

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

### Datchet St. Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary Academy

The Green Datchet Slough Berkshire SL3 9EJ

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Good**

**Diocese**

**Oxford**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Date of inspection

22 March 2018

Date of last inspection

March 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided Primary 137788

Headteacher

Nicola Green

Inspector's name and number

Gill Walley 644

#### School context

This is a one form entry primary school with a bulge year in year 3 and nursery class. There are 243 pupils on roll. The school converted to an academy within the Oxford Diocese Schools Trust in January 2017. The school is ethnically diverse with 15% of Traveller pupils. Most children enter with broadly average ability. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who attract pupil premium funding, are below average. The headteacher was appointed in December 2016 following the tenure of two executive headteachers in the previous five years. The Chair of Governors took up office in September 2017. As a local curate he is maintaining a working partnership with the parish church because there is currently an interregnum. A small number of families attend the parish church.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Datchet St. Mary's as a Church of England school are good.

- The new headteacher and the governors have strengthened the Christian distinctiveness because they regard it as the school's fundamental characteristic.
- Pupils and their families can explain the significance of the distinctly Christian values because these are completely embedded in the school's work and are referred to constantly.
- Parents attribute their children's success to the headteacher's Christian vision for every pupil to 'be the best that they can be' by 'living and learning with God'.
- Pupils now make good progress in religious education (RE) because teaching is good and the RE leader supports staff well.

#### Areas to improve

- Establish a partnership with the new incumbent so that links between the school and the parish are strengthened further.
- Celebrate pupils' achievements in RE by increasing the amount of their work which is displayed around the school.
- Look for ways to enable pupils to use the new garden space for prayer and reflection to broaden/enrich their spiritual development.

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good**

### **at meeting the needs of all learners.**

Leaders and governors have worked tirelessly to embed six Christian values – compassion and love, resilience, forgiveness, equality, friendship and honesty. These values now underpin the work of the school so that all pupils make good progress and achieve well. Policies such as the way attendance and behaviour are dealt with are based on compassion. Pupils understand the values completely and know the Bible passages which set the values in a Christian context. The values are discussed regularly and they are displayed around the school as a reminder. For example, when a pupil displays challenging behaviour he or she is asked to explain which Christian value has not been followed. Pupils talk about the way the values influence their lives because they talk about how they can live out these values. Parents know which value is in focus and are reminded of the school's Christian vision on the website. They attribute their children's happiness and success at school to the way the values are 'at the heart of everything' and to the fact that the school 'feels like one big family'. Staff feel greatly uplifted by the Christian vision and they feel this has helped them to pull together in times when the Christian distinctiveness was less of a priority for school leaders. It also sustains them when facing difficult times. Staff are well supported in understanding how to promote and strengthen the Christian ethos. Pupils have many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, both in the curriculum and through the many opportunities they have to serve the community. Adults nurture pupils' spirituality well. A display shows the extent to which they 'share compassion internationally'. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils are harmonious because of the emphasis on caring for one another. Pupils behave extremely well both in lesson time and during breaks. Older pupils are buddies to younger ones so that they develop their confidence early on in their time at school. They are developing their understanding of Christianity as a world faith, and the features of Christian worship in other places. For example, they learnt about the Congo when the previous incumbent left the parish to work there. Pupils learn about other world faiths and say they enjoy this because it helps them to understand and respect one another. They also identify similarities between different faiths and Christianity. Pupils look forward to RE lessons because they enjoy learning about the Christian faith and other faiths, and because they are able to discuss questions which do not have straightforward answers. For example, 'is Christianity as strong now as it was 2000 years ago?' and 'what is good about Good Friday?' The environment reflects the Christian distinctiveness of the school well but there are missed opportunities for celebrating pupils' achievements in RE. An outdoor reflection area has been designed so that pupils have a space dedicated to personal reflection but its use is not yet fully developed.

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

Worship is a very important part of the school day. Pupils look forward to it and enjoy 'praying together' and 'being close to God'. Each half term's worship is planned to reinforce pupils' understanding of one of the values. Pupils are keen to take part and to discuss their ideas. The values are explained well so that pupils can easily understand what it means to show that value in their behaviour. For example, when talking about forgiveness they thought about times when they had made mistakes and how they had been forgiven when they said sorry. This helped them to understand how God forgives us when we say sorry. Pupils understand the Biblical contexts of the values because worship reinforces them well. They learn about the life of Christ, stories in the Old and New Testament and the Christian calendar of festivals. Pupils use Christian prayers such as the Lord's Prayer, and they often write and use their own prayers. A candle is lit at this time to help pupils to reflect and to focus their thoughts. Pupils are invited to pray but not made to join in. Pupils from non-Christian backgrounds feel fully involved and included. Worship is led by different members of staff and visitors from the parish so that pupils experience a range of styles. Until the interregnum the incumbent led worship regularly, both in school and in the parish church. Another Christian group leadshighly interactive Easter and Christmas workshops in school. They also run FAB, theFun After School Bible Club, which is well attended and deepens pupils' understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils are beginning to understand the concept of the Trinity. They learn to care for those less fortunate by raising money for various charities, locally and further afield. Staff are uplifted by worship, and talk about it 'being a source of comfort, reflection and inspiration'. Parents enjoy attending worship which is planned and led by their children. Pupils look forward to times when they can worship in the parish church such as the Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day, Christmas and Easter. The Collective Worship Pupil Council has been set up so that pupils can evaluate worship and suggest ways in which it could be made more meaningful for them. Governors and senior leaders also monitor worship regularly and use this information to plan ways to improve it further because it is important to them that pupils gain the most benefit from worship. A committee of governors reports the outcomes of its monitoring to other governors so that they are all well informed and assured that worship meets statutory requirements.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Pupils enjoy RE lessons and teaching is good. Teachers assess pupils' understanding well and are now providing a range of activities to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. There is now more challenge for the most able, assessment is more robust and impacting on teachers' planning, and there is a more relevant and engaging

curriculum. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. The RE leader supports staff so that they are confident to teach RE and their lessons are well resourced. She attends diocesan training regularly and shares this information with other staff so that they all improve their teaching. She stays up to date with current changes in the curriculum and has high expectations of pupils' attainment. Pupils' progress in RE now matches their progress in other subjects. The school is constantly looking at ways to improve RE further so that it has greater impact on pupils. The profile of RE has risen although this is not always evident in displays around the school. It meets statutory requirements. RE develops pupils' understanding of the Christian faith and Bible stories well. It also reinforces pupils' understanding of the core Christian values and supports pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The RE leader has invited several faith leaders in to talk to pupils. This, together with visits to local places of worship, has had very good impact, increasing pupils' motivation and engagement when learning about world faiths. Pupils enjoy discussing the similarities and contrasts between Christianity and other faiths. They feel that this helps them to be respectful of the beliefs of others in their community. Pupils particularly enjoy discussing opinions with one another and comparing beliefs. They often discuss questions which are difficult to answer and require reflection and creativity. The RE leader, senior leaders and governors monitor RE rigorously so that they are sure it meets the needs of all pupils and enables them to progress well. It also helps them to develop an action plan for further improvements. They know that pupils need to gain more experience of applying their learning in RE to their own lives.

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

The recommendations of the last inspection report have been met. Bibles are now available for pupils to use in RE lessons. Pupils are involved in planning and leading acts of worship regularly. Parents are now asked for their views of the Christian distinctiveness of the school regularly and this information is used to identify changes to strengthen it further. The headteacher and governors have strengthened the Christian distinctiveness considerably and the school's vision is now firmly rooted in Christian values. This has led to pupils, whether they are more able or whether they find learning more challenging, making more rapid progress and reaching higher levels in all areas of the curriculum. The school's strong Christian ethos is responsible for pupils' extremely good behaviour, their personal and spiritual development and their positive attitudes towards their learning. Prayer Space Day was a new initiative to support pupils' feel comfortable with prayer. Links with the parish church and the local community have strengthened considerably so that pupils feel very much at home in the parish church and are able to contribute to local events. For example, the choir sings at particular celebrations in church and pupils support local charities and vulnerable groups. Arrangements have been made to preserve the links with the parish church and its community despite the interregnum. Various members of the parish contribute fully to the life of the school and the pupils' involvement in the life of the church has increased. They are now more engaged in evaluating the school's distinctiveness. Pupils now have an area of the church set aside for displaying their prayers and reflections, for example, about Mothers' Day. The leadership of worship and RE are strong and have developed considerably in recent years because leaders regard these areas as of great importance. Governors carry out routine monitoring so that they fully understand the areas of the life of the school which contribute to the Christian distinctiveness and they can contribute to self-evaluation. They visit lessons, look at pupils' books and talk to them about their learning. Governors have given thought to succession planning because it is of the utmost importance to them that the school's Christian distinctiveness is maintained and continues to develop. They have developed their roles in preserving the Christian distinctiveness considerably and are highly engaged in strengthening the school's Christian vision. Parents are consulted regularly about the impact RE and worship have on their children and school leaders take account of their views when developing action plans. Staff receive professional development so that they can take on or share leadership roles. Leaders are highly reflective and have made improvements sensitively based on careful and thorough evaluation.

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