

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

### St Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Albany Road  
Montpellier  
Bristol  
BS6 5LQ

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Bristol</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Bristol
Date of inspection	19 June 2018
Date of last inspection	12 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 109144
Headteacher	Jon Barr
Inspector's name and number	Patricia Morris 626

#### School context

St Barnabas is a smaller than average sized primary school with 171 children on roll. Over half the children are of Muslim faith and less than a fifth are of Christian faith. Over half the children have English as a second language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average and the Pupil Premium is well above. Attendance is below the national average. The headteacher has been in post since April 2018 and the deputy head since January 2018. The Diocesan Church and School Partnership Award was achieved in November 2017.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Barnabas as a Church of England school are good

- The welcoming, inclusive Christian ethos ensures that every child is nurtured and valued as an individual.
- The dedication of the new leadership team, supported by very committed staff and governors, is having a positive effect in securing the school's capacity for development as a church school.
- The respect for diversity and difference in all faith communities, celebrated within a Christian ethos, enables all children to develop an understanding of the wider world and global issues.
- The partnership with the church contributes to rich experiences that engage and challenge children.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop a more rigorous system to monitor and evaluate collective worship that involves all stakeholders and informs future planning in order to ensure that worship is constantly moving forward.
- Continue to develop a more structured approach for governors to monitor and evaluate the Christian distinctiveness of the school by gathering and evidencing information, so that they have a clearer understanding of their role to enable them to increasingly challenge leaders and hold them to account.
- Support children's understanding of values so that they are put into action in order to manage their behaviour.
- Develop a shared understanding between all members of the school community of what spirituality means so that more clearly defined opportunities to engage children in spiritual experiences can be identified across the curriculum.

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

The school's Christian vision and school motto of 'let our light shine', inspired by the words of Nelson Mandela, are firmly underpinned by six core distinctively Christian values of friendship, respect, trust, unity, justice and peace. All members of the school community were involved in deciding values, generating a strong sense of ownership. Christian values are at the heart of all the school does and are reflected in the welcoming, inclusive environment where diversity and difference are celebrated and respected. Values are well supported by biblical quotes and rooted in Christian traditions. They give children a sense of direction and act as a bridge across all faiths. The majority of children identify the importance of values and acknowledge the positive effect they have on their daily lives and achievements. However, some behaviour is challenging at times and although children are encouraged to use values to reflect on their own actions, this is still in the early stages. Behaviour is endorsed through rules that make up the acronym 'shine'. These are displayed throughout the school and children confidently explain how they are a reminder of how to behave, to live out the school motto. The Christian character contributes to the strong relationships across the school, with staff working together as a team and providing good pastoral support within a nurturing environment. There is some understanding of spirituality but opportunities for spiritual development are not always clearly identified. Staff are working together to identify occasions across the curriculum for children to explore a personal awareness and an empathy with others. There are many opportunities for children to develop an appreciation of the world around them and religious education (RE) makes a valuable contribution to children's understanding of the world beyond their own lives through opportunities to ask questions and explore feelings and beliefs. Moral, social and cultural development have a high priority and are well supported through celebrations such as Black History Month and Refugee Week. Respect for diversity and difference in all faith communities is evident and a strength of the school. This is developed through the celebration of major religious festivals. For example, during Ramadan, the school ensured prayer rooms were available for children to pray and reflect, while a member of the community arranged a whole school celebration for Eid. Such experiences mean that children confidently reflect on similarities and differences between faiths and recognise comparisons between stories from the Bible and those in other cultures. Children develop an understanding of Christianity as a world faith because of their good understanding of how Christian festivals are celebrated around the world. The Christian character consistently informs the school's approach to attendance, which has been an issue in the past but is gradually improving.

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

Collective worship is important in the life of the school and is seen as a time for everyone to come together. The inclusive ethos ensures that children understand they are part of a wider family where everyone is valued as an individual. Worship is clearly underpinned by Christian values that also apply to other faiths. They are well linked to Bible stories and relevant stories from other cultures. Children are engaged and respectful in worship. There is increasing evidence of children linking values to their own experiences and life in the world today. Worship is well planned although there is limited monitoring and evaluation so there is no evidence to identify its impact or to inform future planning. Children enjoy contributing to worship and are taking increasing responsibility for particular aspects. This is being further developed through the introduction of a 'SHINE Crew', who support daily worship and lead prayer, and this is having a positive impact on encouraging children to become more involved in worship. Prayer and reflection are an important part of worship although children's understanding of the meaning of prayer, and its relevance to everyday life, is limited. Children know the school prayer and write prayers connected to values. Some particularly thoughtful prayers and poems about the value of 'trust' are displayed in very impressive class floor books, which also show evidence of 'big' questions such as the meaning of the value 'peace'. This makes some contribution to children's spiritual development, as does the 'stillness time' at the end of each worship. The main Christian festivals are included in worship and festivals from other cultures are acknowledged and celebrated. Children are particularly enthusiastic about the 'Star trail', which took place in church at Christmas. They are motivated as they explain how the Christmas story was retold, beginning with Mary and Joseph fleeing their country in the same way as children who were recently welcomed to the school from Syria. The Shine Crew eagerly helped at each station where there was a Bible passage and a book to read. The opportunity for children to share this event with parents on the following Sunday made it a powerful and enriching experience. This is one of four 'Focus Sundays' initiated by the local vicar, the other three being at Easter, Harvest and the transition of older children to the next stage of their education. Such examples successfully contribute to developing the partnership with the local church, which is increasingly strong. The vicar is passionate in her support for the school and the church congregation regularly hold the school community in their prayers.

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

After a number of changes in leadership over the past two years, the relatively new leadership team are having a positive effect in ensuring the Christian distinctiveness of the school is given a high profile. Leaders articulate and

promote a clear vision based on distinctive Christian values and are already making notable progress in many areas. There is a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness based on realistic self-evaluation. The headteacher and deputy are providing effective leadership and are committed to the many challenges that lie ahead. Governors recognise that, after so many changes and a lack of strategic leadership, the leadership team's dedication and hard work is starting to make a positive impact in moving the school forward as a church school. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic chair and vice chair, assisted by the relevant expertise of the governing body, are extremely supportive and very positive about the future of the school. The introduction of an ethos committee is having a positive impact in addressing the area for development from the previous inspection, by developing a more structured approach to monitoring and evaluating the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Governors are beginning to be more effective in asking probing questions to hold leaders to account. They appreciate the importance of gathering and evidencing information in order to have a clearer understanding of their role and enable them to increasingly challenge leaders. The relationship between the school, church and the local community is becoming progressively stronger, contributing to children's growing understanding of local, national and global communities. This is evidenced through opportunities such as Focus Sundays, involvement in local celebrations and fundraising for national and global charities, like Red Nose Day and Sports Relief. Children are very aware of the wider world in which they live. There is a strong feeling that children learn compassion because they are exposed to each other's experiences. Parents confirm this perception, saying they are proud of the multi-cultural aspects and feel this enables children to develop respect for different faiths, which are sensitively incorporated into school life. They are extremely supportive and very positive about the school. They appreciate the welcoming, inclusive atmosphere and the openness of the school. Parents feel that all staff are approachable and the nurturing ethos means they really know the children and are supportive of the whole family. They feel children are making good progress and getting a good education. Parents' evenings are used to gather information and feedback, and a monthly coffee morning has been introduced, with increasing attendance, to share ideas. Parents say that any issues are dealt with quickly, although there was some concern over recent incidents of bullying but they feel these are being addressed. Leadership of worship and RE is given a high priority in the school. The improvement strategies adopted by leaders are starting to have a positive impact and more rigour is being introduced in order to ensure sustained improvement. Children enjoy RE and feel 'it is inspirational learning about other faiths and cultures'. They enjoy the fact that they can contribute by sharing information about their own religion and say, 'There is something here for everyone.' Standards of attainment in RE are in line with national expectations, with both RE and collective worship meeting statutory requirements. The leadership of the school is working hard in building a solid foundation and is in a very good position to move forward and grow.

SIAMS report June 2018 St Barnabas Church of England VC Primary School, Montpellier, Bristol BS6 5LQ