

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Diseworth Church of England Primary School

Grimesgate, Diseworth, Derby DE74 2QD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Leicestershire
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	29 June 2017
Date of last inspection	22 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary controlled 120127
Headteacher	Alison Woffindin
Inspector's name and number	Hilary Painter 817

School context

Diseworth is a village school with 44 pupils on role, from Early Years to Year 5. 65% live outside the catchment area. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. The uptake of free school meals is low but the proportion receiving additional educational support is above the national average. The school is preparing to extend the age range to include Year 6 from September. The headteacher has been in post over six years but the other two teachers are both new to the key stage in which they work. In March, 2017 an Ofsted inspection rated the school as good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Diseworth as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Christian values are implicit in underpinning the school's character but they are not clearly promoted, which limits their impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- Through its implicit Christian character, the school provides a nurturing and caring environment, which enables pupils to make good progress.
- The introduction of the material for 'Understanding Christianity' through diocesan training is increasing pupils' understanding of the Christian faith.
- The areas for development in the last inspection have not been addressed, which has had a negative impact on the school's ability to develop the distinctive character of a church school.
- Governors have paid too little attention to the requirements of the school's trust deed and, as a result, the school's church foundation does not contribute to strategic planning for the future.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all stakeholders understand the role that Christian values have in the life of the school.
- Support pupils to enable them to play an active role in planning and leading worship in order to develop their understanding of Anglican traditions in worship.
- Develop governors' understanding, practice and knowledge of their role in managing a church school by:
 - seeking support and guidance from the diocese
 - ensuring that Christian values drive and underpin the school's vision and strategic planning
 - monitoring and evaluating the Christian distinctiveness of the school so that the terms of the trust deed are maintained and this is a regular item for discussion by governors
 - monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship, using the outcomes to plan improvements.

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

The school vision refers to its values as being Christian but this is not articulated clearly enough in its vision statement to shape the school's approach to its status as a church school. However, pupils are able to speak thoughtfully of some of the Christian values and are aware of the impact they have on their lives. For example, they have shown compassion, friendship and thankfulness in choosing to raise money for charities. This comes from good teaching in RE and from collective worship. They comment that values give them 'something to follow' and speak with enthusiasm about RE. They show awareness of the need for quiet, spiritual times. One said that these were 'times to speak to God and to hear him in your heart'. Pupils are also able speak about specific times when prayer has helped them. They have set up a special prayer corner in the church, which is nearby. This is available for all the community to use. The school is using the 'Understanding Christianity' (UC) material to great effect, dovetailing with the current RE syllabus. It is giving pupils the ability to understand and discuss Christianity as a faith. RE is, therefore, contributing to pupils' spiritual development and to the Christian character of the school.

As with other foundation subjects, staff meeting time is dedicated to discussing, planning and monitoring RE. A member of staff enthusiastically leads this. Pupils' work arising from the UC material has been displayed around the school.

There is a church-based after school club, 'Angel Space', which pupils speak of with enthusiasm. In collaboration with five other local schools in the informal BeSKILD trust, pupils have been able to gain first hand experiences of other religions and cultures through sessions put on by the St Philip's Centre. Pupils have valued these experiences and recognise how it is important to understand and respect those of other faiths or of none.

Monitoring and KSI results show that pupils at Diseworth make good progress. Each child is treated as an individual and there is a great sense of nurturing and being part of a family. Effective, caring support is in place for those with specific needs and parents speak of the concern for the spiritual needs of all pupils. Staff and parents voice this as being part of the school's Christian ethos, although the significance is not fully understood. Parents speak of choosing the school because they value the nurturing atmosphere, the feeling of being part of a family and the school's Christian values. The school works in partnership with parents and relationships between all stakeholders are good. Pupils generally behave well but the school has had to manage a few challenging issues. These have been addressed in a caring and sensitive manner that reflects the school's Christian character but again, this is not expressed in the behaviour policy.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The grade for the impact of collective worship is not better because recommendations from the last report have not been fully implemented. Although staff carry out monitoring and evaluation in an informal way, pupils are not regularly active in this role, nor in planning and leading worship. Nevertheless, pupils say that collective worship is important to them, as it is a quiet time in the day that gives them time to think and give thanks to God. Collective worship is planned around a series of themes, often supporting morality and British values, interspersed with festivals in the church year. Stories from the Bible are regularly included, which gives children some understanding of Jesus, his life and his teaching. A candle is lit at the beginning and pupils know this is to remind them that Jesus is the light of the world. They are not able to articulate clearly what this means but relate it to the candles lit during Anglican church services. Members of staff lead collective worship in turn and the incumbent or another member of the church leads once a week. This ensures that pupils experience a variety of leadership and worship styles. Each month there is a service in the parish church to which parents and the community are invited. Parents welcome the opportunities to attend on the occasions when worship is in the church. They speak of their appreciation of the values and foundations of faith that their children are learning and comment positively upon how these are reflected in children's conversations and attitudes to events and current affairs. They also comment on the positive role models provided by staff and the incumbent.

Most pupils know the Lord's Prayer and have had the opportunity to write their own prayers. Some have an understanding of the value and relevance of prayer in their everyday lives. 'Understanding Christianity' has been introduced this year and its positive effects can be seen. For example, pupils are developing a clearer grasp of the concept and significance of the Trinity.

Behaviour during collective worship is respectful and attentive and pupils are eager to respond when given the opportunity. They speak of worship led by the previous and the current incumbents with enthusiasm and also of 'Angel Space', a well-attended after-school group, organised by the church. This group often builds upon the themes used in school worship.

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

There are some elements of effective leadership in place but strategic governance as a church school is ineffective. It is the specific duty of the governors, particularly the foundation governors, to ensure that the character and ethos of the school as a church school is maintained. This is not evident. Since the last incumbent left in 2015, one position of foundation governor has remained vacant and this has weakened the impact of foundation governors. The current incumbent has four Church of England primary schools within her benefice. The instrument of government states that she is entitled to be an ex-officio foundation governor, but has not taken up the role at this school. The diocese has not appointed anyone in her place.

Areas for development from the last inspection have not been fully addressed. They include the promotion and celebration of the school's distinctive Christian character and values in the mission statement, aims and objectives. Whilst governors and staff have discussed values in general, Christian thinking has not driven them. This means that the opportunity to promote the school's Christian character has been lost and this has limited the wider understanding in the community.

A second focal point was to continue to support pupils to enable them to play an active role in planning and leading worship. There is evidence that pupils have helped create their own version of the Christmas story and take part in some assemblies but there is no evidence that they have played an active or leading role on a regular basis. This lack of leadership experience may hinder their growth in faith and reduces their chance to serve others by leading worship.

Another point was the recommendation for governors to develop a focussed approach to monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness and its collective worship. This recommendation was discussed but records show that the outcome was: '*It was felt that the focus of any monitoring and evaluation needed to be on the quality of teaching and learning and the priorities which form the school improvement plan.*' This does not support the school's instrument of government, which states that '*The school will preserve and develop its religious character... It aims to... encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values...*' There is no monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness or collective worship by the governing body and it does not appear as an item on the agenda of governors' meetings. Consequently, they have no information to inform their strategic planning or to hold leaders to account.

Provision for RE and arrangements for collective worship meet statutory requirements. There is strong leadership of RE within the school, which is bringing continued improvement. The school has good relationships with the local church, through the weekly leading of collective worship, Angel Corner and pupils' regular visits to the parish church. Parents say the leaders of these activities provide very positive Christian role models for their children.

The school's membership of BeSKILD (an informal trust of six local schools) has enabled mutual support for staff, sharing of good practice and the opportunity for pupils to share activities with those from other local schools. These particularly enhance both the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SCMC) curriculum and enrichment provision and have included sporting events, a residential trip and an RE diversity day.

The school also has a strong relationship with parents and the community via the Friends of Diseworth School. This too has a significant impact on the pupils in that they see people working together for the common good. The creation of an extra classroom ready for the expansion of KS2 to include Year 6 was possible largely due to the support of parents. They have not only raised money but have also done much of the physical work to convert the staff room into a teaching area.

There is much to be commended in this small school. It is highly valued by the community, who are committed to its success. However, as a small school, it faces many challenges and its Christian ethos is not playing a role in shaping its strategic development.