

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Anne's CEVA Primary School

London Road, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire PE29 2WW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Ely
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection	24 May 2017
Date of last inspection	28 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 131238
Headteacher	Ruth Moor
Inspector's name and number	Caroline Clarke 711

School context

St Anne's is an average-sized primary school with 209 pupils on roll. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The parish church of St Mary the Virgin is a 15-20 minute walk from the school. In addition, there are very close links with the local Baptist church. There is a new headteacher in post since the last inspection and there have been ten other staffing changes. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities is below the national average, as is the number of pupil premium pupils.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Anne's as a Church of England school are good

- The church school ethos is embedded in all aspects of school life and has a positive and significant impact on relationships, behaviour and attitudes for both pupils and staff.
- Strength, support and Christian purpose are provided at St Anne's through very strong links with local churches, the diocese and the foundation governors.
- The determination and vision of the headteacher, supported by a strong staff team, has ensured that the school has continued to improve, despite significant changes over a short period of time.

Areas to improve

- Further develop the monitoring of collective worship by governors and pupils and ensure that there are opportunities created to reflect and act on the feedback collected, so that there is continuous improvement.
- Involve pupils more regularly in planning and delivering individual acts of worship so their knowledge develops further particularly around their understanding of the Trinity and use of the Anglican liturgy.
- For the RE leader to regularly monitor teaching and learning 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

There is a very strong sense of spirituality at the heart of the school's vision and purpose which is recognised by all. Clear, welcoming Christian messages and symbols are displayed throughout the school, encouraging pupils to make links between what they hear in worship, RE teaching about values in action and the school's Christian ethos. Parents, staff, pupils and governors all speak passionately about the strong sense of teamwork, community, kindness, friendship, love and support. This is lived and breathed daily through the St Anne's Spirit which all see as a pillar of strength throughout the many recent changes at the school. One pupil expressed this very well when she said; 'At this school behaviour is good and people are kind so it makes it a happier, better place to be. If we didn't have St Anne's Spirit we might behave differently.'

Progress and attainment at the school is good overall, supported by the close tracking of individual pupils and the use of extra support for pupils at risk of underachievement. For example, the 'Eat and Learn' sessions that take place before school have had a good impact on reading achievement in particular, as shown by an overall increase in reading age of six months in three months. All pupils are supported and encouraged to do well and to reinforce this the school employs a pastoral leader who is trained in counselling and play therapy. Attendance at St Anne's is good with all groups of children keen to learn and engage in the opportunities that the school provides.

The use of 'Talking Circles', introduced by the headteacher, enables pupils to think more deeply about aspects of Christianity and how this impacts on them as individuals. Pupils exemplify the Christian values of the school, for example by taking care of themselves and others. 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 some pupils are able to apply their RE learning from one context to another. For example, a Y4 pupil, when asked, 'How do food banks show Jesus' work?' replied 'It is like when Jesus fed the five thousand. He made sure everyone was fed. The food banks make sure everyone is fed because these people help other people. Jesus also helps people.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the significance of collective worship and are beginning to contribute to its delivery. They particularly enjoy worship where they are involved in role play and leading the prayers. Pupils have had limited opportunities to plan and deliver a complete act of Christian worship themselves, but say they would be keen to do so.

The worship table is used well as a focus with pupils lighting a candle and then sitting attentively, listening very carefully to the message being delivered and actively and knowledgeably contributing by answering questions and applying their previous knowledge. For example, at the start of the worship a pupil recalled how in a previous act of collective worship they had learnt about how Jesus healed the man on the bed which had to be lifted in through the roof. The pupil added that this showed how kind, helpful and amazing Jesus is.

The messages delivered through collective worship support pupils in making good choices in terms of their behaviour and attitudes and there is evidence of the application of Christian values beyond the worship itself. For example, the school's aims are expressed through the statement; 'Within the love of God, we are learning together.' Pupils talk about how happy and included they feel at the school because children are kind to one another and understand the importance of saying sorry when they make mistakes.

Collective worship is thoroughly planned and delivered by a range of school staff and visitors from local churches, including the incumbent. Worship is linked to the school's values and Christian festivals, with pupils, staff and parents having regular opportunities to worship at the local church, including a termly eucharist. Collective worship has been monitored by the headteacher, pupils and governors. However, the frequency of monitoring and any improvements resulting from it are not yet sufficiently consistent to ensure impact.

Reflection areas in classrooms and around the school are embryonic but are starting to have impact. One pupil explained about the prayer chair; 'You can sit there and reflect and do an activity. There is always a reason behind it.' The school has yet to fully develop pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Members of two local churches lead an activity at the school known as 'Prayer Spaces.' This enables pupils from different year groups to participate in a range of exciting hands-on activities that help them learn about the different types of prayer and how they might use prayer in their own lives.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) teaching is based on the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus with plans to launch a new RE curriculum from September. This will still focus on the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus but will include more material specific to the needs of the school. Staff speak very highly of the new 'Understanding Christianity' materials that they have begun to incorporate into their RE teaching. This has resulted in increased opportunities for pupils to explore and reflect upon core Christian concepts.

The knowledgeable and experienced RE Leader, who has been in post for eight months, is enthusiastically leading the changes to the RE curriculum, focused on moving the school forward in order to develop and enrich RE teaching and learning. She has already started to strengthen the teaching and learning in this subject by leading staff meetings, supporting staff in lesson planning, carrying out a scrutiny of work and ensuring that a clear assessment system is in place across the school. Pupils' RE books show good progression and differentiation and there is evidence of enquiry based learning and consistent marking with a focus on showing pupils how to improve their work. All groups, including those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities and those in receipt of pupil premium, make good progress in RE. Attainment in RE is at least as good as attainment in other core subjects, showing that overall pupils are working at the level expected for their age in RE.

Strong teaching was observed on the day of the inspection in both key stages, with teaching assistants being used effectively to question and challenge pupils and record observations. Pupils of all ages and abilities were actively engaged in their learning. The RE Leader has identified ways to further develop her role through lesson observations and sharing of best practice. Whilst much has been achieved, with the RE leader still relatively new to her role, it is too early to assess how well these improvements are embedded.

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

The clear, shared Christian vision and purpose is moving the school continuously forward. The statement, 'Within the love of God, we are all learning together' is at the centre of all the school does. Through this and the daily use of St Anne's Spirit the whole school community ensure that the distinctiveness of St Anne's as a church school is strong. There is strong capacity to further improve. This is shown by the fact that the actions from the previous inspection have been fully met and in addition the senior leadership team and foundation governors have created a further action, 'to support the new staff members and senior leadership team in ensuring the Christian ethos of the school is maintained during a period of exceptional changes within the school.'

Governors regularly both deliver and attend collective worship and have observed RE teaching. Their strategic leadership is evident through regular meetings with senior staff where they monitor and review the impact of the church ethos through the church school action plan.

Leadership by the newly appointed headteacher is passionate, positive, supportive and collaborative. She has further raised the significance of the church school ethos, by creating a church school action plan and involving staff and governors in its implementation and review. She has also ensured that the Christian ethos of the school is now a standing item on the agenda at all governor meetings.

School governors, the church, the diocese and the school work in very strong partnership and are mutually supportive of one another. This is seen through the joint training activities held at the school for staff and governors and the school's participation in diocesan activities for pupils such as the Ely Cathedral activity day, the impact of which has been raised awareness, increased understanding and the opportunity for collaboration. The governors are aware of the importance of succession planning and shared leadership, supporting the headteacher as she delegates responsibility and encourages individuals to further develop, for example by supporting staff to attend training and to lead whole school initiatives.

Parents speak highly of the school with some having specifically chosen a church school and expressing how the strong links with the church and the Christian ethos within the school are of great benefit to their children. They are aware that members of two local churches regularly visit the school and say that the children enjoy attending church services each term. Parents feel that behaviour at St Anne's is good and that pupils and staff treat one another with kindness and respect, strengthened by the Christian values that the school promotes. Feedback from parent questionnaires is good overall, but the school has yet to specifically ask parents for their views in relation to Christian distinctiveness.