follow, and some quite hard!' Collective worship is interactive and visual. Bible stories are told, and questioning encouraged. The 'Wondering Question' asked in community collective worship is further explored in class collective worship and Godly Play. Consequent cogent pupil responses can be seen in classrooms, particularly through art. Collective worship is regularly led by clergy from across the six linked churches of the parish, the head teacher and teaching staff. This tracks the Anglican liturgical calendar, with the result that children are very familiar with the main Christian festivals. Collective worship is also led by the pupils, especially in the parish church at Harvest, Easter and Christmas, doing readings and playing instruments to accompany the hymns. However, the pupils expressed a wish to be even more fully involved in the leading of collective worship commenting, 'We don't lead, we share.' Personal spirituality is encouraged through Godly Play, class prayer areas, and murals in some parts of the school. Outside reflective areas offer similar opportunities. Pupils and staff are encouraged to use them daily in an interactive way. A learning walk and conversation with staff, parents and pupils established that all key stakeholders use them for prayer throughout the day. As a result, parents commented on how moved they felt to see their children pray so confidently in collective worship and at home. For example, before SATS, pupils frequently asked, 'Can we pray?' Through worship and Biblical input all pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of Jesus for Christians. They learn about the Christian distinctive of understanding God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and are therefore able to articulate why this is significant to Christians. 'God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God but like three bits.' A rolling programme of 'visits and visitors' to and from places of worship include the local mosque, Christian churches and a Sikh temple. This ensures that children of other faiths are equally confident in articulating what they believe. Muslim parents remark that because of all this,

pupils learn great respect for different traditions and pass it on to their families. A worship committee consisting of the headteacher, chair of governors, staff and clergy meets twice a term to plan, monitor and evaluate collective worship. The chair, who is also a member of the parish church team, trains staff to lead collective worship. This makes them feel much more confident and empowered to do so. All teachers are thus encouraged to lead collective worship through key stage worship and class worship, developing their own spirituality through research and reflection.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

RE is outstanding because it is planned, monitored and evaluated in an exemplary way. This results in teaching and learning that is frequently outstanding with all pupils making at least good progress. The head teacher, RE governor and RE coordinator meet regularly to monitor and set key priorities, with the result that the coordinator feels supported in her role. As part of the worship committee meetings and their own participation and visits, foundation governors and clergy are deeply involved the planning, monitoring and evaluation of RE in this Voluntary Aided school. It is taught as a separate subject, one hour a week in each class, with extra time given as major Christian festivals approach. RE is also taught through cross curricular work, allowing for investigations that engage the pupils' imagination. As a result of this detailed planning system, pupils have the opportunity to learn about and from Christianity as well as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and in some cases Sikhism. The understanding of British Values is embedded by further activities such as art work, group discussion and writing. In this inclusive way they learn to show respect and tolerance in dealings with and learning from each other. RE is challenged robustly through regular monitoring of pupil work. Assessment data is fed back to the full staff meeting and individual training opportunities identified through teacher questionnaires. Further training is offered through the 2016-21 Bucks Agreed Syllabus (thus meeting statutory requirements) with an emphasis on assessment procedures through the Discovery RE scheme of work. Children are asked for feedback on the effectiveness of their RE learning. Consequently, the children are very enthusiastic about RE. If of another faith or ethnic background, children are also thus able to relate Christianity to their own. RE feeds into CW especially at major festivals through music and integrated theme weeks. As a result, it effectively underpins the distinctive Christian values of the school. The use of Godly Play enables all pupils to engage with and reflect on Bible stories. Together with the multi-cultural ethos of the school this leads to them gaining a very strong awareness about Christianity as a world faith. Parents comment that in this way the values of the school are effectively internalised by all learners.

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

The headteacher uses every opportunity to share through staff and parent meetings, parent council, weekly newsletters and CW the explicit Christian vision that underpins the life of the school. As a result, parents comment that the school is a community where everyone is valued and cared for, a place to feel safe and respected. They further comment how the distinctive Christian character of the school makes it a place where differences are celebrated, and strengths shared. The very positive impact of the headteacher's inspirational work and vision can further be seen in the way pupils and adults can articulate the difference Christian values make to life in and out of school. In addition to a holistic approach to academic and personal development they say, 'It helps to develop confidence and openness in relationships.' A very strong and engaged governing body provides effective challenge to the school leaders, contributing to the regular communication with parents to articulate and evaluate the distinctive Christian vision of the school. They have a thorough understanding of the school's performance based on insightful self-evaluation, which drives development planning. For example, the school's self-evaluation has a structured line of completion which involves both governors and staff. Consequently, this provides opportunity for all key stakeholders to form an understanding of what has been achieved and what needs to be done to maintain academic progress and Christian distinctiveness. Reflection now influences teaching and learning across the school, and so greatly enhances spiritual development. All teachers are offered effective induction and strategically planned staff INSET. Intervention is made early if problems are identified through frequent learning walks. In this way the school leadership effectively motivates and encourages colleagues to seek greater responsibility. A very strong relationship has been developed and sustained with local churches, particularly All Saints. Clergy are regular visitors to the school, and the children remark how much they enjoy visiting church for services and concerts. Clergy and church workers provide significant input to life of the school, not least by one of them being an exemplary challenging and supportive chair of governors. Relations with parents and community groups, such as the Chiltern Rangers are very warm and mutually supportive. In following the Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus the school fully meets statutory requirement in the teaching of RE and CW.