



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James and Ebrington Church of England VA Primary School	Pear Tree Close, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, GL55 6DB
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Gloucester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Gloucester
Name of multi academy trust	N/A
Date/s of inspection	12 September 2016
Date of last inspection	15 June 2011
School's unique reference number	115713
Headteacher	Joanna Jonson
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Spitzer NS37

School context

St James and Ebrington Church of England Primary School was formed as a federation on 2 sites over thirty years ago. There are 196 children on roll, 150 in 5 mixed age classes at St James in the town of Chipping Campden and 46 in 2.5 mixed age classes in the nearby village of Ebrington. The vast majority of children are from white British heritage families. The numbers of children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities are in line with the national average. The numbers eligible to be in receipt of the pupil premium are also in line with the national average. A year ago, the governing body secured the appropriate funding from the diocese and proposed relocating the Ebrington site to the one at St James so that all children could be educated together. The school consequently experienced a period of significant difficulties resulting in the proposal being dropped and the resignation of the governing body. An interim governing body was appointed at the start of the summer term.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James and Ebrington VA as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian values, explicitly promoted by collective worship, have a significant impact on children's academic achievement, personal and spiritual development
- The visionary leadership of the headteacher and her staff team, drive the continuous improvement of the school's distinctive Christian character, thereby maximising its impact
- The high quality of spiritual awareness promoted by the school's distinctive Christian character has a strong impact on the whole life of the school

Areas to improve

- Develop a reflective space within the school grounds at St James as a focal point for the whole school community so that opportunities to promote personal spirituality are widened
- Include a programme of visits to places of worship for other faiths within the religious education (RE) curriculum to develop a greater understanding of people of diverse communities living in this country

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

St James and Ebrington Church of England Primary School is a welcoming, inclusive, Christian school community. It promotes values rooted in Christian teaching which are integral to the whole life of the school. They also have a strong impact on children's personal development and well-being. The school creates a secure inclusive Christian environment in which all children are cherished and highly valued. This, in turn, has a very positive impact on the children's academic achievement which is generally above national expectations. For instance, children say that values, such as perseverance and courage, linked to the stories of David and the fisherman, help them not to 'give up' in their learning. Relationships particularly between children and staff, are outstanding. The sense of a strong, closely knit community, where children and staff are kind and supportive to one another, is palpable. Christian values of friendship, built on trust and respect are identified by children as integral to daily life. Initiatives to promote spiritual development are based on staff's shared understanding of spirituality and are planned in the school curriculum. They are having a profound impact on the life of the school. This is seen in the way each child's special unique qualities are represented by a pebble which is given to them on entry to the school and treasured throughout their life at school and beyond. Children talk of the 'calming effect' of their pebble and the way it helps them reflect on themselves and others. The way the school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective because it is rooted in the school's Christian values. The central importance of RE in promoting the school's distinctive character is evident in the way children talk with animation and enthusiasm about the subject. Christian values are explicitly linked to British values, thereby actively encouraging positive attitudes of respect and tolerance towards others; values which underpin British society.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is distinctively Christian and of central importance in the life of the school because all teaching staff attend worship demonstrating that they find it relevant at a personal level as well as for children. Children understand that worship helps them learn how God wants them to behave in their lives. As a result, it is highly effective in promoting the school's distinctive Christian values. This was noted in the way the story of Moses and the ten commandments was used very well to illustrate the Christian value of respect. Children are very attentive, engaged and find worship meaningful as a result of the variety of opportunities to actively participate. Worship is enhanced by older children who lead liturgical greetings and closing responses as well as prayers at the end. Worship leaders plan and lead regular 'Junior Open the Book' worship dramatising Bible stories modelled on the team from the local parish. Times of guided reflection and prayer during worship as well as the good use of visual images promote spiritual development very well. Worship develops the children's understanding of Anglican tradition very effectively. For example, by their good understanding of the colours of the church's seasons as well as the importance of the Trinity in Christian worship. Opportunities to develop personal spirituality are very effective. For example, this is seen in the good use made of prayer and interactive reflective spaces in classrooms. Although a spiritual garden is in place at the Ebrington site, creating a similar central space to develop spirituality in the school grounds at St James has not yet been addressed. The headteacher coordinates worship in a highly effective way. The views of staff are fully shared and included in the planning process. Themes which focus on values are linked clearly with the school's vision embedding it at the heart of school life. Worship is supported and monitored very well by the vicar. Worship leaders are regarded by children as an integral part of worship thereby enhancing this important part of school life.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards in RE are at least in line with national expectations and above for a significant minority. Monitoring by the subject leader provides evidence that teaching is at least good and this was verified in lessons seen. Learning is of high quality because teachers use well-chosen activities, often based on enquiry methods, which are inspiring and transformational. Questioning is open ended, challenging children to think deeply and reflect. This was evident in an outstanding Key Stage 2 lesson where children were exploring the dilemma of the temptation of Eve, using persuasive language in order to change others' viewpoints. Children's understanding of Christianity is exceptionally good and was evident in their knowledge of Bible stories. Progress between key stages is good as seen from tracking of children's learning over the last few years. The curriculum is interesting, exciting and relevant to children's needs. The RE curriculum promotes a deep understanding of Christian values. This was noted in a Key

Stage 1 lesson where role play was used to very good effect, enabling young children to recognise the Christian value of forgiveness in the parable of the Lost Son. The children identified very well with the feelings of the three main characters in the story due to the strong focus on spiritual development. This was reflected in children's comments that the lost son must have felt 'lonely' and that the father shed 'happy tears' when he saw his son coming home in the distance. Opportunities are taken to promote learning about other faiths in a very engaging manner. This was evident in the recent visit of a Buddhist monk to an older class which had had a powerful impact on developing children's understanding of spirituality. However opportunities to make visits to places of worship of other faiths are underdeveloped. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. Professional development is well chosen and very effective. Marking in children's books enhances learning very well because it is interactive, promoting deeper thinking. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject is thorough. It includes comparing the progress of the depth of children's understanding of key concepts in RE as well as their understanding of Christian values.

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is of the highest quality, is deeply embedded and has a significant impact on the whole school community. The improvement in the school's distinctive Christian character since the last inspection has been profound. The headteacher's strong Christian vision and the staff team's commitment to this vision are the driving force at the heart of the school's success and ongoing improvement as a church school. Her inspirational leadership and the spiritual support of the church are promoting a deep sense of community which is providing strength at all levels. As a result, the significant difficulties of the recent period have been overcome. The prayer station set up within the church for the school has had a powerful impact and has been highly valued by school staff and governors; as has the support of the diocese. The school's partnership with parents is very effective and plays a pivotal role in promoting the school's success as a church school. Until recently, the governors have been exceptionally well involved in all aspects of school life, resulting in a very effective church school's self-evaluation process. The new governing body have much appreciated the warm welcome received from staff, and have made an excellent start to their role. Professional development for the headteacher and other school leaders is a priority and used to good effect. It has included very effective training led by the vicar on the subject of spiritual development. The welcome service for new children and their families led by the vicar in school is another good example of this partnership. The school uses the church to celebrate and also for special events such as Mothering Day and Education Sunday. As a result, the links between the two communities are strong and mutually beneficial.

SIAMS report, September 2016, St James and Ebrington Church of England Primary School, Chipping Campden, GL55 6DB