

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Iron Acton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Wootton Road, Iron Acton, South Gloucestershire. BS37 9UZ

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Bristol</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Date of inspection	11 December 2017
Date of last inspection	14 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Voluntary Controlled 109162
Headteacher	Mike Riches
Inspector's name and number	Rev. David Hatrey 844

#### School context

Iron Acton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary is a smaller than average school. The majority of children come from a White British heritage. The number of children who are entitled to pupil premium funding is below national averages, whilst the number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in-line with national averages. A new leadership team have been appointed since the last inspection.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Iron Acton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Children have a good understanding of distinctive Christian values which they are confident to articulate and recognise how they influence their lives and attainment.
- The children's worship team make a full contribution to collective worship developing messages which are relevant to all.
- Leadership is enthusiastic and ambitious and articulates a distinctive Christian vision for the life of the church school.
- The school has developed strong relationships with the community, particularly the church who make a valuable contribution to the daily life of the school.
- The school has developed rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of a church school which leads to on-going improvements.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed the Christian vision into the life of the school so all stakeholders understand and recognise where it makes a difference to daily life.
- Develop children's understanding of prayer and different types of prayer so that the thoughts of the older children show a growing maturity and depth of thought.
- Identify high quality experiences to develop children's personal spirituality enabling them to express this in a variety of creative ways.

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

Christian distinctiveness is good because Christian values are well established in daily life and children are confident to articulate their understanding and how they influence their lives and thinking. The school community agreed six core Christian values. These are; trust, friendship, compassion, justice, truthfulness and hope. There is a strong emphasis on showing how these values make a difference to children's lives so they understand their relevance and importance. Children explain what values look like in daily life, where they use them and the impact that they make. Strong links are made between values and learning. Children talk about how they tackle challenging work or how these help them to be calm when they are anxious. Values help them to feel special and unique which develops their confidence so they have an enthusiasm for learning. There is a well developed awareness of the Christian distinctiveness of these values. Children link these to a Bible verse or key story which reflects its distinctive meaning. They are able to recall these stories in some detail and explain what they mean to them. Further, they relate to other Bible stories which provide different perspectives on each value. Christian values are seen as helping them to become better people. Children look to Jesus' example and talk about how He shows us how to use values. The quality of behaviour is good and children readily make good relationships. There is a real sense of being a family with children of all ages playing together which continues even when they leave school. Adults model these values in their daily interactions. There are few instances of poor behaviour or bullying and if they occur, addressed by references to values. Through feedback from children the school knows how values have influenced attainment recognising how children feel valued and unique. Attainment is at least in-line with national expectations and in several areas above. Disadvantaged children are effectively supported which enables them to make similar progress to their peers. The provision for spirituality is developing well with an agreed understanding from which all staff draw. A framework for reflecting about spiritual aspects, 'Windows, Mirrors and Doors' is secure and children are confident to use this. Opportunities in the curriculum have been identified which cover a range of experiences. There are opportunities to record and express their ideas but at present these are largely written. The school is aware that children's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith is an area to develop. However, children's cultural awareness is a particular strength. Through the teaching of other world faiths, visits to other places of worship and other schools in Bristol children talk in some depth and sensitivity about those who hold different beliefs to their own. They have a high degree of tolerance and respect for others and what they can learn from them. Religious education has a high profile well supported by leadership. Key priorities are identified for each year which is raising the quality of teaching and learning. A good example of this is the introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. This challenges children's thinking about important questions of meaning and purpose so children see the relevance of the subject. Equally RE makes a good contribution to developing an understanding of Christian values.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is good because of the contribution it makes to developing children's understanding of Christian values and the increased opportunities children have to contribute and lead worship. Leadership gives worship a high profile and are continuously engaged in extending the impact that it has. A number of significant changes have been made in the last two years. At the centre of this are more detailed plans for worship. Each week an aspect of the current value is explored in greater depth. This has enhanced children's knowledge of the Christian distinctiveness of these values. There is a strong focus on biblical material so that children develop a good knowledge of Jesus. There is also a growing awareness of the Trinity. Additional leaders provide a range of approaches which has responded to a request from the children for greater variety. This includes an 'Open the Book' group, local clergy and those from other Christian denominations. Children experience a variety of different styles which they say makes worship more interesting. This has been further enhanced by training for all staff to lead worship, a target from the previous inspection. The headteacher's visit to outstanding church schools to see excellent examples has led to further developments. A children's worship team now lead worship and each week they make a good contribution to class worship. Children enjoy opportunities to lead worship and articulate how worship has improved. They plan dramas and ensure that messages developed are relevant for children. Opportunities for reflection are regularly included where children use the 'Windows, Mirrors, Doors' approach to support their response to the ideas raised. This frequently culminates in children initiating fund raising for a charity. Examples of this include the Shoe Box appeal linked with the local church. Leaders ensure monitoring and evaluation is well developed. Feedback from children is a key part of this and leads directly to new initiatives. Each year there are key priorities to be addressed with staff taking increased ownership for them. Previous targets are reviewed so all are aware of the impact that this has had. A good example of this has been the collective worship reflection diaries. Children confidently talk about the difference worship makes to them. This includes the importance of coming together as a family, moments of calm and how values shape their relationships. Seasons of the church's year

and festivals are well known. Children talk about these with a good degree of understanding particularly their significance for Christians. They take increased responsibility for these celebrations in church. An Advent reflection calendar posed a question each day to enable children to show compassion during the day. Children's responses to prayer show some confusion about its nature and purpose. There is no clear strategy as to when children are introduced to different types of prayers. Some children are growing in confidence to pray spontaneously at the end of worship. However, prayers of older children do not demonstrate a deeper level of thought and maturity.

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

Leadership and management are good because a distinctive Christian vision effectively informs the work of being a church school. Leaders have thought carefully about what a church school is and how this is informed by biblical understanding. At the centre of this is the uniqueness and importance of each individual. Everyone at the school has a range of diverse talents which the school seeks to develop by encouraging everyone to fulfil their potential. Governors undertake their role seriously in reviewing the vision on an annual basis. This leads to evaluating previous initiatives and setting new targets, thus ensuring the school continues to develop. Children talk confidently about the school motto and feel valued because they have opportunities to fulfil their potential in different areas. A frequent comment made by parents whose children have recently joined the school is the difference this makes to their attitudes and academic progress. Further, they feel that Christian values make a difference to their relationships and how they saw the school as a community. The school's Christian distinctiveness is particularly evident in its care and provision for the well-being of all. The quality of monitoring and evaluation is a particular strength, strongly led by the leadership. Listening to children talk allows them to share their views which are valued. This leads directly to action such as changes to worship. Monitoring is enhanced by learning walks, lesson observations and surveys. Governors are increasingly involved in evaluation through their involvement in the ethos team which is making an impact on the raised profile of the school's Christian distinctiveness. The ethos team attends focused training which develops their understanding of what it means to be a church school. This complements the rigorous tracking of pupil progress of which they are closely involved. What stands out is the enthusiasm and ambition of the leadership team to build upon their successes. There is close liaison with the diocese using their expertise to develop staff professional development. The best example of this being the introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. Staff are given opportunities to develop their skills in order to take up senior posts in church schools. The local church makes an influential contribution notably through a knowledgeable clergy team, but equally through the commitment of local church members. The vicar leads worship and contributes to RE teaching whilst there is valuable and enthusiastic support to governance. There are clear mutual benefits. Parents celebrate the school's work and greatly value the quality of relationships between staff and parents. The school involves parents in their children's learning successfully, notably through an end of module review where children explain the learning they have made. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report December 2017 Iron Acton CE VC Primary School Wootton Road Iron Acton BS37 9UZ