

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ashton Keynes Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Gosditch
Ashton Keynes
Wiltshire
SN6 6NZ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Bristol
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Wiltshire
Date of inspection	25 May 2017
Date of last inspection	23 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 126297
Headteacher	Samantha Saville
Inspector's name and number	Patricia Morris 626

School context

Ashton Keynes is a smaller than average size primary school with 208 children on roll. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number entitled to receive the Pupil Premium. Attendance is in line with the national average.

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

- The dedicated leadership of the headteacher, supported by very committed governors and staff, ensure that an exceptionally clear vision is continually moving the school forward.
- Christian values are deeply embedded and contribute to outstanding behaviour, exemplary manners and strong relationships across the school.
- The inclusive Christian ethos supports children to be confident to express their thoughts and opinions.
- Collective worship is inspirational and makes an outstanding contribution to the promotion of the school's Christian ethos.
- Excellent partnerships with the church and local community provide opportunities to engage and challenge children.

Areas to improve

- Establish ways to monitor the progression of spirituality across year groups in order to evaluate the impact on children's continuing spiritual development.

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

The Christian ethos of Ashton Keynes Primary School permeates every aspect of school life. The inclusive, welcoming atmosphere is apparent from the moment you enter the school. This is a school where every child is valued as an individual, created in God's image, and nurtured for their unique talents. All members of the school community are thoroughly committed to the school's vision to create inspirational opportunities within a Christian environment. The significance of the school motto 'Shine bright and reach for the stars!' underpins the school vision and is promoted at every opportunity. Children speak animatedly of the way stars are an important symbol in their school: for example, by confidently explaining how stars are used in the Bible as a sign of guidance. Four core Christian values of trust, friendship, perseverance and creativity, are firmly linked with the teachings of Jesus and deeply embedded in the life of the school. Children are proud to see their photograph placed on a 'wall of stars' to acknowledge values in action. Such initiatives contribute to outstanding behaviour, excellent manners and strong relationships across the school. There is a highly developed interpretation of spirituality with many opportunities to engage in high quality experiences. For example, at the beginning of each academic year, a 'spirituality week' supports children in exploring what spirituality means to them. This has a positive impact on their spiritual development and understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. Children are enthusiastic about the spiritual garden, which they helped to design, and where core values are on display, etched in wood. Quiet areas with blackboards for writing prayers are used effectively and a new spherical water feature is especially valued with children saying, 'the water carries away emotions when we are upset'. Interactive reflection areas in classrooms are used respectfully with on-going challenges to support values. For example, children explain how each class individualise their reflection areas with reflection trees, pebbles or stars on which to write their thoughts or answer 'big' questions. Forest school provides rich experiences to further support children's spiritual development and to be creative in nature. This is illustrated through opportunities to build homes for insects, shelter building and making paint from wild berries. Leaders are now keen to establish ways to monitor the progression of opportunities for spiritual awareness across year groups in order to evaluate their impact on children's growing spirituality. Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is promoted in many excellent ways including visitors from other faiths, workshops and the annual 'world awareness' week, which is part of the school's unique 'shine curriculum', when children 'travel around the world' visiting each classroom to experience a variety of faiths and cultures. Such experiences are invaluable in contributing to children's high degree of understanding and respect for diversity and difference in faith communities. Religious education (RE) consistently promotes Christian values and makes a significant contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Opportunities to explore RE in creative ways such as art projects and drama means children are excited and challenged by RE. It makes excellent contributions to children's spiritual and cultural development through enriching experiences that allow them to be inquisitive and explore their feelings.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is inspirational and plays a central role in the life of the school. Children see worship as a special time to come together and speak to God. Christian values strongly underpin themes for worship and are well supported by references to Bible stories. Planning is thorough and based around the 'Living Values Roots and Fruits' resource. This means that children are thoroughly engaged in worship and rise to the challenge of taking responsibility for their own behaviour. A variety of different leaders give children a rich experience of different types of worship. They particularly enjoy visits from the 'Open the Book' team who are members of the church community. Children's uplifting and joyous singing contributes to the atmosphere in worship. The successful visit from 'iSingpop' extended the children's range of worship songs, which they proudly performed to the community in the local church. Children speak animatedly of the mosaic cross, seen as they enter the school, to which every child contributed and it was their suggestion to incorporate photographs of their four core values in action. The introduction of a children's worship council, led by the local minister and RE leader, has been instrumental in developing worship. For example, children are more involved in leading worship as well as contributing to its monitoring and evaluation. Foundation governors are conscientious in their monitoring and evaluation of worship. This is highly effective and makes a valuable contribution in moving worship forward. Children appreciate the importance of a focus table, which they create using liturgical cloths, provided by the church, and specific artefacts to represent the seasons of the church year. The importance of three candles reflects children's very good awareness of the Trinity. They confidently articulate their understanding through interpretations created in artwork. 'Trinity spoons' are used effectively to create prayers to reflect the different parts of the Trinity. There is an exceptional understanding of the value of prayer. Children eagerly explain the purpose of a prayer station where small glass stars are placed in a bowl of water when they want to say a private prayer. The use of 'teaspoon' prayers (tsp – thank you, sorry, please) as a reminder of reasons to pray, provides excellent support to develop children's confidence to lead spontaneous prayers. Worship includes a high level of spiritual reflection and is effectively supported by the 'Windows, Doors and Mirrors' framework. Worship themes raise children's aspirations and

inspire moral reflections that generate child initiated fund-raising for those less fortunate than themselves, such as supporting Fair Trade. Opportunities to explore Christian festivals give children confidence to explain the importance of celebrations with greater clarity. The church regularly hosts 'experience days' when children work in small groups and take part in activities to extend their understanding of important seasons of the church year. Children are eager to explain that in Lent, instead of giving something up, they decided to 'give out' forty acts of kindness. Such experiences broaden children's understanding and give relevance to their daily lives. There is an extremely strong partnership with the church and the local minister is highly regarded by the school and parents. The impact of this strong relationship is seen in the children's involvement in out of school clubs such as a 'youth café' and 'messy church', which are increasingly well attended.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is exceptionally good and a strength of the school. The leadership team has ensured that improvements identified in a rigorous action plan addressing key areas for development from the previous inspection have been fully implemented. Accurate monitoring confirms that the actions taken are fully embedded and make a positive impact on the whole school community. For example, focussed visits and the introduction of a 'governor of the term' make a significant contribution to the development of more effective governor systems for monitoring the impact of Christian distinctiveness. The headteacher is highly committed and motivated and, with staff and governors, consistently promotes and articulates a shared vision, based on distinctive Christian values. Through challenging questions and regular visits, governors have an excellent knowledge of the strengths of the school. The dedication and strong commitment of leaders and managers is instrumental in moving the school forward and ensures there is continual development of the Christian ethos. Strong partnerships exist between the church and the school with children contributing to the church newsletter and singing at special events. To further celebrate the mutual commitment, leaders are beginning preparation to apply for the 'Church and School Partnership Award'. Links with the local community are increasingly strong. For example, the community 'Window Wanderland' project included creating a 'star' window display in conjunction with displays from community groups as well as individual family homes. Global community connections are endorsed through a Ugandan link with a Christian primary school in Kabale and fund-raising for families in Guatemala. Leadership of RE is thorough and comprehensive monitoring confirms standards are in line with other core subjects. Both RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Children are given many opportunities to give their opinions through school council, worship council, eco council and a 'whisperer team' who write and produce a school newsletter. Parents are fully engaged in school life and have a very strong voice. They feel very welcome in school and especially recognise how the excellent support of the local minister and the commitment of the headteacher and staff are moving the school forward and making a difference to the lives of their children.

SIAMS report May 2017 Ashton Keynes VC CE Primary, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire SN6 6NZ