

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

### **Dorrington Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School**

Church Road, Dorington, Shrewsbury SY5 7JL

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Satisfactory**

**Diocese**

**Hereford**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Date of inspection

21 September 2017

Date of last inspection

20 March 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

123545

Executive Headteacher

Kerrie Lewis

Inspector's name and number

Andrew Teale 770

#### **School context**

Dorrington C of E (Aided) School is small village primary school with 40 pupils on role. Pupils come from the local village and surrounding area. The school currently has three classes. There have been considerable changes and challenges since the last SIAS inspection in 2012. In March 2017, Ofsted placed the school in special measures. The school now has an Executive Headteacher who also leads Condover CE Primary. The two schools began working closely together in January 2017 and a number of staff are now carrying out work in both schools. There have been significant staffing and governance changes since the last inspection. The school will be sponsored by the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust from December 2017. St Edward's Church is located next to the school. The incumbent is also relatively new in post and is a member of the governing body.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dorington Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

- Dorington provides a nurturing and supportive environment for children and families underpinned by Christian values and strong links with the community.
- The Christian ethos is evident and is clearly having impact upon the whole school community.
- The close partnership between the school, local church and clergy significantly enhances the Christian life especially the worship of the school.
- Partnership with a neighbouring church school is enabling Dorington to improve outcomes.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Continue to develop Christian values as a means to raise standards for all pupils. To develop a practical outworking of the values so that learners improve in self-confidence and so have positive approaches to facing challenges in their learning.
- Make more effective use of monitoring and assessment in religious education (RE) in order to facilitate increased differentiation and increase achievement levels for all pupils.
- Establish monitoring and careful evaluation of worship to inform development planning and so improve provision for spiritual development.

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

The school's mission and practice makes it explicit that core Christian values of peace, trust, love, hope and friendship are central to the work of the school. One child explained, 'Without love, we are nothing'. These values are at the heart of the close connection with Conover school, and are transforming the opportunities for the children at Dorrington. This partnership has a positive impact on the academic, spiritual and personal development of pupils. Children's behaviour towards each other at playtimes and in lesson times, shows how they embed these into their daily lives. The relationships between different year groups are extremely strong and this contributes powerfully to the nurturing ethos that sits at the heart of the school's distinctive character. 'There is plenty of love for everyone.' Dorrington is clearly a school which values all God's children.

Children are beginning to talk with confidence about how the school's core values affect their lives in school and are able to draw inspiration from Bible stories. One child explained how the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us about love and friendship. Attendance is increasing because children enjoy coming to school. Links with the partner school have had positive effects on staff development and training. This is leading to significant improvements in the academic achievement of learners across the school. Rising achievement is supported by a determined focus by all staff on the learning needs of individuals and the creation of a purposeful and nurturing environment. Within this, the children feel safe and cared for.

The village and church community cherishes its school and makes a very important contribution to the experiences of learners. The children also evidently bring a vibrancy and energy to the church community. The children's discussions showed that they value the distinctive ethos they experience in school and greatly enjoy their termly visits to St Edward's church, as well as the work with the incumbent.

Parents and children report that, though problems are rare within the school, those that do occur are dealt with quickly and sensitively by staff. One parent praised the nurturing and sensitive support received from the school during challenging times for the family.

There are some engaging displays, such as the values board in the hall, which encourage spirituality through consideration of values themes. There are also spiritual reflection spaces in classrooms and the children make effective use of them such as for inspiration for worship planning. Opportunities for age-appropriate spiritual reflection and prayer outside of worship are being developed. Moral and cultural development of children is clearly a strength. Some curricular experiences are provided, including a strong Forest School programme, which are used to encourage thoughtful contemplation and focus on the natural world. Children are empathetic towards the needs of others and are determined to make a positive difference where they can.

RE is a key part of the wider curriculum and supports the Christian character of the school. The subject offers some opportunities to learn about and from Christianity and other faiths but these are not yet fully developed. This limits the development of children's understanding of their place within a diverse world.

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

The whole school community is included in a worship cycle, which centres on its rotation of Christian values. Parents are welcomed to worship on a termly basis, and they clearly value these services. A range of teaching staff and pupils are given opportunities to plan and lead worship. Children are actively included in worship delivered by members of the wider community every fortnight, through the 'Open the Book' programme. The incumbent has a major impact on the rich opportunities to worship in school. Children learn valuable lessons from worship in school such as, to treat others as we like to be treated. 'The unkind words we speak are like toothpaste squeezed from a tube and cannot easily be taken back'.

Children take an active role in preparing the assembly hall for daily worship. They also sing worship songs with enthusiasm which shows how worship is important in the life of the school. Collective worship nourishes the prayer life of the community. Children are developing their confidence when joining in with familiar prayers such as the Lord's Prayer. Prayer outside collective worship, such as before lunch or in personal moments of reflection, is also developing. Reflection spaces in classrooms are used to inspire the Worship Wednesday sessions led by the children.

The coordination and strategic overview of worship is at an early stage. Record keeping and planning is developing and this has recently led to a more coherent cycle of worship themes. There are opportunities for children to reflect on the impact of acts of worship each week. School worship provides a strong framework for children's

understanding of Anglican practice within a broader context of Christian traditions. The life of the school and the behaviour of members of the community is shaped and influenced by these strong worship traditions. Children have a basic understanding of the Christian belief in God as the Holy Trinity.

The monitoring, evaluation and strategic planning for worship lacks the deeper involvement of a larger group of pupils, staff and governors. This prevents the grade from being higher.

Worship provides the hub for involvement of the church and wider community in school life. The leadership team also recognises that the further development of spirituality beyond worship time, into all areas of school life, is a priority. Plans for leaders to attend diocesan training on this aspect of church school life are now in place.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

RE is now recognised as an important subject by staff and children. Children enjoy aspects of religious education, such as work with the incumbent and visits to church.

Teaching in RE is currently satisfactory, however, there is limited use of assessment. Pupils broadly attain standards expected for their age but there is no indication of the progress they are making or whether it is fast enough. RE is taught in mixed year group classes where careful differentiation is lacking to ensure expectations are appropriate for all ages and groups of children.

Work in religious education is supported by some engaging displays around the school. These are most effective where children have made contributions through their own work and where they have the chance to interact.

The monitoring and assessment of RE work requires significant development in order to more accurately measure standards and ensure that all children reach their full potential in RE. The 'Understanding Christianity' programme has recently been introduced and this has already begun to have an impact on RE teaching. Further training and development opportunities are planned to facilitate this process. The new RE coordinator has a high level of subject expertise and there is a development plan in place which accurately targets the key areas for improvement in RE

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

Planned conversion to a sponsored academy within the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET), close partnership with Condover CE Primary School and skilled leadership from the executive headteacher are clearly having a transformative effect on the school. Parents report that the changes have led to significant improvements. 'There is a caring atmosphere in the school and the staff are all very approachable and happy to help'. The current leadership team have undertaken an extensive improvement programme within the school. There is now effective monitoring of the much-improved progress of learners. There is a focus on the need to rapidly raise standards and religious education is recognised as a central area for the school's development planning. Governors accurately describe the school as being at the very core of the local community.

Continued staffing changes within the small team means that leadership continues to evolve and leadership of worship is not yet sufficiently well established. Governors, in partnership with the executive headteacher, are directing major changes within the school to good strategic effect, in ways which reinforce the Christian foundations of this school. School documentation, and the recently re-designed website, articulate a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian values and the Church of England's own vision for education. Parents now recognise the distinctive Christian ethos and this is a factor which influences their choice of school. Dorrington encourages children to make a meaningful contribution to church school leadership and they have played an active part in choosing the core values to be at the heart of its distinctive character. The school also engages in self-evaluation with consideration of pupil views as part of this process.

The school leadership team fully recognises what needs to be done to continue to develop. The school is careful during staff appointments to ensure that successful applicants recognise the importance of the school's distinctive church school character. Christian values, such as friendship and trust, have contributed strongly to the leadership of school and the relationships which exist between key stakeholders. The work with the partner school is of central importance to the future success of this school and it has created valuable opportunities to develop future leaders of church schools.

The school recognises that the quality of provision in RE remains an important area for development. Leaders have recently attended the diocesan 'Understanding Christianity' training and the school is at the early stage of introducing this programme, including its associated assessment materials. Increasing the focus on monitoring and progress tracking in RE, has been recognised as an area for improvement by the school.