

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Uley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Woodstock Terrace, Dursley, GL115SW	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Gloucester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Date of inspection	19 October 2017
Date of last inspection	25 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 115657
Headteacher	Zoe Mandeville
Inspector's name and number	David Crunkhurn NS884

School context

Uley Church of England Primary School has 105 on roll, and is smaller than most primary schools. There are four mixed-aged classes. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and is new to the school since its previous SIAS inspection in 2012. Staffing has changed over time, with new teachers to Y5&6, as well as Y3&4. There is currently a teacher on maternity leave. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion identified for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support. The school's last Ofsted report, in December 2016, judged it to be a good school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Uley as a Church of England school are good

- Relationships at all levels are informed by Christian values, which guarantee a high level of pastoral support for all members of the school community.
- The headteacher drives an inspirational vision with commitment to enhance the school as an inclusive Christian family. This is having a positive impact on the lives and relationships of all stakeholders in the school.
- Collective worship (CW) and religious education (RE) are well-led by an enthusiastic and dedicated subject leader. This is securing significant improvements in these areas.

Areas to improve

- Strengthen systems for governor monitoring of RE, collective worship and Christian distinctiveness so that they can challenge and evaluate their impact on all areas of school life.
- Improve pupils' involvement in regular planning, leading and evaluation of acts of worship to further their confidence as leaders and their understanding of the nature of worship.
- Develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, through increasing pupils' understanding of how the Christian faith is practised worldwide.

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

Uley Church of England Primary School is a happy, caring Christian community where all children feel highly valued and special. Led by the determination of the headteacher, the school's vision of 'Live, Learn, Flourish' forms the basis of everything that the school strives to achieve. Since the previous inspection, the school has chosen four Christian values of trust, friendship, compassion and wisdom. These values create the foundation on which all relationships are formed. The core values are recognised, celebrated and lived out in daily life, resulting in a strong Christian ethos.

Children are proud of their church school. They are grateful for the ways in which staff enable them to flourish in their learning, in accordance with the school vision. They talk confidently about the Christian values and say that 'they help us to live better lives'. They comment that behaviour in the school has improved because of the strong emphasis on the core values. The value of perseverance has also helped children to improve their attitudes to their learning. The strong emphasis on these values has led children to take more responsibility for their own actions and learning. This in turn has had a very positive effect on their achievement.

Through the school's commitment to teaching Christian values and developing areas of reflection throughout the school, a shared understanding of spirituality is developing. Opportunities to reflect on values, enables them to learn more about themselves as individuals and their place in their school and wider community. This is impacting positively on their levels of well-being.

Pupil well-being is of extreme importance to all staff at Uley. Parents appreciate the way their children are supported in their learning and cared for. They are grateful for the way in which values impact on their children at home as well as in school. They say they feel listened to and are deeply proud of the school. One parent commented that it is 'amazing to be part of a school, where it is easy to make friends. I feel blessed to be part of the school family'.

Where issues of attendance, punctuality and behaviour arise, these are responded to sensitively and with compassion. Staff are committed to creating environments that reflect the Christian character of the school and support pupils with their learning. Consequently, progress is good for all groups.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is effectively supported by the strong Christian ethos, a rich and engaging curriculum, collective worship and religious education (RE). Reflection journals are used by pupils to record their responses to questions arising from the exploration of Christian values and this helps them think deeply about the application of values to their own lives. RE also makes a good contribution to pupils' spirituality and understanding of faith. The dedication of the RE subject leader to fully implement the requirements of the Understanding Christianity material, has impacted on the depth to which upper key stage two pupils engage with biblical texts. However, at present, this is not fully the case with younger pupils, who are not always taken deep enough to fully understand the key messages of those texts. As yet, pupils are not secure in their understanding of the multicultural nature of Christianity as a world faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The enthusiastic worship co-ordinator has created a rich and varied programme, which reflects the school's distinctive Christian character. Pupils learn a great deal from worship. It helps to develop their understanding of God and the Bible and is an important part of the daily life of the school. Pupils explained how the lighting of three candles at the start of worship symbolises the presence of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This is supporting pupils' developing understanding of the trinitarian nature of God.

The 'Open the Book' worship is led by members of the local church community and is highly regarded by pupils. It provides them with regular opportunities to explore Bible stories and events in the life of Jesus. Children enjoy supporting and acting out the stories with the 'Open the Book' team. As one pupil put it, 'acting out the stories and not just hearing them, helps us to understand them better'.

Worship provides inspiration to pupils and helps them relate Christian values to their own lives and relationships. It impacts positively on their understanding of service and how to live this out in their daily lives. Prayer plays an important part of school life. Pupils value opportunities to engage with prayer through writing their own to be

shared during times of worship. Pupils said that worship gives them the opportunity to 'talk to God, when you have a problem and send Him a message'. They also said that worship is 'one of the most important parts of the day'. The recent development of prayer stations around the school is proving important to pupils, who enjoy using the prayer stones to offer personal prayers to God.

Planning is effective and over a cycle, ensures that a wide range of biblical stories are covered. These stories provide the biblical root for values explored in worship. Whilst pupils often participate in the organisation and support of worship, they do not yet plan and lead acts of worship on a regular basis.

The partnership with the church greatly enriches worship. Major festivals are celebrated in the local church, which ensures pupils have worship experiences that are rooted in the teachings and practices of the Anglican church. A very moving whole-school Harvest service took place during the inspection and this was supported extremely well by members of the school and wider community. As a result, a plentiful supply of produce was donated for distribution to local charities. This is just one example of the charity work that the school encourages pupils to engage with. Pupils say that this enables them to see how values explored in worship such as compassion and generosity are lived out. Parents consider the church services to be of great importance to the life of the school and appreciate the efforts made by staff and local clergy when organising them.

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

The passion and determination of the headteacher, supported by all staff and governors, ensures that the school vision is rooted in Christian values. Her excellent grasp of how the school's Christian vision ensures each child strives to reach their potential, makes a difference to pupils' learning and wellbeing. Standards of attainment have improved in the past year because of the determination to ensure that the vision is at the heart of curriculum planning and intervention programmes for pupils. These are fully supported by the governing body and other leaders in the school. Working together, leaders understand the school's strengths and how it can continue to grow. This underpins the strategic direction for the school. However, monitoring of the school's Christian character is not sufficiently robust. As a result, they do not have a complete picture of the impact of the school's vision.

Professional development of staff is given a high priority, so that they too may 'flourish'. Engagement with courses run by the diocese and visits from diocesan advisors, are impacting positively on the quality of teaching. The religious education subject leader has attended annual training provided by Gloucestershire's statutory advisory committee for religious education. Staff speak highly of the opportunities that they are given to lead in areas of their expertise, and feel supported by the school leadership when doing so.

Arrangements for collective worship and religious education (RE) meet statutory requirements. Both areas are well led by an extremely enthusiastic subject leader. She is highly committed and knowledgeable about these areas and their relevance to the life of all members of the school. She has worked with staff to implement the Understanding Christianity project and this is having a positive impact on religious education, especially with upper key stage pupils. She is supported well in her role by the headteacher and governing body. Work has now begun on linking the progress of pupils in RE to the new tracking system used by the school. However, this is not sufficiently embedded to provide accurate information regarding the impact of new initiatives in religious education.

There is a strong partnership with the local church. The vicar has only recently taken up post, but is already supporting the school and governing body well. He is providing the governing body with good guidance on church school distinctiveness. He leads acts of worship in church as well as in school, often meeting parents afterwards. As a result, pupils feel as happy to be in the church environment as they are in their school. Parents feel they have a growing relationship with the church, which is supporting them pastorally as well as spiritually.

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