



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Upper Arley VC Primary School	Arley Lane Shatterford Bewdley DY12 IRZ
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese/Methodist District	Worcester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Worcestershire
Date/s of inspection	7 October 2016
Date of last inspection	8 November 2011
School's unique reference number	135037
Headteacher	Ian Smith
Inspector's name and number	C. Ann Stone NS812

School context

Upper Arley VC Primary School is situated in a rural location. It has 80 pupils on roll with a large proportion not living in the catchment area. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage and are taught in mixed year classes. The number of children with Pupil Premium and special educational needs is below national average. The school has close links with the parish church of St Peter's.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Upper Arley Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- The ability of all stakeholders to articulate and promote a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian values with the result that every child feels valued.
- The great value placed on worship which is linked to Christian values and impacts positively on the life of the pupils and staff.
- The awareness of the children that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith and respect shown for the diversity and difference within the church and other communities.
- The strong links between the school and the church community which promotes a shared Christian vision for development and learning.

Areas to improve

- Formalise the evaluation of collective worship in order to ensure that children and governors are fully involved in the process.
- Enable children to gain more detailed knowledge of the Eucharist so they can talk about it with a greater degree of understanding.
- Develop the assessment of religious education in order that members of staff will have a sound understanding of expected standards and those being achieved.

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

Christian values permeate the whole life of the school and create an ethos that enables children to achieve academically and socially. The motto of 'Growing and Learning together' is understood and articulated by all stakeholders and children are able to link this to the understanding that all is possible with God's help. The behaviour of the children is of the highest standard and relationships are consistently attributed to the Christian character of the school. Children understand the need to put others before themselves. Year 6 children plan and deliver the clubs, 'Jumping Jaxx' and 'Bug Club', to younger children at lunchtime demonstrating the Christian values of care and compassion. Fundraising supports local, national and global charities. What still needs to be developed is how Christian values are at the heart of their fundraising.

Opportunities are given for children to develop an understanding of spirituality and the provision of more within the curriculum will deepen their knowledge, enabling them to make their own links between beliefs, practices and Christian values.

The relationships between the local community, parish church and school is very strong and is characterised by mutual respect and a genuine sense of community. An example given is the afterschool Christian club 'Jam and Bread' held in the parish hall, led by governors and attended by children and parents.

Children have a good understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith and learn about other faiths during religious education (RE) lessons enabling them to develop an understanding of other cultures and beliefs. The school has developed a link with a multi-ethnic, multi-faith school to encourage an understanding of diverse communities and visits have taken place between the two schools.

The religious education subject leader is new in post and has devised an action plan to ensure standards are high and lessons challenging. She has had limited professional development and would benefit from attending diocesan training to ensure new initiatives are disseminated to staff with the result of improving the content and knowledge of the subject. Children enjoy their RE lessons and are learning to question and develop their understanding of the impact religion has on others. They understand that RE contributes to their social, moral and cultural development through experiences offered during lessons.

Parents and governors comment that they are welcomed into school and consider themselves an intrinsic part of the school community. Parents remark that the school feels like 'one giant family.' Christian values and Bible stories are discussed at home and parents believe this can be directly attributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective Worship is important to the life of the school and is seen to contribute and support the school's Christian distinctiveness. It is planned using 'Roots and Fruits' and incorporates Christian values, Bible stories, music, reflection time and prayer which lead to a rich and diverse experience of worship. Staff, governors and the Lay Reader from the parish church regularly deliver worship.

Following an area for development from the last inspection to encourage the spiritual development of children through prayer, children have more opportunities to pray, ask questions and reflect. A 'Quiet Area' has a prayer tree, prayer pebbles, inspirational sayings and a 'Values Book.' The area is used daily by children enabling them to develop their understanding of the importance of prayer in their own lives. The 'Lord's Prayer', learning about Jesus Christ and developing an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit enable children to make links between the Bible and lessons for their own lives. Yet to be developed is an understanding of the Eucharist and the importance it plays in the lives of Christians. Children can talk about areas outside the school building where they can reflect and give thanks for God's wonderful world ensuring that worship extends beyond a set time and place.

Symbolic artefacts and the use of a coloured cloth to reflect the seasons of the church year are displayed on a

worship table and children are able to explain what they mean to Christians. Following an area for development from the previous inspection children are able to talk with a degree of confidence about major festivals of the church's year including Candlemas, Ascension Day and Pentecost.

Strong links exist with the parish church and children support the church by participating in celebratory services such as Harvest and Mothering Sunday. Following the involvement of children in these services parents, who live outside the church parish, remark that they feel the church is 'their church' and return for other services. Children also regularly attend church for other curriculum activities ensuring that the church becomes one with the school. Parents are invited into 'Congratulations Assembly' which acknowledges achievements of all and reinforces the Christian values needed to achieve success.

Informal feedback of collective worship occurs but the lack of formal systems of evaluation involving governors, staff and children mean that improvement is limited and this has been identified as an area for development.

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

The experienced headteacher shows strong leadership, vision and commitment and has a clear strategy for moving this church school forward. The understanding of all stakeholders of how Christian values make a difference ensures that these are at the heart of the schools vision. Governors know the school and articulate well the understanding of their role as strategic leaders of a church school. They are an intrinsic part of school life involved in decision making, afterschool clubs, informal visits and community events. Children know their governors and are able to ask them questions relating to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The Lay Reader from the parish church, also a foundation governor, has an effective pastoral role within the school which is valued by staff, governors, parents and children thereby strengthening links between school and the church community. Not yet embedded is the involvement of governors in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship.

Arley Estate and the local arboretum contribute to school life with the result that there is mutual and substantial benefit to all. For example, the arboretum welcomes visits from the children at no cost and the estate allows parking on their land for parents. Children reciprocate by holding 'litter picks' and caring for their local environment which links well to the social development of the children.

Parents comment that Christian values shared by the headteacher and staff contribute well to pupil behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents know their views are valued and state that the ability to speak to the headteacher in the playground every day ensures that any problems are quickly dealt with.

The role of the school in developing leaders is important to the school and staff are encouraged to develop their careers and aspire to leadership. Attendance at diocesan training would increase their understanding of leadership in a church school.

Leaders and governors ensure both worship and RE meets with statutory requirements. The supportive relationships between all members of the school community are clearly rooted in Christian values and will enable the school to implement new strategies to lead the school to one which is both distinctive and highly effective.