

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Baltonsborough Church of England Primary School

Ham Street, Baltonsborough, Glastonbury BA6 8PX

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Bath and Wells
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local Authority	Somerset
Name of multi-academy trust	N/A
Date of inspection	3 July 2017
Date of last inspection	16 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 123740
Headteacher	Michelle Heap
Inspector's name and number	Carolyn Banfield 610

School context

Baltonsborough CE Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average school with 89 pupils taught in four mixed-age classes. The majority of pupils come from the immediate village and surrounding area and are from a White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding is below the national average as is the number of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities. 12.5% of pupils are registered as having traveller status and this has an impact on levels of attendance. The Little Pips Preschool came under the governance of the school in January 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Baltonsborough as a Church of England school are good

- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher, who with a united team, effectively promotes a distinctive Christian ethos. This ensures that the Christian values form the cement that binds this community together.
- Baltonsborough is a place where every individual is valued as one of God's children, respected for their uniqueness and carefully nurtured so that they are encouraged to achieve their full potential.
- The impact of the school's ethos on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is made clear through responses to the enriching and memorable experiences the curriculum provides.

Areas to improve

- Share and communicate the recently reviewed vision and values so that all stakeholders fully appreciate what motivates and informs decision making and strategic planning.
- Extend the prayer life of the school through imaginative methods to facilitate personal prayer and reflection.
- Ensure all teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is of the highest quality, through, for example, the embedding of the Understanding Christianity programme, so that its impact on the deepening Christian distinctiveness of the school is maximised.
- Use the school improvement plan (SIP) as an on-going mechanism to more rigorously monitor and evaluate success against all aspects of the SIAMS framework so the school can confidently move towards being outstanding.

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

The life and work of Baltonsborough is clearly underpinned by distinctively Christian values which are shared and articulated by all. The inclusive and nurturing ethos is well established and demonstrates God's love to the community through strong relationships and genuine care for pupils and families. As a result, pupils very naturally care for and are accepting of each other. A tangible sense of respect pervades and differences are celebrated. Pupils recognise the skills and personal attributes of each and appreciate how these contribute positively to the school as a Christian community. Issues of attendance are dealt with sensitively and levels are now almost in line with those nationally. Pupils are able to convey what it means for them to go to a church school. They say that 'God is in all of us and he is interested in everything we do'. Because the values are firmly rooted in biblical teaching, pupils are increasingly able to relate their own life experiences to the teachings of Jesus. From the leaves that pupils are rewarded with for their efforts, the values tree captures examples of the way in which the values are being lived out. They have acquired a clear understanding of how Bible stories give focus to moral and social issues and are able to explain how the choices they make are being influenced. As a result, a consensus in what constitutes right from wrong is agreed and actively supported by the golden rules. This has a direct impact on the excellent behaviour demonstrated by the pupils as well as their sense of personal well-being. Attitudes towards learning are extremely positive. Pupils identify the resilience of Jesus throughout his ministry and in particular during challenging times, with their own need to 'never give up, keep on trying and to give of our best'. The effective use of additional funding ensures that the more vulnerable are well catered for. The impact of this is reflected in growing levels of self-esteem and a willingness to play an active role within the school and wider community. The curriculum is lively, vibrant and child-centred. Staff have a shared understanding of spirituality and opportunities to develop this are planned for. This is exemplified through a rich and stimulating outdoor environment. Explorations of Pippin's Wood, stories around the camp fire and times of quiet reflection within Russet Glade, all contribute well to this provision. As a result, pupils have a deep affinity with the wonder of God's creation and are mindful of their responsibilities towards it. Through creative learning journeys pupils are exposed to a wealth of inspiring opportunities and memorable experiences. This results in pupils who are motivated and enthused by their learning. Consequently, academic achievement by the end of Key Stage 2 often exceeds national expectations. Provision for SMSC development is strong. It very effectively embraces the cultural diversity which is apparent within the school community. This is typified by the way in which parents are encouraged to formally share their interests and travel experiences with the school. Consequently, issues such as child labour in India, the distribution of aid in Syria and the celebration of alternative Christian festivals, can all be explored and debated from an informed perspective. This epitomises the mission statement 'Hand in Hand we Live and Learn' and exemplifies the underpinning aims. Pupils, therefore have a secure understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. They value and respect the diversity of their own community. Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) because they identify the importance of faith and belief. They regularly explore the mysteries of life and are helped to ponder wider ethical issues. The subject contributes well to the distinctive Christian character of the school. This notion has been strengthened by the introduction of the Understanding Christianity programme.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship holds a central place in the life of the school and its distinctive nature is well understood. It plays a vital role in expressing and defining the school's Christian foundation. Consequently, pupils describe a sense of 'coming together in the presence of God'. This is having a positive influence on the way in which they approach worship and how they interact with the materials shared. Worship is well planned and organised. Monitoring and evaluation has led to some improvements but impact is not yet being sufficiently analysed. The systematic Roots and Fruits programme used, facilitates a learning, reflecting and response model. As a result, pupils make connections with the Bible stories and this adds relevance and meaning to their own lives. Through the challenge of response, many acts of kindness and service are willingly carried out. The benefits of this are felt within and beyond the school community giving shape to charitable events and opportunities to support the less fortunate. Prayer and reflection is a constant thread through worship. Pupils understand its purpose and draw strength from the collective sharing of the school and Lord's prayers. However, some pupils say that they find it difficult to give space to their 'inner voice' or to appreciate a personal presence of God. The prayer station is helping to address this. Pupils appreciate the different styles and formats of worship and can identify with elements that particularly appeal to them. They are encouraged to take on greater ownership of worship by regularly leading aspects of the programme. This is having a positive impact on levels of engagement and understanding. The school successfully brings a level of creativity to each occasion. This is both motivating and inspiring. Symbolism, drama and music add to the learning and generate memorable experiences. The use of balloons to illustrate the coming of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost is just one example of how more difficult concepts are made accessible to pupils. The 'Open the Book' programme effectively breathes life into the characters and messages being shared. As a result, pupils are acquiring a secure knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus. Direct teaching of the innate qualities of the Trinity is underpinned by the daily

lighting of three candles and a call and response that makes clear reference to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Consequently, pupils display a good understanding appropriate to their age. As one pupil explained, 'God loved us so much, that he sent his Son to save us. It is his Holy Spirit that is with us now and connects us to God.' The strong and effective partnership with the church significantly enriches pupils' SMSC development. Pupils are proud of their connection to the locally born St Dunstan and are keen to share his fame as Bishop of Glastonbury and later Archbishop of Canterbury. The celebration of major Christian festivals and special occasions such as Christingle engender an appreciation of the church year and all its associated traditions. The church school status is powerfully confirmed through the annual Clypping service. Parents and pupils speak of the spiritual impact of joining hands to 'hug' the church before turning to face and 'hug' the school and village in unity of prayer and blessing. Pupils are regularly involved in and contribute to family worship with their readings. They acquire a familiarity with Anglican liturgy during these visits to church and this is further developed at school.

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

The commitment and Christian leadership of the headteacher shines through and is instrumental in ensuring that this church school continues to thrive and flourish. Governors are actively involved in the work of the school and provide good levels of support and challenge. Consequently, leaders at all levels have clear knowledge of the part its Christian ethos plays in the school's success. A recent review of the school's vision and values, has led to some simple refinement, resulting in a more explicit expression of the school's Christian principles and practice. This has yet to be fully shared with the wider community, as a more in depth review will happen next year. The 10 Christian values are well embedded and bind this community together. They are genuinely lived out by the headteacher, governors and the staff team with care and respect at the very heart of the work of the school. Parents see the school as a place where their children are nourished, loved and supported. They eloquently describe how the school's vision is all embracing, encourages participation and truly reflects how hands, both adult and pupils, are held in the process of living and learning. As a result, they say that due to the Christian grounding they receive, 'good people who respect all humankind, are grown at Baltonsborough'. Leaders take swift and appropriate action to address areas of underachievement. The success of this can be noted in the significantly improved levels of reading this year and the number of pupils who are working at 'greater depth'. The development of the school's Christian distinctiveness forms a strand on the SIP and this has provided direction for improvement. However, this strand has not been monitored and evaluated with the kind of rigour required to accurately measure the impact this has for individuals and the community as a whole. The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The RE and collective worship leader is a knowledgeable and passionate advocate of her subjects. Clear and strategic plans identify strategies for improvement and support from the headteacher and governing body is assured. Staff and governors are empowered by relevant professional development opportunities enabling them to grow as leaders. Through membership of the Community Learning Partnership, wider opportunities are readily accessed. This complements the rich curriculum and supports the development of SMSC well. The mutually beneficial relationship with St Dunstan's church is strong. The support received from clergy and lay-readers enhance the school's distinctiveness considerably. Overall, leadership is highly effective and leaders demonstrate a clear appreciation of what is required to maintain and improve standards. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.

SIAMS report July 2017 Baltonsborough CEVC Primary School, Glastonbury BA6 8PX