

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dry Drayton Church of England (C) Primary School

Park Street, Dry Drayton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB23 8DA

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Ely
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection	1 February 2017
Date of last inspection	26 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary; URN 110787
Headteacher	Katie Kendall
Inspector's name and number	James Adkins 821

School context

Dry Drayton is a smaller than average voluntary controlled primary. It joined a one year partnership with Caldecote Primary School in September 2016, with the deputy headteacher from Caldecote becoming interim headteacher. This follows 3 changes of headteacher since March 2012, with the last in post under two years. The whole school self-evaluation published in November 2016 and the December 2016 Ofsted inspection judge the school to require improvement. Cohort numbers are too small for comparisons to be made with national figures for the progress and attainment of some groups such as boys. The school has recently opened new buildings.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dry Drayton as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The Christian values of the school contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and are reflected in their behaviour.
- Children, governors and staff recognise the importance and impact of collective worship at Dry Drayton, with the pupils enjoying opportunities to contribute to it through reading from the Bible and leading prayers.
- Good leadership of religious education ensures that it is clearly valued and contributes to the Christian ethos of the school.
- High standards of achievement in religious education enable pupils to engage with the subject and instil the importance of understanding how religions have an impact on our modern society.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the partnership between the school, the diocese and Cambridgeshire local authority is effective and sustained so that they all contribute fully to the strategic development of Dry Drayton as a church school.
- Clarify the biblical basis for Dry Drayton's Christian character with all stakeholders and embed its impact in order to raise the achievement of all pupils over time
- Ensure that the school provides greater opportunities for the identification and development of staff as leaders of church schools, such as by giving priority to staff expertise and specialist qualifications in religious education.
- Formalise monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by governors, staff and pupils into a clear programme that informs its development.

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

Most members of the school community recognise the school's values as being Christian and cite their impact on pupils' behaviour. One pupil spoke for many when they said that the values they gain from being in a church school improves "our behaviour because it makes us realise that we should show how responsible we are". This comment was clearly evident in the good behaviour seen in lessons and around school throughout the inspection, with pupils applying these values and taking responsibility for their learning. As a consequence relationships are strong because of the impact of the Christian nature of the school, with governors citing a genuine sense of community pervading Dry Drayton. This Christian ethos is helped by the incumbent, who offers regular support to the school including its staff. However, the impact over time of Dry Drayton's Christian character on children's achievement is less evident. Equally the school's self-evaluation, which was published on its website in November 2016, acknowledges that achievement over time at Dry Drayton requires improvement.

Pupils spoken to during the inspection were able to clearly articulate the biblical basis for Dry Drayton's Christian character and its values, although senior leaders found this more challenging. Opportunities to develop a shared understanding of spirituality range from church experience days to mock baptisms. More recent developments in the build up to the inspection, such as a quiet reflective area or prayer space, have not had time to have a tangible impact on a shared understanding of spirituality. The development of pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally is also aided by initiatives at Dry Drayton such as links with a school in Zambia, with staff highlighting its positive impact on pupils' understanding of other cultures and countries.

At Dry Drayton, pupils say that they enjoy religious education because it allows them to ask "lots of good questions", such as linking stories from the life of Jesus with intrinsically interesting questions about what makes things fair. As a consequence of the strong leadership of religious education the standards achieved by pupils at the end of each academic year are good. During the inspection the pupils were able to share some detailed understandings of a range of world faiths, although their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith was less clear.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils, staff and governors speak about the importance of collective worship at Dry Drayton. It engages learners, with one pupil explaining that collective worship allows them to have "fun learning things about Christianity". Collective worship regularly includes biblical material, with pupils clearly able to make links between the actions of Jesus and their own lives. As a consequence they cite the impact of collective worship in reminding them about how they should behave.

At Dry Drayton collective worship follows the seasons of the Anglican Church year and marks key Christian festivals, with visits to the local church for celebrations such as Christmas. The involvement of the incumbent in Dry Drayton to mark key periods in the Christian year is valued by pupils. For example, they spoke with great pride about how they made two posters to mark Advent, one of which was displayed in school whilst the other was displayed in the local church. The incumbent is also involved in helping the school plan collective worship along Trinitarian lines, with each term being dedicated to a different aspect of God as either Father, Son or Holy Spirit. Collective worship also regularly includes teachings about the person of Jesus Christ which is supported by the appropriate use of biblical material.

Pupils also spoke with confidence about the importance of prayer in Dry Drayton. They highlighted how some of them were prayer leaders for collective worship as well as how the school prayer is displayed about the school. Pupils also spoke about the new addition of a reflective area or prayer space, although the impact on them of this area was less evident because it is so recent.

In the collective worship observed the pupils openly enjoyed the story of Jesus at the temple and its links to their lives. It offered good opportunities for pupils to participate, such as reading from the Bible or leading the school in prayer. Equally their involvement in collective worship has enhanced their understanding of Christian symbolism, with one pupil later explaining that they light a candle at the start of an assembly because "Jesus is the light of the world". Whilst pupils deliver parts of collective worship on a regular basis, it is less evident whether they are being given the opportunity or responsibility to plan a whole event from scratch and deliver it.

There are a range of leaders involved in collective worship at Dry Drayton, including staff and the local incumbent. As a result, the pupils have a rich experience of worship. There is a regular termly meeting between the school and the incumbent to informally review collective worship. A formal system for evaluating collective worship, which involves governors, staff and pupils and leads to specific strategically planned improvements, is currently less well developed.

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

The headteacher provides a concerted approach to improving the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dry Drayton as a school. Initially this focused on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school, but latterly clear plans have been drawn up to address the development points from the 2012 SIAS report by the end of summer 2017. What is less clear at present is how this drive to improve at Dry Drayton is grounded in distinctively Christian values that spring from biblical teachings. Equally the evaluation by leaders of the effectiveness of the school's performance as a church school is also less well developed, particularly with regard to the impact of its Christian character on pupils' achievement over time. As a consequence not all learners progress as they might, despite improvements in achievement since September.

There are elements of good leadership at Dry Drayton. For example, the incumbent offers regular support to the leadership of the school as well as its staff, parents and pupils. Equally the good leadership of religious education and collective worship ensures that they contribute to the good behaviour and attitudes of learners. As a consequence of this leadership the topics studied are fundamentally thought-provoking and the standards achieved by pupils are good. In recent times opportunities for staff to engage in professional development for religious education has been restricted, as they have taken on other responsibilities in the school. At present there are no clear plans in place to identify and equip potential church school leaders. Governors are beginning to take responsibility for strategic planning around the Christian distinctiveness of Dry Drayton, with meetings in December aimed at establishing a separate group for this within the governing body structure.

Staff and governors maintain that a strong partnership between the school, the diocese and the local authority has not always been sustained through the many changes in leadership at Dry Drayton since 2012. Consequently, this limits the benefits to learners, parents and staff of this partnership. Equally there is uncertainty about what will happen at Dry Drayton once the link with Caldecote comes to an end in August 2017. One respondent summed up this problem by explaining that whilst current leadership is effective, there are concerns about whether any of the improvements since September are "sustainable" in the longer term. Governors are acutely aware of the need to develop a strategic succession plan for the long-term leadership of Dry Drayton and their role within it.

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