

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Brill Church of England Combined School

The Firs, Brill, HP18 9RY

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Oxford

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Date of academy conversion

1 April 2013

Date of inspection

12 October 2017

Date of last inspection

September 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Academy VC Converter 8253023

Headteacher

Louise White

Inspector's name and number

Helen Crolla 918

School context

The school is a smaller than average sized primary. The school has converted to academy status and there has been a change of headteacher since the previous SIAS inspection. There are currently 182 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils from a disadvantaged background is below the national average. The amount of pupils supported for SEND is below the national average. Pupils for whom English is an additional language or who are from ethnic minority groups is below the national average. Attendance is above the national average. The school has close partnerships with the Bernwode Benefice and the Oxford diocese.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brill as a Church of England school are Outstanding

- An established, widely acknowledged and supported Christian ethos, based on everyone being loved, challenged and inspired to 'have the wind in our sails', has a clear impact on behaviour, attitudes to learning and relationships.
- The headteacher supported by staff and governors articulates a strong Christian vision, which is highly valued by children and parents.
- The Christian distinctiveness enriches the support for all pupils which maintains the high levels of attainment, progress and enjoyment.
- A broad and highly creative curriculum provides excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision, resulting in the development of caring, reflective and articulate pupils.
- Inclusive and creative worship provides pupils, staff and parents with opportunities to think deeply about the school's values and Christian teaching.
- Strong, mutually beneficial links with the Bernwode Benefice and the local community develop a sense of reciprocal service which results in the school being held in high regard.
- Rich provision in RE enables pupils to demonstrate a good knowledge of a wide range of beliefs and a respect for diversity.

Areas to improve

- To provide further study using tangible, age appropriate symbols within worship and RE to deepen pupils' understanding of the Holy Trinity.
- Formalise consistent systems to monitor the impact of religious education (RE) and worship so that this can inform future developments.

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

The impact of the renewed vision and values is significant and ensures that Christian distinctiveness shapes the ethos of the school. There is a strong Christian vision, embodied in the quotation from John 10 v10 'Jesus said, 'I have come so that you may have life-life in all its fullness' To enable this to happen the school has identified 12 values which are known by all in the community and explored through worship. One parent shares that the pupils are extremely aware of diversity and that her son spoke of this whilst watching the Invictus games. The strong Christian character within the school has a significant impact on pupil's positive attitudes to learning and individuals are supported and challenged. Pupils achieve well and attendance is above national expectations and where pupils appear to require additional support, members of staff use time creatively. Vulnerable pupils are chosen for a weekly "chomp and chat" lunch which enables pupils to talk with a member of staff and be nurtured. One parent describes the school as 'a kind place' whilst another acknowledges the 'inclusive' atmosphere, where 'everybody is welcome'.

Pupils are able to express a highly developed sense of spirituality because they benefit from well-chosen activities to develop reflection. Creative activities within forest school provide pupils with spiritual experiences. One example of this is where pupils' experienced a raisin meditation and learned about the use of ancient Japanese kami mirrors. Parents value the spiritual character of the school because it supports the academic achievement and personal development of their children.

There are strong relationships, supported by the schools Christian vision and the local benefice. The behaviour of older pupils demonstrates a mature sense of responsibility; they contribute to the School Council, organise the resources for worship and act as buddies for younger children. Year 6 pupils share that "God is in every one of us" and that "God will always forgive you, he will never give up on you"

Through their various charitable donations, the pupils are encouraged to develop their moral, social and cultural awareness. The local food bank and the Shoe Box Appeal are valued by the children as ways to respect others. One child recalled that the prayer space had taught him to reflect upon the life of refugees because he experienced spending time in a cardboard box.

Learners are able to articulate that Christianity is expressed in variety of ways due to cultural or religious differences because of the creative activities presented to them. The International Day of Peace and learning about inspiring Christians such as Mother Theresa of Calcutta have provided opportunities to deepen the children's understanding of Christianity across the world.

Class RE books illustrate that this subject is taught imaginatively and creatively, providing the pupils with many opportunities to think deeply and make spiritual responses. The contribution of RE enriches the curriculum and shapes the Christian character of the school so that pupils are able to articulate their knowledge in detail. Homework projects in RE help to reinforce the Christian character of the school, with families being asked to create a collage about the school's values. A proud year 6 shared his collage which is on display in the hall.

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

Collective worship enriches the lives of the pupils, staff and parents because of the strong links between the local church and the school. Daily opportunities to engage in the inclusive and creative approaches to worship, enable all to value prayer and Biblical teaching. Year 6 pupils have increased their leadership of worship since the previous inspection, organising resources, lighting the candle and reading the class prayers from the school prayer book. Parents feel welcome to the Wednesday worship and express that this has a positive impact on their children's lives and relationships. One parent shared that their child has asked for a reflection area to be placed in the family home.

Collective worship is planned with a focus on the monthly value, which helps pupils to reflect upon associated Bible stories. All pupils make a respectful response to the gathering statement "The Lord is here" and sing enthusiastically which demonstrates an embedded knowledge of Anglican traditions and practices. When asked how to be thankful to God, younger children give confident replies, suggesting through song or helping others.

This demonstrates that worship regularly challenges pupils to reflect upon the meaning of each value whilst considering the lives of those less fortunate than themselves.

Learners refer to significant Christian festivals and their worship in church, placing great value on the opportunities to engage in prayer outside of school. The well-chosen values link closely with the seasons of the church's year. This helps pupils to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith and the main festivals within the Anglican tradition. Older pupils share that they would like to develop more reflection places outside, in addition to the prayer walk which allows pupils personal opportunities to pause and reflect.

The annual prayer space, organised by the clergy, provides opportunities for the pupils and members of the community to explore worship together. Older pupils share that they love the bubble tube because they think it 'carries their prayers to God'. The opportunities that the prayer space offers for spiritual reflection are highly valued by staff, pupils and parents. In addition, the library and classroom reflection areas display prayers linked to the monthly values. The opportunities for daily reflection are used to good effect and have increased since the previous inspection. Pupils benefit from the interactive worship display in the library. One pupil shared that it is a good place to sit and say prayers. When writing about diversity, one pupil wrote 'we are all different and that's beautiful'. Pupils accurately recall stories either told by or about the person of Jesus Christ, demonstrating an understanding of Christian concepts. Further study with tangible, age appropriate symbols would deepen pupils' understanding of the Holy Trinity,

A range of leaders and members of the community lead worship, which provides all with variety and a deepening of the range of traditions within the Anglican faith. Pupils value the occasions where they can plan and lead the worship in church. This provides rich experiences and allows parents opportunities to share special festivals. Prayers are also used to enrich the lunchtime, with pupils rolling a prayer dice to generate a grace. Pupils share that this, along with the decorated VIP table for specially chosen pupils demonstrating the Christian values, encourages good behaviour.

Leaders effectively plan the worship linking Bible stories or festivals to core values. They monitor the impact of worship on the whole community, listening to the views of pupils and staff. This allows the spirituality and prayer to have a real impact. Further monitoring would deepen a knowledge of how this benefits the parents and wider community.

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

Leaders consistently and confidently articulate a strong Christian vision that has an impact on the curriculum and the outcomes for all pupils. Teachers comment that the headteacher promotes an inspiring vision, which is rooted in Christian values. Governors reinforce that the school's ethos aims to develop all pupils and pays close attention to their individual needs which is a reflection of the vision statement. This ensures that the school continues to demonstrate high academic performance alongside rich opportunities to shape 'rounded' pupils by the time they leave for secondary education.

The RE subject leader is passionate about providing a broad and reflective curriculum, using the Oxfordshire Scheme of Work. She has been supported through training and by the diocesan advisor, to develop the teaching of RE and empower other teachers to do so confidently. There is a clear commitment to the development of the National Society Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education. Class RE books include thoughtful responses in answer to big questions, illustrating that pupils are challenged to think about the beliefs of others. This has been further enriched with visits to the Hindu Mandir and the Synagogue.

Leaders place great importance on the spiritual well-being of all staff and pupils. Governors also support the recently appointed headteacher, through regular meetings and their involvement during the school day. The SIAMS working group focus their strategic planning on the promotion of the Christian vision and values with parents, which has strengthened relationships. This has also ensured an understanding of the mission statement within the parents. Due to well- focused support, there has been a smooth transition which enables leaders to focus on enhancing the school's distinctive role within the wider community. Where monitoring has taken place, this has evaluated the effect of the school's values but could now concentrate on the success of the Oxfordshire RE Scheme of Work in shaping pupil attitudes and the quality of their responses.

The local benefice provides very good pastoral care, which is highly valued by parents and staff. They are positive about the impact of this on the school's distinctiveness and as a result many parents and staff attend festival services. One parent commented that it was 'lovely to see so many teachers at the Mothering Sunday service in church.' Further community involvement which benefits the school can be seen in the way that hot dinners are cooked locally and when volunteers offer their time within the library. The local art project, Art on the Hill,

enriches the distinctiveness of the school and contributes to the spiritual lives of learners. There is highly effective parental engagement and all are proud of the school and its Christian ethos.
The school more than meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.

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