

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christian Malford Church of England Primary Academy

Church Road
Christian Malford
Chippenham
SN15 4BW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Bristol
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 December 2013
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust
Date of inspection	2 March 2017
Date of last inspection	8 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 140454
Executive Principal Head of School	Jill Rowe Andrea Kaye
Inspector's name and number	Patricia Morris 626

School context

Christian Malford is a smaller than average sized primary school with 74 children on roll. The school is organised into four classes each morning and three classes each afternoon. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of children entitled to receive the pupil premium is also above the national average. Mobility is higher than normal with children joining and leaving school other than at the usual starting points. This impacts on attendance which is lower than the national average. The school converted to academy status in December 2013 when it joined the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust.

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

- The exceptionally good leadership of the executive principal and head of school in introducing initiatives to enable the school to move forward as a church school.
- Good relationships throughout the school community generate a shared team vision in promoting a distinctive Christian character.
- Core Christian values are well linked to school rules enabling children to articulate their opinions and beliefs.
- The strong partnership with the church is integral in supporting the Christian ethos of the school.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the plans to develop the outdoor environment enable children to have high quality opportunities for spiritual development.
- Embed the objectives of the worship council to enable children to have greater ownership in planning and leading worship and to develop opportunities to use class reflection areas to support spiritual awareness.
- Provide opportunities for quality discussions so that children gain a greater depth and appreciation of how the mystery of the Trinity is central to a person's faith.

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

Five core Christian values are clearly expressed and embedded in the life of the school. Children's involvement in choosing these values has given a sense of ownership of them. Values link closely to school rules and make a positive impact on school life especially behaviour and attitudes to learning. For example, one child explained how the value of diligence has encouraged her to work harder and persevere. Children are proud of their school badge of an oak tree saying, 'The roots are our values supporting our school as it grows'. They speak enthusiastically about a value tree. The design includes every child's hand with values on each finger and a reason to strive for a particular value in the palm of the hand. Children see this as a whole school reinforcement of their commitment to values. The significance of this is evident in the way children respect each other and adults. This helps to build strong relationships which are consistently linked to the school's core values and ensure children are nurtured within a Christian ethos and valued as individuals. The impact is apparent in their growing self-esteem and the excellent way they confidently articulate their beliefs and opinions. The school environment reflects the high profile of the school as a church school. Crosses are displayed around the school and reflection areas have recently been introduced in each classroom, although children do not yet appreciate the full significance of these areas. Christian values successfully contribute to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The current development of an outdoor spiritual area is welcomed by children who are excited to have been part of its planning process. They are actively involved in bringing their ideas to fruition and have recently planted trees in preparation for the development of a reflection and sensory area. Children have some understanding of Christianity as a world faith. This is enhanced through linked experiences with the church and local community. For example, Harvest is celebrated through fund-raising together and has included projects linked to African and Asian families. Religious education (RE) promotes children's awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith which is helping children understand diversity within Christianity. Parents speak positively about the Christian character of the school and the values that underpin children's learning. Attendance continues to be a challenge but the school are doing all they can to implement strategies to increase attendance.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a central role in embedding Christian values and the ethos of the school. Values underpin themes which are explored through prayer and stories. Bible stories are closely linked to values and children are encouraged to make connections with their own lives. Children show a deep respect when listening in worship and are keen to be involved either through drama or by responding to questions. There is a consistent approach to the format of worship that ensures it is a special time in the school day with elements that make them distinctively times for worship within a Christian context. Worship is thoroughly planned with opportunities for reflection and prayer which makes a good contribution to children's spiritual development. Opportunities to be still, with thoughtful suggestions to support children when reflecting, encourage them to think beyond themselves and the world around them. The assistant minister from Draycot Benefice has contributed in lessons to support children's perception of reflection. This has developed children's understanding of what it means to reflect and encourages them to appreciate God's world and widen their thoughts by considering others less fortunate than themselves. Class worship in particular enables children to take part in discussions at appropriate levels that generate outstanding opportunities to develop a deeper awareness of Christianity and values in action. Prayer has a high profile and is said at various times throughout the school day. Children have a good understanding of the purpose of prayer for saying thank you and asking for forgiveness. They are familiar with the Lord's Prayer, blessings and responses to praise. The excellent partnership with the local church is exceptionally strong and the relationship is integral to supporting the Christian ethos. Children visit the church regularly to celebrate worship as well as to support RE lessons. There are a range of leaders in worship that enhance children's experiences. They particularly enjoy visits from the 'Open the Book' team and encountering 'Church Experience' days which take place annually. These are based on Christian festivals that enable children to develop a greater depth of understanding and knowledge of the seasons of the church year and Christian celebrations. This has contributed to children having some understanding of the Trinity although this has not been fully explored. A worship council has recently been formed and is beginning to empower children to share opinions and ideas on how to improve worship. Children qualify the importance of this by saying, 'we want to make worship creative and to be more involved'. Their commitment has subsequently produced a guide to worship for visitors and a scrapbook reflecting what makes them a Church of England school. The worship council is already starting to impact on the quality of worship by enabling children to have more opportunity to plan and lead their own worship. Regular monitoring and evaluation takes place on an informal basis, identifying where improvement is needed and informing planning although a more formal system has yet to be developed to ensure all stakeholders are fully informed.

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

The executive principal and head of school have worked exceptionally hard to develop the Christian character of the school after a challenging few years. This has ensured that the school has moved forward as a church school and is a better church school than at the time of the previous inspection. They articulate and promote a vision based on distinctive Christian values and confidently describe the impact of core values on children's lives and the whole school. Foundation members of the local board have a comprehensive understanding of the school. This is reflected in their contribution to self-evaluation and an evidence log of key questions that challenge leaders. They are well informed and extremely supportive. Together, they are taking the school on a journey of improvement so that it is now in a very strong position to embed the many initiatives that have been introduced to move the school forward as a church school. The co-ordinator ensures RE is based on the school's distinctive Christian values and makes good contributions to children's behaviour and attitudes. Links with the Diocese are strong with effective use made of opportunities that arise for the development of staff and local board members in church schools. The active involvement between the church and local community produces a mutually beneficial partnership. Close links with the independent on-site pre-school already exist and these are currently being further developed to benefit children during the process of merging together. Parents and the local community are involved in school life in a number of ways that enrich children's education. For example, regular joint fund raising for extra resources and specific skills of volunteers enrich the school curriculum. Parents say communication is excellent. They feel fully informed through weekly newsletters and have opportunities to give their views. They particularly appreciate the 'open door' policy and say that all staff are approachable and concerns are dealt with promptly. Parents especially speak of the commitment and dedication of leaders and feel the school is going from strength to strength. They believe the school is well led and has 'come a long way' in the last few years. They say children are more confident, calmer, better behaved and respectful as a result of how they are treated by a caring and committed staff. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report March 2017 Christian Malford CE VC Primary Academy, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 4BW