

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Titchmarsh Church of England Primary School

2 Church Street Titchmarsh Kettering NN14 3DR	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese / Methodist District	Peterborough
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Date of inspection	28 June 2017
Date of last inspection	25 April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 121994
Executive Headteacher	Edward Carlyle
Inspector's name and number	Annette Ray 888

School context

Titchmarsh Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average, rural school with 107 pupils on roll. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to the school. The school has become a primary school expanding from a lower school with pupils from 5 to 9 years of age. There has been considerable building work to accommodate the new groups and a growth in the numbers of staff. The school has been working with Warmington Primary School since 2012 in a soft federation. The executive headteacher was appointed to the post in March 2017 after acting as interim headteacher since January 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Titchmarsh CE Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The positive role model of the executive headteacher promotes the school's Christian ethos in all relationships securing the inclusiveness of the school community.
- The strong emphasis on prayer and reflection effectively supports pupil's spiritual, moral and social development.
- Parents are welcomed into the life of the school and value the care, guidance and support the school provides through its Christian values.
- Learners talk articulately and confidently about the school's Christian values and how they link to their daily lives.

Areas to improve

- Undertake a review of the school's aims and mission statement to enable all stakeholders to more effectively monitor and promote the schools' Christian distinctiveness.
- Review the website, school documentation and ways of communicating with parents to ensure the school's Christian distinctiveness is clearly understood by all.
- Develop a more systematic method for planning collective worship to secure clearer links between biblical teaching and Anglican practice.

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

All members of the school community speak confidently about the school's Christian values, on how they impact positively on their daily lives. Attainment is at least in line with and sometimes better than national expectations and linked to the strong values the school promotes. Pupils talk, for example, about how the value of hope helps them to focus on doing their best to attain well. Friendship encourages them to care for others and helps them cope with difficult times. Staff are also aware of how the values influence relationships within the school and support learners' learning.

The inclusive ethos of this school supports attendance. Children are enthusiastic and excited by their experience. They make comments such as, 'when I wake up in the morning I really want to come to school', and 'everyone here is so kind'. Learners recognise how the school's Christian values give good examples of how to live their lives saying 'the values help us to become a good person'. The Christian values are used to support and develop children's understanding of ideas such as forgiveness through the example of Jesus. An example was a parent's claim that children leave this school 'knowing that Jesus loves them and he is their friend, this stands them in good stead for their future'.

Pupils find religious education (RE) lessons are enjoyable and interesting. These lessons support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils. Older learners express their thoughts clearly and confidently. They talk about discussion of topics such as, 'would you let a stranger in need sleep in your house?' These questions help them to think deeply about how they are related to Jesus' teaching. Parents support this with comments like 'even the youngest children relate examples from Bible stories to everyday life in discussions at home'.

The school's provision for children to reflect and pray impacts positively on their spiritual development and well-being. However the school does not have a shared definition of spirituality to support teachers planning across the curriculum. Learners behave well because they say values and Bible stories teach them 'we should do things for other people'. The pupils have a developing understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. This is supported through the links the school has with schools in other parts of the world as well as both the RE curriculum and planned SMSC opportunities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is very important to the life of the school. It provides a positive start to the day giving the chance to reflect on positive messages for the day ahead. Pupils use the time to reflect upon the school's Christian values, how they can work together and think about what 'Jesus did for us'. Pupils are enthusiastic and positive participants in worship. Older pupils often plan and lead aspects of the service both in school and on the regular visits to the local church. This helps children understand they are part of the wider church community. Prayers written by pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, are always included. They provide clear evidence of their spiritual journeys. Recently these prayers have also been used to open governors' meetings demonstrating the link between school governance and the pupils. Prayer is a key aspect of the life of the school both in worship and at other times. The use of grace at lunch time and the school prayer at another point during the school day provides other opportunities to reflect. The school uses a range of visual prompts in the key stage based reflection areas to help children reflect and pray. This contributes well to the learners' developing understanding of the use of prayer. Planning is linked to the teaching of Jesus Christ, seasons of the Church year and the school's values. Learners are aware of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in worship and talk about this with some degree of understanding. Pupils talk confidently about how the teaching of Jesus they hear in worship inspires them to take actions in the service of others such as supporting the local food bank. Staff value the information about biblical links and Anglican festivals provided by the worship coordinator to support their planning of collective worship. Feedback on collective worship is gathered from members of the school community and has had some impact informing development planning. However monitoring and evaluation of both planning and impact are insufficiently systematic and regular to enable on-going improvement. The school includes a variety of visitors to lead collective worship and give a range of experiences of Anglican and other Christian traditions. Pupils respond positively to these experiences.

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

The leaders of the school clearly describe the impact the Christian values have on the whole life of the school. The executive headteacher's vision to develop caring and honest children, fearless in confronting obstacles in their learning is clear. The school values underpin this, developing thankful, reflective learners who feel safe in the love of God. Parents recognise this and say that the children know the school will look after them physically, educationally and in a spiritual, prayerful way. This is due to the strong lead from the executive headteacher who is a role model, who lives out and promotes the school's Christian values in all the relationships across the school. The school has

recently undergone a period of significant change. There have been many staff changes and a significant increase in pupil numbers. The soft federation of the school with another non church school and building links between the two schools has been a priority. This had resulted in a changing focus for the school. Since his appointment the executive headteacher has begun to re-emphasise raising the profile of the school as a church school. This, for example, includes making the school's church foundation clear on recruitment materials and including the church school ethos in the staff induction programme. At this time the school's website does not initially make its Christian character clear.

The school values its links with the diocese through the Bishop's Visitor who has provided the staff with some training on collective worship and supported the writing of a new collective worship policy. However the school does not access training and support that could be provided, for example through the diocesan service level agreement to further develop staff and governors as leaders in church schools. The school meets the statutory requirements for both collective worship and RE.

The foundation governors know the school well and have a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. This evaluation, supported by the church council in which the pupils play a significant role, leads to school improvements such as the introduction of prayer and reflection spaces. These foundation governors have also ensured that the Christian distinctiveness is still a high profile even when governors meetings are shared across the federation.

Leaders for RE and collective worship are given support to help them fulfil their roles and there is evidence of positive impact. Links between the school, church, and community are valued by all. For example, the recent work refurbishing the church organ was supported by the school and learners got the chance to be involved in projects linked to this. Services led by the school at the church are well attended by parents. Pupils engage in the local community, for example, distributing packets of tea and biscuits to local residents as part of harvest celebrations. The school has fully met one of the development points from the previous inspection ensuring that there are now greater opportunities for reflection. The school has made good progress with the other development point through the use of key questions in RE lessons to ensure there is a stronger link to pupils' spiritual development.

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