

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Heytesbury Church of England Primary Academy

High Street, Heytesbury, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 0EA

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 March 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	Acorn Education Trust
Date of inspection	14 July 2017
Date of last inspection	3 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 144333
Headteacher	James Evans
Inspector's name and number	Marcia Headon 761

School context

Heytesbury school is a much smaller than average village primary school with 61 pupils on roll aged 4-11. The school population is made up of children from the local villages of Heytesbury, Norton Bavant and Tytherington, along with children who travel from Warminster. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs/disabilities is below the national average. Since the previous inspection, the school has ceased its federation with Crockerton School. Between January and July 2017, a temporary headteacher has been in post. From September, the current deputy will be the substantive postholder. The school converted to being an academy within the Acorn Education Trust on 1 March 2017.

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

- Highly effective links with the local church make a significant contribution to the pupils' understanding of what it means to be a Christian.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) help pupils to understand the importance of belief in their lives.
- Recent changes to the school, since it became an academy, have raised awareness that its church school distinctiveness is not sufficiently strong.

Areas to improve

- Involve pupils in the planning and leading of collective worship in order to develop their spiritual understanding.
- Ensure that the new leaders of the school and the governors undertake training so they fully understand their role in developing and monitoring the school as a church school.
- Ensure that the Christian vision is fully discussed and that Christian values are made explicit to all in the school community in order to strengthen the church school distinctiveness.

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

The school revised its core values in the 2017 spring term and adopted the six values of hope, friendship, truthfulness, courage, wisdom and forgiveness. Pupils describe their impact as 'helping us to behave better' or 'enabling us to be a better person'. The values influence pupils, as when they disagree they say they think about whether that is showing friendship. Pupils believe that hope is the most important of the values, as without it they could not try something which they found difficult. They say courage persuades them to try new things. However, the pupils do not see the values as being distinctively Christian and do not make the connection with Christian teaching. The school has not made this association sufficiently explicit. The school policies are not currently referenced to the Christian nature of the values or the Christian character of the school. This is particularly true of the behaviour policy, where forgiveness is mentioned but not as a core Christian value. The website is out-of-date and has little mention of the values of the school. Behaviour and relationships within the school are generally good. Staff act as good role models in school and are very supportive of one another. The school has an agreed definition of spirituality but this is very limited in scope. Opportunities to develop pupils' thinking about meaning and purpose are not mapped across the curriculum and hence sometimes valuable changes to develop spirituality are missed. The values of the school help to develop pupils' sense of right and wrong and help them to develop socially. Pupils help those less fortunate than themselves and recently ran a cake stall to raise money for the victims of the Manchester bombings. The pupils do not show an understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. The teaching of different religions in RE plays an important role in developing their understanding of different cultures. The school stresses the value of wisdom gained by regular attendance when talking to parents about this. In the same way, on the rare occasions when pupils are excluded, it stresses the value of forgiveness. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Attainment at key stage 2 and in the Year 1 phonics is well above average and there is a rising trend at key stage 1.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils identify collective worship as a time when they come to respect God, to understand what Jesus did for us or as a time to be quiet and 'to dig deep into your soul for meaning'. They describe it as 'their worship' and a time when you are entirely safe as God is watching over you. Worship is treated respectfully by the pupils, who assemble quietly, listen attentively, respond enthusiastically when asked questions and above all sing with great enjoyment. A suitable atmosphere is created by the lighting of a candle and the saying of a Christian greeting to signify the start. Pupils recognise that the lighting of the candle is a way of saying 'Jesus is with us as He is the light of the world'. Worship always includes Bible stories or other messages and incorporates a period of reflection and prayer as well as ending with the Grace, during which the whole community joins hands. Pupils recall many of the stories from collective worship and many pupils explain their messages. Collective worship is planned around the core values of the school, with one value explored each half term but with other values being considered when appropriate. Acts of worship follows the calendar of Anglican festivals, and services are held in the nearby St Peter and St Paul Church at Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, and Easter. Parents are invited to these services, which are always very well attended and the Christingle service is the highlight of the year for everyone, including members of the village. Pupils particularly enjoy 'Open the Book', as they are more actively engaged in these sessions. They do not routinely plan or lead worship, although Year 6 pupils have led the services in church and recently a pupil acted as headteacher for the day and planned and led the worship. Pupils are developing their understanding of the Trinity and explain the importance of the Holy Spirit within them. Pupils know that prayer is important to Christians and that prayer can be used in a variety of ways and for a number of reasons. Some are undecided as to whether it is always answered, while others say 'most of the time God fixes what happens'. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and use it in collective worship. At the start of the term they write prayers on the termly value used in collective worship. Each class has a reflective area where pupils place prayers in a basket. Some classes use these prayers at lunch or at the end of the day. The use of the reflective areas in the classroom is inconsistent, with some pupils stating they are only used for calming down when you are upset. Staff feel affirmed by worship and speak of the opportunity to be calm and reflect on the message of the Bible story. Staff evaluate collective worship but this is currently too focused upon process rather than impact, and has not led to any major alterations. Governors do not formally evaluate worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) and readily acknowledge the enthusiasm with which teachers help them in this subject. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards in RE are mostly in line with other subjects. Progress from their starting points is good and is carefully tracked and underperformance quickly identified. Religious education is given a high profile in the school, with attractive displays which are used to enhance pupils' understanding. Planning for RE is thorough, with long-term overviews as well as everyday lesson plans with clear objectives. Planning is undertaken over a two-year cycle or, for older pupils, a three-year cycle in order to match the mixed age groups in which they are taught. Lessons follow the 'Discovery' scheme of work and pupils study Christianity as well as a focus on other world faiths including Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. Pupils make links and comparisons between the faiths. Pupils, when asked to write a Jewish boy's response to an invitation to a birthday party at MacDonald's, showed considerable depth of understanding. Pupils acquire knowledge through research and investigation as well as very effective questioning by teachers. They respond to this questioning eagerly and through it develop their thinking. A recent visit from the associate priest gave the Year 4,5 and 6 class the opportunity to ask challenging questions of meaning, such as 'When did Jesus know He was special?' or 'How was God made?' However, currently there is more emphasis upon acquiring knowledge and learning about religion rather than learning from it. Teaching is good overall, with pupils being given a wide variety of activities such as creating mezuzahs, a Passover feast, exploring the meaning of a painting or making clay pots to illustrate the story of Guru Nanak. Assessment takes place at the end of each unit of work and parents receive detailed reports on RE. The subject leader, who only took over the responsibility for the subject from January 2017, has quickly developed a good understanding of what needs to be done to develop the subject and drive improvement. She is currently revisiting the scheme of work to see what is most effective and has plans for a revision of the content for next term. She has visited classes, monitored pupils' work and supports teachers in their planning. One other member of staff has extensive experience in teaching RE and is providing her with support. She has forged links with other schools, but currently no cross-moderation of work has taken place.

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

Governors, senior leaders, staff and parents share the desire for the school to prosper and maintain its Christian distinctiveness. However, the school does not have a clearly articulated vision of its aims as a church school. In addition, there has been little consultation with the staff over the future vision. Since the school became an academy, the interim headteacher has begun to consider how the Christian distinctiveness can be developed. The self-evaluation of the school indicates an awareness of the current position but there are as yet no definite actions in the school development plan about the Christian ethos. The chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust is very clear that this is a priority. The governors are committed to the school and foundation governors are eager to ensure that its church school distinctiveness is maintained. They sought assurances of this upon conversion to an academy within the Acorn Education Trust. They have not completed any evaluation of the Christian distinctiveness and their formal monitoring of collective worship, RE and the ethos of the school is weak, which inhibits their ability to contribute to strategic planning. This was an area for development from the previous inspection. They have not taken opportunities for training on the role of governors in leading a church school and their links with the Diocese are underdeveloped. The academy has begun to address the need to develop leaders of church schools and, where this has taken place, it has had a noticeable impact. Training in what makes for effective collective worship has already been invaluable in enhancing the understanding of staff and pupils. Links with the local church are a strength of the school. Members from the church, as well as making a valuable contribution to collective worship through the 'Open the Book' team, have run an Easter experience day. The local associate priest is a regular visitor to the school and the church presents Bibles to all Year 6 pupils at the leaving service. The school contributes to the parish newsletter and the parochial church council receives a report about the work of the school at its annual meeting. The school reciprocates by running a produce stall for the church during the summer break and is currently making new figures for the Christmas crib. The parents appreciate the link between the church and the school. They support its work, commending its small-family feel, the friendship it shows to them and the fact that their children are taught values which, as one parent said, 'will see them through life'. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.

SIAMS report July 2017 Heytesbury CE Primary Academy, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 0EA