

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cottingham Church of England Primary School

Berryfield Road, Cottingham, Market Harborough, Northamptonshire, LE16 8XB

Current SIAMS inspection grade Satisfactory

Diocese Peterborough

Previous SIAMS inspection grade Good

Date of academy conversion March 2016

Name of multi- academy trust Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (PDET)

Date of inspection 15 November 2017

Date of last inspection 14 November 2012

Type of school and unique reference number Primary Academy 142661

Headteacher Ashley Scott

Inspector's name and number Janet McMurdo 529

School context

Cottingham Church of England Primary School is smaller than average and is located in a large village receiving pupils from the immediate vicinity and local town. Most pupils are White British with 8.6% from ethnic minority groups which is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average at 14.8% and those for whom the school is in receipt of the pupil premium grant are fewer than the national average for primary schools. The school has a new headteacher and a new religious education (RE) coordinator who both took up post in September 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cottingham Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The school has a displayed set of school values but it is not clear that these values are used routinely to confirm its Christian roots.
- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly established a strong understanding of the profile of the Christian distinctiveness of the school in preparation for making improvements.
- The recently appointed religious education (RE) coordinator is improving the provision for and units taught in the subject so it makes a more explicit contribution to the school's Christian character though this has not yet had an impact.
- Prayer is an easily identified strength of the school. It enables the whole community to engage in collective and personal prayer in a variety of contexts. The prayer room is a particular strength of the school as is the governor with responsibility for this space.
- Collective worship has many positive aspects when children support in worship and in services at the church but there are too few opportunities for children to be more fully involved in school led worship.

Areas to improve

- Review the Christian vision and purpose of the school and its associated values so they can be articulated through a strategic plan and reflected through the daily life of the school.
- Establish robust systems that involve governors, senior leaders, other staff, parents and pupils, to monitor and evaluate the impact of the revised vision and values so their effectiveness is understood.
- Routinely involve children in the planning and leading of collective worship so that it is enhanced and owned more by the whole school community.

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

This inclusive school, which is becoming increasingly popular with families in the village and the local town, ensures that children behave well and support each other in a caring and supportive environment. The high-quality relationships are generally attributed to the values of the school. Comments from parents indicate that the school has values but they are unable to link them readily with the Christian faith. The children know about the school's values and that celebrations in collective worship are linked to the values. They are less confident about illustrating how the values are linked to Christianity.

The school supports charities locally, nationally and internationally and sponsors a child through the Compassion initiative. This provides the children with a developing understanding of and respect for diversity.

The school, under the leadership of the new headteacher, has a plan to revise the current twelve values to a more focussed six. This is an important first step as it not obvious to everyone that the current values are distinctively Christian. The established spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) big books in each class enable a record to be kept of SMSC experiences which are broad ranging in nature. However, the spiritual aspect of the provision is currently under developed and learners are not able to clearly link this to the school values.

There is some understanding of spirituality amongst school leaders with a candle and reflection point as a key part of collective worship. However, the school community has not yet worked together to develop a shared understanding of spirituality and the various ways it can be identified and celebrated across the curriculum.

Children report they sometimes enjoy religious education (RE) lessons and particularly enjoy discussions. However, they also report the weekly RE is not always taught in an interesting or creative way. This view is confirmed by the children's books and the staff interviewed during the inspection. Consequently, RE makes a limited contribution to the children's SMSC development particularly for the older children. Similarly, it has little impact on the Christian character of the school.

Children have a good understanding of world religions and recognise that Christianity is also a world faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

There is evidence that collective worship is part of the routine pattern of the school week and children say they enjoy the experience. Some of the older children are able to remember a specific act of worship, and particularly speak favourably about the weekly class worship which follows their RE lessons. Collective worship is planned in themes which relate to the school's values. As the planning is sparse and pupils are not able to readily articulate the values as expressly Christian it was difficult to clearly see the moral and spiritual aspects of the worship.

Prayer is a strength of the school and children are aware of the importance of it in their lives. They can recite the Lord's Prayer. They are also comfortable with prayer both in assemblies and the regular grace before lunch. The beautiful prayer space is facilitated by local Christians and used by children as part of the routine of their lives. The well-structured rainbow prayers particularly allow the children to actively engage with prayer both in school and in their own lives.

Children enjoy the use of Bible stories to communicate a message in worship. They also make some links between these stories and actions in the lives of people around them. The children can enthusiastically share their experiences of visiting the local church for the main Christian festivals. They particularly enjoy the opportunities for leading worship and the opportunity to write requesting permission to light candles.

The children have an understanding of the person of Jesus and key events in his life; they say this is taught to them in church led worship. Children have a less developed understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and cannot speak about the significance of this belief.

The children behaved well in the worship linked to the colours of the church year observed on the day of the inspection. They also explained that this worship was an example of what routinely happens when clergy visit to lead worship. The headteacher takes responsibility for the planning of the collective worship overview but according to the rota very few other members of the school community are involved in the delivery. Although pupils like to lead worship they have limited opportunities to do so.

The governing body has undertaken regular monitoring of collective worship. However, as yet, there are no systems established to routinely monitor the views of parents, pupils and the wider school community on the impact of and developments needed in collective worship.

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

The recently appointed headteacher has a vision for the school which is based on Christian values but this has not yet been formulated into a strategic plan which can be understood and enjoyed by the school community. However, the relevant committee of the governing body has established systems for the routine monitoring of collective worship. Self-evaluation systems are also not embedded to ensure all aspects of the school as a church school are routinely considered.

Leaders recognise the need to respond to the focus for development set out in the last inspection concerning the tracking and assessment of pupils' progress in RE. They also support the recently appointed RE coordinator's plans to improve the provision for and units taught in the subject. However, this work has not yet had any significant impact because it is at such an early stage of development. The governing body is aware of its obligations to support and develop the school as a church school.

The school community is aware of the church school status but members are not always able to explain the effect this has on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or on their well-being.

Both RE and collective worship are at the early stages of development under the new leadership structure. The recent change to the staffing which ensures all teachers teach RE to their classes has enabled the RE coordinator to prioritise the knowledge and skills development of the teaching team. She is undertaking the Understanding Christianity training to enable her to facilitate this development for her colleagues. She reported that her recent monitoring enables her to be confident the RE teaching is now 'owned' by all teachers.

Parents, local churches and the wider community all contribute to the life of the school. For example, a successful Christmas Fair was being prepared by parents, on the day of the inspection. Members of local churches are regular visitors to lead collective worship and support the prayer space to be open at lunchtime. However, children have little awareness of the wider cultural diversity found within Christianity or how any actions they might take could support the wider world.

The school has a commitment to talent spot for succession planning and provide high quality training and development for staff. Some of this is provided by Peterborough Diocese. This enables staff to potentially consider future leadership opportunities in a church school and has been enhanced since the school joined PDET in March 2016. The Trust was also significant in the recent recruitment of a headteacher who is able to strengthen the Christian character of the school.

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