

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### **Bicton Church of England Voluntary Controlled (VC) Primary School**

Bicton Lane, Bicton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.SY3 8EH

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lichfield</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Shropshire
Date of inspection	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
Date of last inspection	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary. 123461
Headteacher	N Johnson
Inspector's name and number	R M Gale 337

#### **School context**

Bicton C of E VC Primary school is a one-form entry rural primary school serving the out skirts of Shrewsbury. There are 138 pupils on roll. The vast majority of pupils are white British. There have been considerable changes to the entire staff team and the leadership structure of the school since the previous inspection. There is also a new vicar. The school has close links with Holy Trinity parish church and the village community.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bicton Primary as a Church of England school are good**

- The positive interplay between church and school which is recognised and appreciated by pupils and parents alike.
- Leaders at all levels who are passionate about developing the school's distinctive Christian ethos and promoting its Christian values.
- The inclusive school culture where each pupil is nurtured and valued as unique individuals.
- Delightful pupils who demonstrate high standards of behaviour.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Ensure Christian values and vision are more explicitly expressed in school documentation and on the school website.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to lead school worship and share those moments with parents thereby enhancing pupils and parents understanding of the schools' core Christian values.
- Promote further opportunities for all members of the governing board to engage in the formal monitoring and evaluation of the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- Include a range of representatives from different Christian traditions and other religions to support the developing understanding of the pupils regarding difference and diversity in the world.

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

Bicton Church of England school is a happy, safe and caring rural school where pupils are supported fully in all aspects of learning. The school motto of 'Learning for a lifetime' is understood by all and lived out through the care, attention and opportunities given to pupils. Pupils are nurtured and encouraged by this Christian family. They are reminded often that 'we are each unique and beautiful, but together we are a masterpiece'. Leaders are building on and embedding its Christian beliefs and values to ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to make good progress. As a result, most pupils meet the national floor standards in reading, writing and mathematics, which are the minimum standards for the achievement of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 set by the government. Effective systems are in place to monitor outcomes and target interventions to ensure the needs of pupils are addressed. Pupils are keen to attend school because they see school as an interesting place to be. One pupil said, 'we all love this school, the teachers are kind, friendly and wonderful.' Another stated 'I love Bicton school, it feels like the sun is always shining bright here, even if it rains a rainbow always comes out'. This results in very good levels of attendance and punctuality. Reward systems enable a culture of praise and encouragement and serve as a reminder of the school's implicit Christian mission to develop the potential of all within a caring environment. Behaviour is very good and pupils report over and over that they feel safe and secure. They are encouraged to look after each other just as Jesus cares for them. As one pupil said, 'I care for the younger pupils, God is around me and he will protect us all; we are in safe hands'. The seven core values of 'love, kindness, peace, joy, generosity, respect and perseverance' are clearly displayed in the school hall and in some classes. Pupils are developing an understanding of how these values relate to their personal lives. Special areas such as classroom reflection areas, the reflection garden and outdoor facilities, give pupils opportunities to develop their spirituality through reflection on the wonder of the natural world. They say that these special places give them the opportunity to read the Bible, write prayers and 'say sorry to God and ask for forgiveness'. This spiritual development is supported by quality experiences across the whole curriculum. Pupils are given the opportunity to expand and appreciate their learning especially about the outdoors through experiences such as Attingham Park outdoor centre, forest schools and gardening activities. There is much to appreciate, as many of these experiences extend beyond the school day and contribute to a broad and rich curriculum which is creative, interactive and weaves across subject boundaries making learning wholesome and relevant. This supports the way pupils are encouraged to appreciate a sense of awe and wonder. Pupils talk positively about religious education (RE) and how this contributes to the Christian character of the school. One pupil commented that the school visit to Shrewsbury Abbey had 'given me the opportunity to share time with God and make new friends'. Pupils have a growing understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, and the difference and diversity between faith communities. Many of the schools' visually exciting displays and artefacts express the school's Christian distinctiveness and promote discussion and debate. The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship and supports a range of charities including the Great Shrewsbury Run and the local food bank. These fund-raising events, all of which are supported by parents, include a local, national and global focus and celebrate the school's Christian outreach. These events are enhanced by the work of the choir within the community. In all these ways, pupils are committed daily to making a difference to the lives of others as well as their own families. All of this is supported by effective Christian moral teaching and guidance. Members of the 'Brill club' and the 'Confirmation club' speak of their ability to reflect on the responsibility they hold for God's world. The school is currently exploring various resources to support and enhance these aspects including 'Understanding Christianity' and 'Fruits of the Spirit.' These resources enable staff and pupils to work with a deeper understanding and demonstrate a growing ease at using theological language.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Daily collective worship, sometimes referred to as assembly, is recognised, by the whole school community as being important to the life of this school and makes a positive impact on pupils' lives. It reinforces the school's values and helps pupils to develop an understanding of how the teachings of Jesus guides Christians in their daily lives. Bible stories, and practical examples support their knowledge of key Christian aspects such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the Trinity. Whole school and class worship feature across the school each week. Pupils particularly enjoy class worship which affords them the opportunity to experience worship in a smaller, more intimate setting. Worship is planned over a four-year rolling programme utilising a variety of stimulus such as the Christian calendar, Anglican traditions, Bible stories and the school values. These aspects are beginning to deepen pupils' understanding of the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils are encouraged to apply what they have heard in worship to everyday situations. After learning about the parable of the wise man and the foolish man, pupils were able to discuss the need to make good choices in life and identify how the teachings of Jesus can influence their own lives. Christian signs, symbols, music and role play are just some of the activities used to engage the pupils and enhance collective worship. The recent introduction of the significance of liturgical colours to represent key Anglican aspects have been welcomed by the church and school community. Worship provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual development as well as informing their behaviour, attitudes and relationships. Pupils enjoy worship and participate

enthusiastically. They sing their praise with great joy. They are now eager to be more involved in evaluating, planning and leading worship. Pupils understand that responses, prayer, silence and song are central elements to the structure of worship. They express feelings of happiness and respect when they attend worship both at school and at Holy Trinity church. 'God is around me when I attend worship', stated one pupil. Pupils of all ages understand the significance of the lighting of three candles in worship. One pupil stated, 'the candle reminds me of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit'. Worship is led by teachers and members of the church community. The curate and the vicar are well supported in delivering 'Open the book' experiences. This variety helps pupils to understand the nature of worship including Anglican tradition and practice and gives pupils experiences of a range of worship styles. Pupils know the value of prayer in worship. Pupils are encouraged to write prayers and read them out for all to hear. They are supported in developing prayer through class discussions and through learning prayers to use at lunchtimes and at the end of the school day. These prayers are displayed on a prayer tree in one of the class rooms and is much admired by all. The Lord's Prayer is known by most of the pupils'; recently older pupils have experienced singing this. Each class has access to a reflection/quiet area which supports the spiritual development of pupils. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to reflect in the recently developed outside garden area. The monitoring and evaluation of worship is beginning to be embedded in the school self-evaluation programme. This feedback is evaluated, discussed and forms part of school development. The governing board evaluate worship informally. Pupils clearly articulate how collective worship impacts on their own personal spirituality and their developing relationship with God. Pupils and their parents visit the school and Holy Trinity church for the principal Christian festivals and pupils enthusiastically take an active part in them. These events are much appreciated and well attended by parents. Parents evidence that their children are applying these Christian messages to their home lives, for example in how they behave. They comment that 'there is a sense of openness and everyday examples of the school ethos in action'.

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

All leaders, including governors display great passion for this school and are effective in articulating and promoting the school's Christian ethos to support effective learning. The school has recently reflected on its Christian values, and this has resulted in a clearer understanding on how each value supports the personal development of pupils. There is an emphasis on perseverance and respect within these values. The family environment promoted by the school is understood by all, it centres on caring and other pastoral aspects, thus nurturing each child as a child of God. A clear direction is set by the senior leadership team and is closely adhered to by all staff. Leaders consistently model the school's values and there is an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop as unique individuals with an appreciation of shared values. There is a close relationship between Holy Trinity Church and the school. The pupils speak of it as 'their' church. Members of the church family are part of the school community and support the school. Pupils visit the church as part of their learning in RE as well as for worship during key Christian festivals. This gives pupils a developing experience of the Anglican tradition. Some pupils have recently been baptised in readiness for confirmation, the next stage in their spiritual journey. The school is described as a welcoming place by pupils, parents and visitors. They all comment on the openness of the staff and the leadership team resulting in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. They also emphasise how staff are highly sensitive to the needs of each family ensuring that social, emotional and spiritual needs are met. One parent said, 'this makes a huge difference to families.' Another stated 'Christian values are riven through all that the staff do.' Parents are very supportive of the school in a variety of ways. They give readily of their time in taking part in fund raising events and supporting classes. They attribute the strengths of the school to its family ethos and Christian values. They say that this has an impact on the development of pupils in the widest sense.

Through targeted professional development and succession planning, leaders have strengthened the school's capacity to realise their plans enabling the Christian dimension to be further explored and developed and deepened. The RE subject leader is highly effective in her role. Governors understand the need to monitor and evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school so that they can further support the school in promoting its Christian ethos. The school has effective development plans for pupil achievement, the promotion of difference and diversity, embedding their understanding of the world wide Christian church, worship and RE which aim to work towards delivering effective provision in all areas. Although improvements to the achievements of learners are clearly planned, the school needs time for the full impact of these plans to be realised. Partnerships and links with other faith traditions are at an early stage. Leaders use additional funding such as pupil premium and sports funding effectively to support the individual needs of pupils where applicable. The development points identified in the previous inspection have been addressed, this has been achieved with effective support from the Lichfield Diocese The school values this support.

