



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Barlestone Church of England Primary School

Barton Road, Barlestone, Nuneaton
CV13 0EP

Previous SIAMS grade: Inadequate

This inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Leicester

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 6 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 29 November 2012

School's unique reference number: 140850

Headteacher: Jo Westaby

Inspector's name and number: Marie Sandford (834)

School context

This is a smaller than average rural, village school serving the parishes of Barlestone and Osbaston. The number of pupils on roll is rising. Pupils are predominantly of White British descent and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding is lower than schools nationally but increasing. The proportion with special educational needs is also below the national average. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the last inspection. The school converted to academy status in 2014 as part of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust.

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

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is central to the distinctive development of this growing church school.
- Strong partnerships exist with local churches and clergy are fully involved in the life of the school ensuring its Anglican foundation is honoured and promoted.
- Whether or not they belong to the Christian community, partnerships between staff, governors, parents, the church and village community are valued by everyone.
- Selected Christian values are embedded in all aspects of school life, resulting in children having a thoughtful understanding of how they impact on their own attitudes and behaviours.
- Collective worship if of high quality, engaging and including all worshippers.

Areas to improve

- Increase opportunities for children to develop knowledge of diversity and difference, within the church and different faith communities, in order to deepen their understanding of different practices and beliefs.
- Explain the distinctively Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in order to develop children's understanding.
- Include parents in the evaluation of the impact of collective worship and the Christian vision and values on the work of the school, and use the outcomes to plan further improvement.

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

School leaders, other staff and governors are committed to further developing the school's distinctive Christian character and this is reflected in improvement planning. All staff, governors, children and parents were involved in the selection of four Christian values – friendship, perseverance, trust and respect – which are based on the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Staff and governors are in the process of determining the school's new vision statement. At 96.3 %, attendance at the school is high. Staff and parents attribute this to the caring, nurturing nature of the school where each child is known and valued and learning is fun. Individual children who require additional support in their learning do well because support is tailored to their needs and barriers to learning and emotional wellbeing are addressed enabling their self-esteem and worth to develop. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good with children demonstrating developed spiritual, moral and social awareness. Children enter the reception class just in line with or below age related expectations and rising attainment shows greater proportions leaving Key Stage 2 at expected levels. Children are able to articulate many values and relate them to biblical teaching. Trustful, respectful relationships are evident across the school as children think carefully about how they treat each other and encourage each other to persevere. One child explained the importance of thinking 'what would Jesus do?' when faced with a problem and 'Jesus never gave up on anybody. We should be the same'. Displays around school, reflection areas and displays in classes affirm that this is a church school. In each classroom the four values can be seen in the shape of a cross and children's photographs are moved to demonstrate when a child has displayed significant behaviour linked to the values. These values are celebrated in worship. Prayer is important in the life of the school and children have opportunities to pray in worship and in class. They are increasingly making use of prayer boxes and writing thoughtful prayers to be used in class and in worship. Religious education teaching is given a high priority with children being taught in single age groups at the same time each week. They are excited by RE lessons and can articulate what they have been learning about and what it means to them. However, meaningful opportunities to develop an understanding and respect for the diversity and difference within other faith communities are limited, impacting on cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

All members of the school community value the daily acts of worship which are explicitly Christian in nature. Children and adults value the time to reflect, take part in prayer and responses and benefit spiritually from gathering together at the start of each day. Use is made of the diocesan themes for worship and the selected Christian values to interest, challenge and engage children. The headteacher leads the planning of collective worship in conjunction with the incumbent. Gathering, singing, prayer and reflection are integral to worship as is the blessing song to send staff, visitors and children on their way. Children describe the lighting of the candle as 'gathering together to learn about Jesus, the light of the world. As we light the candle, we let God into our hearts and focus'. The school prayer, written by a Year 5 child and selected by the school council, is said at the end of each day. Increasingly, children are writing prayers to be used in worship. Governors use monitoring visits to highlight good practice in worship, ask questions and make suggestions for further improvement, for example, the introduction of children reading the selected Bible readings during worship. Staff complete worship evaluation forms and children enjoy the responsibility of being 'reflection reporters'. However, parents have not had opportunities to be involved in the evaluation of worship. Children speak highly and enthusiastically about their enjoyment of collective worship, they link Christian values to Jesus' teaching and to their own lives stating 'they give us a strong foundation'. Although they participate regularly, children would like increased opportunities to plan and lead worship. Worship takes place at St. Giles' Church several times in the year including at Harvest, Christmas and Easter with attendance by the community described as 'standing room only' in recent times. Each class has an age appropriate reflection area and a recently introduced prayer box. Although children have a growing knowledge of Christian teaching, they are less sure about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

Due to strong leadership, appointed since the last inspection, the school has rapidly developed as a church school. Converting to academy status as part of the diocesan multi academy trust, has contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school. Various members of local churches, school leaders and the governors enjoy strong, trusting and respectful relationships which have impacted on the distinctive Christian character of the school and enriched collective worship. Leaders and governors can articulate how the Christian values inform the life of the school. They are committed to driving the school forward as a church school and governors take responsibility for developing the school as a church school. RE and collective worship are given priority in the curriculum and in development planning. Previous development points have been addressed although leaders are aware more needs to be done to further develop children's understanding of the richness and diversity of the ethnic and faith mix of the United Kingdom through visits to places of worship and of cultural significance. Parents feel welcome in school and appreciate opportunities to attend worship. They appreciated being involved in the selection of core Christian values, noting the impact of them on their children. Although children, staff, governors and local church leaders have had opportunities to reflect on and develop worship, parents have not been involved in evaluating worship or the distinctive Christian character of the school. Parents speak positively about their children attending a church school, stating 'the children encourage each other to persevere and they like to celebrate each other's successes'. There is an active, growing parent teacher association which has a strong relationship with school leaders, organising a number of fundraising and social opportunities which are well received. The leaders of collective worship and RE have been supported in accessing training opportunities and they have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school. This has led to the purchasing of resources, the implementation of indoor reflection spaces and prayer boxes. The leaders have shared new developments with teaching and support staff to enable initiatives to be put into practice. Collective worship and RE have a notable impact on spiritual, social and moral development and a developing impact on cultural understanding.