

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Barton CEVA Primary School

School Road, Barton, Cambridgeshire CB23 7BD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Ely
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection	30 June 2017
Date of last inspection	2 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 110829
Headteacher	Claire Coulson
Inspector's name and number	Caroline Clarke 711

School context

Barton is a smaller than average primary school with 107 pupils on roll. Since the previous inspection an increasing number of pupils whose first language is not English now attend the school. There is a new headteacher in post since the last inspection and there have been a number of other teaching staff changes. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities is just above average, and the number of pupil premium pupils that attend the school is below average. There is a high level of pupil mobility. The school works very closely with Barton parish church, located nearby.

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

- The church school ethos is embedded in all aspects of school life and has an extremely positive and significant impact on relationships, behaviour and attitudes for both pupils and staff.
- Strength, support, teamwork, acceptance and Christian purpose are at the core of all that Barton School achieves, enriched through very strong links with local churches, the diocese and the foundation governors.
- The determination, passion, energy and vision of the headteacher, supported by a strong staff team, has ensured that the school has improved, despite significant changes in teaching staff.
- There has been exceptional progress in developing collective worship which shows exemplary practice in planning, delivery, impact and evaluation.
- Parents speak very highly of the school and show excellent support for its pupils and staff and good knowledge of its Christian focus.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that there are opportunities created to reflect and act on the feedback collected from the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship, so that there is continuous improvement.
- Further develop cross-curricular links with RE and investigate new projects such as an RE Week or planning a whole school Eucharist.
- The RE leader to regularly monitor teaching and learning and further analyse whole school RE data, so that best practice can be shared, celebrated and built upon.

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

Christian values are embedded and integral to school life, policies and procedures, clearly visible via the school website and all school correspondence. Clear, welcoming Christian messages and symbols are displayed throughout the school, a real strength being interactive displays encouraging pupils to make links between what they hear in worship, RE teaching about values and the school's Christian ethos. For example, linked with determination, pupils are asked to choose a Lego brick and as they feel the bumps think of someone who has helped them when times have been difficult. The school's strap line, 'Believe, nurture, grow, flourish together' combined with the main values of respect and integrity support all members of the school community to follow the teaching of Christ from Matthew's Gospel ; 'Do to others, whatever you would like them to do to you.'

All speak with enthusiasm about the strength of Christian purpose in the school and the partnership and support for one another based around a strong sense of community or koinonia. Adults talk about pupils having a 'big voice'. They are creative, confident individuals who accept everyone and are not afraid to ask questions, such as 'If God created the world, who created God?' or 'God why do you love everyone, even mean people?'

There is a sense of inclusiveness, where both staff and pupils reach out to all children and don't give up on them. Everyone is seen as an individual and this child centred approach means the number of behavioural incidents at the school has decreased and the neediest pupils have made considerable progress. This approach is further strengthened by governors who ask challenging questions about impact and support a change in direction if required.

Progress and attainment is good overall, supported by the tracking of individual pupils, regular pupil progress meetings and the use of carefully targeted support for those at risk of underachievement. Attendance is good overall with all groups of children keen to learn and engage in the opportunities that the school provides.

Pupils and staff live out the Christian values of the school; for example, they have discussed how integrity means doing the right thing even when no-one is watching. Through its Christian character the school promotes understanding and respect for diversity by looking at the beliefs and customs of religions in the UK and world-wide. There is good evidence that pupils can apply their RE learning from one context to another, thereby supporting the school's Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils of all ages recognise collective worship as a spiritually significant part of the day. 'As a Christian school, it is a time to all come together, a space to pray and it is very helpful to reflect on God's word and have fun.' Pupils enjoy opportunities to plan and lead worship themselves, a pupil worship team meeting regularly for this purpose.

Pupils understand the concept of the Trinity, speaking about a sharing worship for St Patrick's Day where they learnt about the shamrock having three leaves, representing 'God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is like three separate parts but they are still all part of the same one thing which is God.'

Each act of worship begins with a pupil-led Bible verse and response, for example: 'Oceans will rise, kingdoms will fall.' followed by 'But the Word of the Lord stands forever.' (Isaiah 40: 8). The worship observed on the day of the inspection was led entirely by the youngest pupils and very well attended by parents, providing a rich opportunity for the children to celebrate and share with the whole school community their learning from a recent 'wedding' that they had planned and held at their local church. The confidence and depth of understanding was excellent and all pupils confidently participated in the school prayer, written by the pupil worship team.

The recently developed reflection area in the hall and a worship display board develop children's thinking and understanding as well as giving the opportunity to explore aspects of the Christian faith. Some displays facilitate and strengthen strong links with the local church.

Worship supports pupils in making good choices in terms of their behaviour and attitudes towards one another. 'We think about our values' they 'help us to make the best choices for ourselves and for others.'

There is regular, formal monitoring by staff, parents, pupils and governors which is systematic and evaluative. Staff planning worship act on feedback from evaluations, such as the use of more visual material to keep the interest of the youngest pupils.

Prayer and reflection are part of the day. Classroom reflection areas have a basket of objects so that the reflection activities can take place anywhere, for example outside. Pupils say 'You go to think about God and have a moment of quiet to yourself. You can look at the mirror and look how unique and special you are, especially if someone has said unkind words to you.'

Weekly worship in church is led by the incumbent with parents invited, some of whom have set up their own prayer group.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) teaching is based on the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus. Understanding Christianity materials will be introduced from September. Staff have received training on how these materials provide opportunities for pupils to explore and reflect upon key Christian concepts. Reflective assessment training, based around spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development complements this.

The RE Leader has been in post for one year; she is inspirational in her own teaching and in developing and supporting others in their planning and delivering of RE. She has worked hard to develop links with other faiths; pupils have visited a synagogue and a Hindu parent has shared her experiences of Holi with pupils in the younger part of the school. The RE leader has begun to strengthen teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Her monitoring recognises that there is a good balance of learning about and learning from religion, as well as evidence of good progression, depth of thinking and pupils being prepared to share their thoughts verbally.

RE has very high status in the school. As a result, the work in every pupil's book is of a high standard and beautifully presented. Teaching links RE with other curriculum areas such as history and art.

Teaching in RE is consistently good and on occasions outstanding. On the day of the inspection strong teaching was observed which demonstrates significant progress from the previous inspection. A class of Y4 pupils placed their handmade water lilies, containing prayers they had written, to float in a tray of water. After several prayers had been shared, one boy said, 'It is good to think how lucky we are and how wonderful the world is.'

A clear assessment system is in place across the school and pupils' RE books show good differentiation. There is evidence of enquiry based learning and consistent marking with a focus on showing pupils how to improve their work. However, best practice in teaching is not consistently shared and assessment data is not yet utilised to its full potential.

All groups, including those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities and those in receipt of pupil premium, make good progress in RE. Overall pupils are working at age appropriate levels.

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

The school's vision and Christian purpose are understood and lived out by pupils, staff and governors. They take a pride in its Christian ethos and 'wear' the school's Christian values like a badge. All staff and governors spent a planning day together, resulting in a vision and values statement that all members of the school community contributed to and own.

Shared leadership is the key to the school's success. The school's strength lies in its collegiate sense of responsibility, recognition of success and continuous desire to improve. Governors recognise the good delegation of leadership responsibilities and give careful consideration to succession planning; the headteacher ensures that individual staff feel appreciated and responsible as leaders. In the words of a school governor, 'Since we have appointed our current headteacher, there is much more consultation and open communication. As a result, standards have improved, the Christian values have been crystallised and there is a much clearer sense of Christian purpose. Our headteacher leads with everyone's ideas, demonstrates all the school values herself and is very willing to change and compromise.'

Staff speak about the great opportunities they have had as part of the school team. One said, 'There are huge benefits to working at Barton because we are always all looking to improve as a school and there is a very inclusive atmosphere.'

A governor preparation group have looked in detail at sections of the SIAMS self-evaluation document and the impact of this is clear in the evidence folder seen on the day of the inspection and the depth of knowledge and understanding as governors talked about the four key areas that are inspected. Governors observe RE teaching and monitor worship and children's reflections. They monitor and review the impact of the church ethos through the school improvement plan.

Governors, the church, the diocese and the staff work in very strong partnership and are mutually supportive.

There are very positive experiences for pupils such as the Rogation Sunday prayer walk, where four banners were made and carried to key focus points in the village, where children led prayers. Such activities strengthen and enrich links with the local community, as demonstrated by members of the public who stopped to watch and reflect. Pupils have participated in the Church Schools' Together projects, where organisers have commented on how well the Barton children reflect, sharing extremely mature and insightful thoughts.

Parents speak very highly of the school. One said, 'There is a real sense of community spirit here with the school being very much part of the parish and the parish very much part of the school.'