

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Newbottle and Charlton Church of England Primary School	
Green Lane, Charlton, Banbury, Oxon, OX17 3DN	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Peterborough
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Date of inspection	26 February 2018
Date of last inspection	14 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 122027
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Smith
Inspector's name and number	Revd Helen Gompertz 507

School context

This is a small village primary school with a roll of 103 pupils. These come from Charlton and Aynho as well as from other villages and the towns of Brackley and Banbury. The school is largely mono-cultural with very few pupils coming from minority ethnic groups or having English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is about 12% and the school receives pupil premium funding for about 5% of pupils. The head joined the school in 2012 and became its permanent headteacher in April 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newbottle and Charlton as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Distinctively Christian values lie at the heart of the school's life and work and have a profound impact upon the lives of all members of its community.
- Excellent provision is made for prayer and reflection both inside and outside of the building. This impacts positively upon the pupils' spiritual development and empowers them to make informed choices.
- The priority given to collective worship each day inspires all members of the school community to realise their worth and uniqueness.
- Through its effective promoting of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ as God in human form, the school's attention to his life and work encourages the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- The school's commitment to the value of every individual has led to its effective welcome and support of some challenging pupils.

Areas to improve

- To complete its work on providing a strap line that encapsulates the essence of the school's Christian character so that it is in a form which is easily memorable and forms a hallmark for its life and work.
- To continue to develop the school's creative work on whole school religious education (RE) projects thereby using mixed age range experiences and staff areas of expertise to further enrich the RE curriculum.

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

The school's distinctively Christian values are deeply embedded in its work and life. Parents describe it as demonstrating 'its Christian values 110% of the time'. Through clear teaching in RE and collective worship pupils have a clear understanding of the associated theological underpinning of the values as shown in Jesus' life. The manner in which pupils help and support each other in lessons and throughout the school day shows the impact of the values on relationships and behaviour. It is remarked upon by visitors and by governors as they monitor the work of the school. Parents appreciate the effort taken by the school to deal with issues of attendance or discipline in the parents' forum and attribute this to the Christian ethos of the school.

Small cohorts make the interpretation of test data difficult but some Key Stage 2 results of the past summer were disappointing although not unexpected. After careful consideration the school, in the recent past, admitted pupils with complex difficulties. They recognised that their ethos could offer them values and care but that they might not achieve results that reflect favourably in test data. Case histories and records of interventions show how values inform the provision for each of these pupils. Supportive governors were kept well informed about the situation.

The whole environment of the school reflects its distinctive Christian ethos. Visitors quickly see the values wheel displayed and explained in the pupils' work. For example, interactive displays of RE work which reflect the seasons of the church year. The liturgical colour of the table covering and small arrangements of artefacts provide ongoing focus on church seasons. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their use of prayer and reflection spaces in classrooms, corridors and the playground. They also value the worry boxes in classrooms. They appreciate the way in which adults are always ready to listen to their concerns and respond either in personal conversations or sensitively in class. They express their amused satisfaction when worries thus discussed are then fed to the 'worry monster'.

Children, staff and governors form ethos committees and records of meetings show effective evaluation and suggestions implemented. The culture of self-evaluation is evident in all areas of the curriculum and school life. Pupils show an enthusiasm for learning especially in discussion and sharing of ideas and opinions. This is particularly evident in RE lessons, which make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The subject contributes to the school's distinctively Christian ethos and inspires the pupils to explore the diversity of ways in which the Christian faith is expressed in other cultures. They display sensitive understanding of and respect for differences in local churches and other faith communities. They are also inspired to take concerned interest in those less fortunate than they are. They engage enthusiastically in charitable support through schemes such as the Children's Society, Farm Africa food banks and Operation Christmas Child.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

All members of the school community view collective worship as an integral and vital part of the school day. Staff and pupils speak of their enjoyment of worship and adults gave examples of occasions when it has helped them at difficult times in their lives. Pupils make clear distinction between assemblies and collective worship and the celebration of achievements on Friday. However, they appreciate that finishing these occasions with prayer, reflection and singing provides worship too. Pupils' understanding of spirituality is well developed and they describe it as something you cannot either touch or see but something which helps you to think of the 'big issues in your life'. They identify this as being an important part of worship and 'of all school life'. Pupils enjoy singing and speak of appreciation of times of quiet reflection when they are able to pray and to respond to challenges in their lives.

Worship has a strong focus upon God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and pupils recognise this and talk about it with impressive understanding. The emphasis on the life and ministry of Jesus enables pupils to identify the link between events of his life, festivals and the seasons of the church year. They recognise the challenge of his example and how this can be understood as 'God showing us what to do.' They are able to explain the different constituents which make up worship and speak with understanding about the different services in local churches or chapels they attend.

Pupils are proud of the ways in which they are able to contribute to worship. They take responsibility in practical tasks and are also confident in planning and leading acts of worship. They write and lead prayers and confidently lead the bidding to worship response which sets the framework for the occasion. They appreciate the ways in which the staff support and help them in their preparation while giving them freedom to choose ways in which to present the values or themes as they feel to be appropriate. They are very creative. Pupils appreciate the different contributions made by a range of leaders including staff, clergy and representatives from different Christian traditions.. Their enjoyment and musical ability is evident in the quality of their singing in worship. Parents and governors describe their singing in worship as inspirational. The pupils show significant understanding of the biblical basis for the school values and of teaching about these given both in RE and in worship. They relate these to their own lives and to decisions they make about choices in behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Governors, pupils and staff evaluate worship. Records demonstrate the priority given to this process as well as the way in which it is effective in refining and improving worship. Pupils acknowledge the impact of collective worship in engendering the respect they have for those whose opinions and beliefs are different. Anglican traditions and

practices enrich the worshipping life of the school and pupils enjoy visits to the local churches and speak very enthusiastically about the visit made to the cathedral in Peterborough. Pupils value the opportunities to write and lead prayers not only in worship but also at lunch time and at the end of the school day. They see these as occasions when the distinctively Christian ethos of the school is evident.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The school acknowledges the important contribution made by RE to the curriculum in the ample provision of resources, training and time. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and this is evidenced by the work in books, folders, classrooms and displays. Effective use is made of assessment and samples of work show good progress in learning. Regular assessment is in place. Standards of attainment in RE are at least in line with the expectations of the syllabus and are often higher.

Pupils are able to articulate an understanding of a broad range of non-Christian faiths and engage in activities which show ability to make links between beliefs, value systems and practices. Visits from Christians and leaders of other faiths enrich the pupils' learning experiences. Pupils and staff are enthusiastic about the new Understanding Christianity resource. This provided the inspiration for and enabled the whole school recent project 'the big frieze'. Pupils initially worked in mixed age groups and then rejoined their classes as 'experts in particular aspects' to share their experiences. The display produced and the enthusiasm with which pupils described what they had learned was remarkable. The use of dance, music, art as well as literacy in the project showed great creativity and helped the pupils to appreciate the many different ways in which spiritual truths and ideas can be portrayed.

Records of regular observations of teaching and learning describe the teaching as consistently good or outstanding. Pupils discuss and debate puzzling issues and listen to one another realising that on some occasions they have to agree to disagree. Parents speak of their amazement at discussions which are initiated by their children about fundamental and puzzling issues of faith and life. They attribute this to teaching in RE and to a curiosity and eagerness to investigate which are engendered in the ethos and learning opportunities offered in school. Foundation governors are aware of the readiness of pupils to help and listen to each other.

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

Leaders consistently and confidently live out the school's vision which is rooted in distinctively Christian values and these influence decisions of policy and curriculum. They recognise the influence these have upon the lives of all members of the community. Governors are confident that they are kept well informed of all aspects of the school's life. All members of the community engage in self-evaluation and detailed development planning to secure ongoing improvement. All development points of the previous inspection have been addressed. Although the school serves villages which cross parish borders, the clergy from each contribute to the planning, monitoring and leading of collective worship. They are involved in monitoring the school's ethos and ensuring that the curriculum, practice and policies are informed by the school's distinctively Christian vision. The school's values have empowered it to welcome pupils with specific and challenging needs.

Governors promote continuing professional development for all staff and have consciously adopted the highest diocesan level of training and support for the school. Recognising the importance of preparing leaders for church schools the governors have supported the headteacher in her training and progression to headship. They also made it a priority to resource the further training of the RE leader so that the best subject knowledge is disseminated to other members of staff. Other members of staff make very good use of diocesan courses where material is particularly appropriate for leadership of church schools. Local clergy support the ongoing development of the school through careful selection of foundation governors with appropriate skills.

Their awareness of the mono-cultural nature of the school and the need to offer pupils a broader global outlook has caused leaders to seek lively links with schools in other countries. Through a local farmer, there is now a link with a school in Ghana and videos of life in each school are exchanged. In addition, links have been established with schools in countries to which previous members of the school community have moved. A school web has been formed with links in Ireland, the Maldives, Australia, Ghana and the Gambia. Pupils and staff are enthusiastic in the exchange of news and the ability to maintain relationships despite the distance between everyone.

Staff and pupils benefit from links with schools in the local cluster for moderation, sharing ideas in a variety of subject areas and training activities. Parents, pupils, staff and governors are presently working on the distinctively Christian values and the ways in which these can be linked to life at home. The school offers pastoral support to families in many different circumstances. One of the highlights of the school's care for their local community is the occasion when pupils serve summer teas to the older members of the villages.