

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

Collaton St Mary Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Blagdon Lane, Paignton, Devon TQ3 3YA
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Exeter
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Torbay
Date of inspection	15 September 2016
Date of last inspection	29 September 2011
School's unique reference number	113476
Executive headteacher	Claire Platt
Inspector's name and number	Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Collaton St Mary is smaller than the average size primary school with 199 children on roll. Children come from the surrounding area and are mainly of white British heritage. They come from mixed socio economic backgrounds. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages. The school is led by an executive headteacher who leads a management partnership with another local church primary school. A head of school is responsible for the day to day running of the school. A new lead practitioner for church school distinctiveness was created in September 2016 who works across both schools in the partnership.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Collaton St Mary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian environment encourages children to reflect on faith and belief in considerable depth which makes a considerable contribution to their growing spiritual awareness.
- Children and adults throughout the school community clearly express how the Christian ethos has made a difference to their lives.
- The high level of commitment to the continual development of the school as a church school by leaders at all levels has enabled the school to make significant progress since the previous inspection

Areas to improve

- Strengthen links between the four core Christian values and children's learning so that they have greater impact on their achievement and progress.
- Review collective worship so that there are more opportunities for children to develop a deeper appreciation of the Trinity.
- Ensure that teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is of a consistent high quality throughout the school by providing more opportunities for children to explore their own ideas and thoughts in greater depth.

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

A significant strength of the school, one which is crucial to its success as a church school, is a continual reflection which ensures that explicitly Christian values make a difference to the lives of children and adults in the whole school community. This is clearly evident in the way that the school is constantly challenging itself to review its values so that they best impact on children's learning as well as their personal development. An excellent example of this is the recent creation of four new core values and their introduction in the summer of 2016. The process to identify the new values is an example of the considerable depth of understanding of what it means to be a church school and how to take the Christian ethos forward. Because these new values incorporate a previous set, already well embedded, they build on the existing vision through a greater emphasis on children's learning. Children already understand how values such as aiming high, inspiring others and showing friendship are underpinned by Christian teaching. For example, they readily use stories from the Bible to explain how Jesus inspired others and showed friendship. Furthermore, children use values such as compassion, trust and forgiveness when explaining what new values, such as aiming high, means to them. The new values are becoming increasingly integral to teaching and are making an impact on the quality of children's learning, in which children attain standards that are at least in line with national expectations, but have not yet been fully explored across the school. The school has made excellent progress in developing a shared understanding of spirituality that gives teachers a framework to offer high quality experiences for children to reflect in a variety of ways. Children recognise that the ability to reflect is an important aspect of learning and a key part of developing as an individual. They do so with confidence to openly share their thoughts and ideas and relish the opportunity to be challenged in their thinking on matters of faith and belief. Children show considerable respect when talking about different religions and appreciate that everyone should have the right to worship according to their personal faith. This contributes to the children's excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education and the high quality of relationships throughout the school community. An excellent example of this is the emphasis placed on appreciating the natural world through food production. The food that children grow on their allotments is used by the school kitchen and contributes to regular lunches which children host for members of the local community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is outstanding because of the significant contribution it makes to the children's understanding of Christian values and the opportunities for children to reflect on the meaning of worship messages and what this means for their own lives. In particular, children clearly understand that Christian teaching has a relevance to their own lives today and apply it everyday life in school and beyond. Acts of worship therefore transform the way that children act especially in how they treat others. For example, children spoke eloquently about following the example of Jesus to look after others whether they were your friends or not. Similarly, they explained how 'it isn't good enough just to feel sorry for someone; you have to do something about it'. The impact of worship has improved since the last inspection because children have greater involvement in planning, leading and evaluating it. Children have regular opportunities to lead acts of worship as a whole class or to participate in class based collective worship. There are a variety of ways through which children contribute to its effective evaluation whether with regular classroom evaluations or reviews with the ethos group and formal questionnaires. Together these give comprehensive feedback which is used to make further improvements. Children are developing their appreciation of the nature of the Trinity and speak confidently about God and Jesus. How well worship supports children to develop a deeper appreciation of the Trinity has not yet been fully explored. The weekly involvement of the 'Open the Book' team helps children learn a wide range of Bible stories. The regular celebration of major Christian festivals and half termly Eucharist in the local church gives children a good appreciation of the Anglican tradition and church year. They regard the church as an integral part of the life of the school saying that they feel at home in the church and enjoy taking part in church services.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Children make good progress in RE to attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. They are particularly skilful when responding to challenging questions although these opportunities are not always followed up in lessons and children therefore do not always express their views to the extent to which they are able. However, when this does happen, teachers have the skill and confidence to challenge children who respond with enthusiasm. Teachers' confidence is also seen in the way that they reflect on learning objectives from the scheme of work which they adapt to meet the needs of children in the school. Children have positive attitudes towards RE and are attentive and engaged in their learning. They are focussed on their work and keen to do well. They listen with consideration to the views of others and show respect when sharing views on a range of religions. Children use their secure knowledge of RE to enhance their learning by making connections between prior learning and the topic being currently studied. Through these opportunities, RE makes a valuable contribution to the children's moral and cultural education. The school is in the process of developing assessment of RE as it moves away from national curriculum levels towards methods consistent with other core subjects. This is at an early stage but the lead practitioner for RE has a clear grasp of what needs to be done to ensure that assessment is reliable with accurate moderation across the school. The use of 'scrap books', which capture children's thoughts and comments, is a particularly effective way of gathering evidence of their understanding and high quality responses.

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

Leaders and management have ensured that the school has made excellent progress since the last inspection in developing an ethos that better impacts on the children's learning as well as their personal development. The executive headteacher has a very clear understanding of what it means to be a church school and how values, such as aiming high, can be explicitly underpinned by Christian teaching. She is fully supported by other school leaders such as the head of school and the recently appointed lead practitioner for church school distinctiveness. This is an exciting innovation for the school as it includes leadership of RE and collective worship across both schools in the management partnership. The lead practitioner is developing this role and has an accurate grasp of key priorities to take these aspects forward. Procedures to evaluate the impact of the Christian ethos have also improved and are now far more effective because there are clearer processes in place to gather high quality evidence which is used to identify improvements. Examples of these include the introduction of prayer boxes around the school and, from listening to children, the introduction of class based acts of worship. Central to the identification of these improvements is the successful work of the ethos group which, because it comprises of all members of the school community including children, has a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas to develop as a church school. Links between this group and the governors' curriculum and ethos committee are strong because key persons are members of both groups. As these groups work closely together with school leaders, self-evaluation as a church school is very accurate. School leaders have a good understanding of the latest developments in church school initiatives which are reflected in the school's own priorities for improvement. The school has outstanding links with the local church which makes an excellent contribution to the life of the school. The provision of a weekly coffee morning, run by church members using the school community room, is an opportunity for parents and other members of the community to regularly come together socially and has been very effective in providing support and comfort. Similarly, the recent initiative to involve church members to work with the school to begin a choir is a reflection of the commitment to building links between the two communities. Indeed, many people spoken to regard the school and church as one community. The vicar's appointment is relatively recent but he is establishing a distinct role in the life of the school spending time getting to know the children and their families. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.