

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Brington Church of England Voluntary Controlled School	
Church Lane Brington Cambridgeshire PE28 5AE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Ely
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection	18 May 2017
Date of last inspection	31 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 110827
Headteacher	Tracey Reid
Inspector's name and number	Pat George 845

School context

Brington is a very small village primary school with pupils from this village and the seven nearby small villages. Currently the 55 pupils on roll are taught in four classes, however the school has a falling roll. The catchment area of the school includes a small permanent traveller site. The majority of pupils are white British with 13% from Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) backgrounds. 23% of pupils are eligible for additional funding. The school has had a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection with most teachers new in post in September 2016 and the Headteacher since January 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brington as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Collective worship is an integral part of school day. It supports pupils to relate biblical material and Christian teaching to both their daily lives and the school core values with a strong emphasis on the central role of Jesus in this.
- Leadership, including governors, has a strong commitment to the vision and Christian values and therefore a sustainable impact on school improvement. They are confident about the impact of the values and vision on their school.
- Positive relationships based on distinctly Christian values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. This has a significant impact on their experiences, wellbeing and achievements of pupils.

Areas to improve

- To continue to develop pupil understanding and use of prayer spaces, inside and outside, so that pupil personal spirituality is enhanced and they have opportunities, if they wish, to be calm, reflect and pray at different times of the day.
- To broaden pupil knowledge and understanding of the Trinity, at an age appropriate level, so that they can more fully understand and articulate the role of the Trinity in worship.
- To continue to develop the quality of RE teaching and learning, so that its contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character, through pupil response, is more prominent in all aspects of school life.

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

The whole school community can articulate the impact of the distinctive Christian values which are deeply embedded and explicit in the daily life of the school. Their high profile is clear on the school website and around the school. The school reviewed its vision and values with all members of its community in the autumn term as part of its distinctiveness improvement plan. The impact of the actions in the plan is clear in the positive relationships and the daily life of the school. Values include generosity, peace, thankfulness and compassion with core values of love and forgiveness. The values are consistently applied by all staff and support staff speak of the improvement in attitudes and behaviour since the reviewed focus on values and how completely pupils live out the values.

Pupils are very clear that they are listened to and everyone is safe. They can link values to the school motto which is in the form of an acrostic of Brington. For example, they relate courage to the 'B', 'trying your best to be the best me I can be' and say taking new opportunities and challenges relates to the 'O'. Pupils and the school community are reminded and challenged by the questions related to the current value around the school. Pupils feel that worship makes them better people, that without it they would not know about values and be as kind, helpful or considerate. They can relate the values to Bible teaching, for example, explaining the values that the story of the good Samaritan shows; courage, compassion and hope. They understand that the Bible stories give them a moral code on which to base their actions. They appreciate the opportunities during the day to pray together in addition to worship, before lunch and at the end of the day. However, they are less clear about the role that their reflection area could have in prayer.

The values have been particularly evident in the support the school provides for its pupils from the GRT community and the work it has done to build relationships and improve attendance and achievement for this group. Other vulnerable pupils make progress commensurate with their peers. Attendance figures are prone to fluctuation due to small cohort sizes and the particular profile of the school roll. However, sensitive and encouraging intervention has led to sustained improving attendance which shows the impact of the values, as does the improvement in standards across the school.

Parents are very positive about the difference a church school makes for their children. They appreciate the opportunities for prayer in worship and feel welcome to join in with celebration worship which is the usual worship format followed by the celebration of achievements both in and out of school. They speak of valuing the opportunity to know about the values and Bible stories their children hear as part of their worship. Parents can see the impact of worship at home as their children talk about the Bible stories and they are very positive about the recent Lenten challenge around refugees and the impact that has had on their children's understanding of issues in the world today.

Religious education (RE) supports the school's deep commitment to respect for personal beliefs, through its positive impact on pupil understanding of different faiths. Pupils are enthusiastic about RE and enjoy lessons. Pupils speak of different holy books and how members of these religions pray and worship at home. This is supported by displays in classes. They have a very good understanding of different Christian denominations which gives them an awareness of and respect for difference and diversity. They are confident about Christianity as a worldwide faith and speak of how Christians in other countries may worship. This, combined with the opportunities to explore Christian values in relation to their own lives, has a significant impact both on supporting the Christian character of the school and on pupil spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship plays a major role in the life of the school and there is universal praise for its contribution to their community. Planning is done by the headteacher, who is the collective worship lead, and themes are linked to the values, Bible stories and the church year. The incumbent supports the focus on Christmas, Lent and Easter and is supporting the new initiative to use liturgical colours in the worship cloths. Worship is led by a variety of adults in school and regularly by the incumbent, only occasionally by other adults from different Christian denominations. Pupils are confident in independently planning and leading worship. Previous feedback on worship from pupils has led to more pupils being given the opportunity to deliver worship and to do this more frequently. Governors are regular visitors to worship and consequently have a good understanding of worship in school. The core values are reinforced through worship and pupils have opportunities to respond through questions. In the worship observed pupils had put together a short drama of a modern version of the good Samaritan Bible story. Pupils feel worship helps them understand what is important and how to behave. Their spirituality is enhanced by music, prayer and pictures as well as focus objects. The current value is celebrated in a prayer corner in the hall. Pupils explained

how they are involved in identifying children who show the value, for example generosity, by telling them to put a generosity bead in the pot. These acts are celebrated as part of the Friday celebration worship.

Worship follows the Anglican gather, engage, respond, send format. Children light the candle, they can explain its significance in worship. They lead the liturgical greeting and the sending and response. Consequently, worship has a lasting impact and parents speak of their children talking about worship at home. Pupils regularly visit the church for worship and together with the incumbent plan and lead this worship. Support staff speak of pupils taking the message of worship outside at lunchtimes and how using the values vocabulary reminds children how they should behave.

Pupils value prayer and reflection and have a good understanding of reasons to pray; to talk to God, to think about your actions, lift your spirits if sad and ask for help. They explained the significance of the globe with hands holding it in the prayer space; as a 'space to pray', 'hands to be together', 'God is holding everyone together'. They write and share their own prayers in worship and on a class prayer tree. Pupils have a good understanding of the Trinity as a three, God the father, who looks after everyone, Jesus the son on earth giving people God's message and the Holy Spirit is in every single person and helps everyone to be better, 'to give a little bit of hope'. However, the understanding of the place of the Trinity in worship is less well developed.

Worship is well led and monitored. Governors, staff and pupils provide regular feedback. Governors records of visit are fed back to the full governing body. Pupils have the opportunity to follow up the messages and values in worship through prayers, drawings and writings. Consequently, worship has a lasting impact on pupil SMSC.

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

The headteacher's strong vision for the school is shared by stakeholders, all of whom continually uphold the Christian values and articulate the Christian ethos, providing good role models for pupils. This ensures that pupil SMSC is a priority and the impact across the school is evident in highly positive relationships.

The core values of forgiveness and love are used to support decision making, especially in terms of pupil wellbeing. Self-evaluation as a church school is in place and improvement planning includes a section on distinctiveness which keeps the vision and values to the forefront of leaders' drive for sustained school improvement.

The governing body spoke of the school having a clear vision and being at the heart of the local community. They feel that it is the Christian values that encourage the behaviour and respect for others in school, developing confidence which has a positive influence on standards, attitudes to learning and attendance, through the theme happy, healthy and high achieving. They state pupils are clear about the meaning of this and how the values support them in their daily lives in school. Also, that the ethos and Christian principles give the children something extra that they don't have from elsewhere, for life. They value the school's willingness to explore and develop what it means to be a church school. Parents had an opportunity to feedback their views on the new vision and values. Induction of new governors includes an understanding of Christian character. There is a review cycle in place which includes governor monitoring of distinctiveness and its impact on school improvement. They specifically evaluate the Christian ethos and behaviour. The new behaviour system was implemented partly as a result of pupil voice as part of this monitoring and evaluation. Governors have put in place succession planning by appointing an acting head from the current leadership team and providing support and training.

Leadership of collective worship is strong and self-reflective. Leaders feel that worship allows children to grow and develop their own ideas. RE leadership has developed over the last year, and consequently the impact of RE on the Christian character of the school has become stronger. Governors expressed their ongoing commitment to excellence in worship and RE as distinctive elements of a church school. Training for the senior leadership on spirituality has led to an action plan focused on allowing pupils to explore their own spirituality and further develop this aspect of distinctiveness in school. The school has effective links with the diocese and supports diocesan training and professional development, for example through monitoring visits and attending conferences, such as a leadership conference incorporating an element on spirituality. Parents and the local church play a strong role in the daily life of the school, through frequent visits, sharing their views and joining in with school and community events such as Messy Church, responding to survey questions and open worship services. Strong leadership has ensured the areas of development from the last inspection have been met and that the school has an ongoing vision for its development as a church school.