

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Curry Rivel Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Curry Rivel, Langport, Somerset, TA10 0HD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Bath and Wells
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Somerset
Date of inspection	26 September 2017
Date of last inspection	17 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 123752
Headteacher	Peter Staddon
Inspector's name and number	Jean Welch 878

School context

Curry Rivel Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is of average size with 154 pupils on roll, serving its predominantly White British local rural community. It has undergone significant staffing changes since the last SIAS inspection. The headteacher has been in post since March 2015. There is a nursery and a new baby unit on site and the school facilitates wrap around child care for 50 weeks of the year. The number of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding, called pupil premium, is above the national average while the number of those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is slightly below.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Curry Rivel VC Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The inclusive and personalised approach to learning expresses the school's Christian foundation in its desire to support the whole child.
- Good links have been established between the school and the local church resulting in the pupils having an increasing understanding of respect for the school's biblically inspired Christian vision.
- Engaging and inclusive collective worship times give the pupils opportunities to pray and reflect on the Christian values at the heart of the school and which have a positive impact on their relationships.

Areas to improve

- Promote the school's Christian vision more widely, in a process involving the whole school community, to create a consistent understanding of how biblical principles underpin the school's ethos.
- Further enhance the children's knowledge about Christianity and other faiths by developing first hand learning opportunities and experiences.
- Improve the personal spiritual development of all learners by using the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation by the whole school community to help enrich collective worship.

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

Curry Rivel is a school with a personalised approach to learning that effectively expresses its Christian character. It allows every child the freedom to make good choices as they learn and develop in a safe, caring community, aware of God's love and interest in their lives. The vicar is a regular visitor in school and pupils enjoy conversing with him about Christian beliefs and traditions. Pupil voice is important to the school and questions asked about Christianity, God and Jesus are collated by the Year 6 leaders of the school parliament and given to the headteacher. The questions asked by the school form the basis collective worship and learning about Christian values each term. The children feel valued in having their questions answered by the vicar and they are able to make links between their own lives and the Christian value being explored each week. Forgiveness, love and friendship are just some of the values this term. These are linked to Bible stories and everyday examples of the Christian faith in practice. For example, at playtimes, the older children help the younger ones experience the value of friendship as they learn how to forgive one another when things go wrong. The older pupils know they must take responsibility for their actions and love and forgiveness are important in their relationships. This gives rise to good relationships throughout the school, a 'family' atmosphere and good attendance. The children enjoy coming to school where they are loved and supported regardless of their ability or background. Staff have been trained to help children who have emotional difficulties. A special quiet room has been created to provide vulnerable learners with a space in which they can reflect on and talk about their needs, where the children are willing to be open and trust others to help them. This demonstrates the school's Christian values of support and care for each individual. In the safe and supportive environment of the newly redesigned outside space pupils are creative and adventurous, exploring their God-given abilities and personalities. Quieter reflective areas are also in place, but the potential for these to be used to enhance the children's spiritual development has not yet been fully developed. The Forest School experience gives the children the chance to go out in the open and explore nature and the world around them supporting their personal development and wellbeing. They respond with enthusiasm and eagerness when challenged with 'big questions', especially about creation, and are acquiring a rich vocabulary through which they express their views in greater depth. In the light of the Ofsted report in March 2017, and where attainment and/or progress is not as good as it could be, staff demonstrate the school's value of perseverance through careful analysis and development of appropriate strategies to support pupils' personalised learning opportunities. Individual learning journey books have been introduced to improve cohesion in the curriculum and standards are improving.

The children speak highly of being part of a church school and look forward to 'messy church' and 'open the book' events. The recent 'Welcome to our church school day', which was supported by the local churches, engaged the whole community by providing interactive workshops to support the understanding of Christianity. After the prayer workshop the children said that they really understood that you can pray at anytime and God is listening to you. Reflection areas and displays around the school are well used, enabling the children to express thoughts that are important to them and supporting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The school's parliament, led by the Year 6 pupils, is active in living out the school's Christian value of compassion by supporting a number of local and global charity and fund raising activities. The children regularly visit a local home for dementia sufferers to talk to the residents. This develops their understanding of differences within the community and emphasises the school's values of care and compassion. Pupils understand the importance of religious education (RE) and through it are developing a growing understanding of Christianity and other faiths, although this is underdeveloped at this time.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is the primary way in which the school's Christian values are explored. Indeed, the school with the vicar from St Andrew's parish church has developed a distinctively Christian collective worship programme. The value of trust is being explored this term with clear links to the children's behaviour in school, their own experiences and biblical stories. The children know that they are trusted to do the best they can. There is a good balance of biblical material and Christian teaching presented during worship which enables pupils to deepen their understanding of Jesus. The impact of all these factors is that learners can articulate some positive links between the Bible, their own lives, their attitudes and the school's values. All members of the school community regard collective worship as an extremely important part of the school's daily life. As a result, pupils and adults speak enthusiastically about their learning from collective worship where there are contributions from pupils, staff and visitors. Worship is inclusive and sensitive to all in the school community and supports their SMSC development. All pupils, irrespective of faith or non-faith background, participate in the worship programme which effectively supports the community atmosphere of the school. Saying the Lord's Prayer, singing Christian hymns and songs and making use of candles is established practice. This supports pupils' familiarisation with Anglican practice as well as exemplifying the good engagement of pupils in worship. Pupils and adults clearly enjoy praising God together in song. Prayer is important to the children who have opportunities to pray throughout the day particularly before lunch and at home time. They know the school prayer off by heart and can explain how it helps them realise God's presence in their daily lives. Children enjoy exploring themes such as 'listening to God' and 'the value of obedience

in the story of Noah', that are introduced during collective worship, at the well-attended weekly question club. Led by the collective worship coordinator the children here reflect on different Christian values and are inspired to a fuller understanding of what it means to live a Christian life. They are creative in writing their own prayers and use art and craft to express their understanding of what they are learning. The pupils generally appreciate the central place of Jesus Christ in Christian worship, although the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not consistently referred to in this context. Consequently, their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God is limited. Worship in school is enhanced by worship at St Andrew's church fortnightly, on Remembrance day, at major Christian festivals and at the end of the academic year. Though improvements in pupils' participation are evident, since the previous denominational inspection, they are not consistently engaged in planning, leading and evaluating worship. There are good plans in hand to strengthen these areas but they are not embedded in school practice. The foundation governor monitors collective worship and reports on its provision to the full governing body. However, the impact of collective worship on the community and how it supports personal spirituality is yet to be fully evaluated.

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

The new headteacher provides inspirational leadership and has transformed the school's ethos over the past two and half years. He has adopted a vision for the school based on Jesus' words in the gospel of John: 'I have come that they may have life in all its fullness'. He is passionate that every child in the school whether they are Christian, of other faiths or of none, will be supported in finding their individual gifts, to love learning and become successful in what they choose to do. The ethos statement expresses the hope that all members of the school community will 'become focused, fair, knowledgeable, engaged citizens with VIM and FIZZ and have genuine excitement for life and learning'. Although there is no direct biblical reference in the ethos statement, it is clearly underpinned by the headteacher's Christian vision. The wider leadership team is committed to the school's Christian ethos and the need for it to be constantly reviewed, to keep it fresh and meaningful for the school community.

The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship and both policies are up to date. The newly appointed RE coordinator is fully supported by the leadership and the profile of RE and academic achievement in the subject has been raised significantly. All staff, the collective worship leader and governors are provided with appropriate training, from the county and diocese, equipping the school with knowledgeable, skilled leaders. The partnership with the church is strong and the vicar takes a particular interest in matters of church school education, collective worship and RE. Consequently, the governing body is well informed and ensures that the school's Christian vision motivates all policy and practices which impact on meeting the needs of all learners. Good progress has been made in addressing the aspects to improve from the previous SIAS report and they are continuing to be addressed by the new leadership, particularly in setting up more formal systems for monitoring and evaluating collective worship. Parents praise the school leadership highly and value the staff as approachable and willing to discuss any concerns. They are fully informed about what is happening at school through parent forums, newsletters and social media. They are engaged in the life of the school and fully aware of the school's Christian character and the impact this makes on their children's lives. The children are learning that the school vision of 'life in all its fullness' is important for everyone and underpins a sense of compassion for those in need, in this country and in other parts of the world. The same idea led to the addition of a nursery and a baby unit demonstrating the school's engagement with the community, providing a service they need and appreciate. The governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and effectively question senior leaders about the quality of teaching and pupil progress. Development plans are in place to improve the school academically by providing a personalised approach to learning. A lack of focus on spiritual development through the whole curriculum has correctly been identified by the leadership in a process of self evaluation. The school is preparing to become part of a multi-academy trust. The governors show determination to maintain its Christian character, by developing firm plans based on the school's distinctive Christian vision, as they embark on the next stage of their journey.

SIAMS report September 2017, Curry Rivel VC Church of England Primary, Curry Rivel, TA10 0HD