

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Columba Church of England Primary Academy

Tewkesbury Avenue, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 6LL

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

Portsmouth

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Satisfactory

Date of academy conversion

30 August 2012

Name of multi-academy trust

Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Academies Trust

Date of inspection

28 March 2018

Date of last inspection

20 March 2015

Type of school and unique reference number

Primary Academy 138509

Principal

Denise Williams

Inspector's name and number

Richard Blackmore 857

School context

St Columba Primary Academy is a smaller than average-sized primary school. A large majority of children are of white British heritage and the proportion speaking English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of children who trigger additional government funding or with different levels of special needs are both higher than the national average. The interim headteacher was appointed in January and a new substantive headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2018.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Columba Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are good

- The leadership of the principal and governors has rapidly developed and ignited the Christian values and the sense of community at the school.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) make a strong contribution in promoting the distinctive Christian values and developing children's spirituality.
- Children have a good understanding of how values can be used in their lives and help them play a valuable role in the school.
- Leaders have ensured that the partnership between the school and church is strong and enhances the Christian family ethos.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the Christian values of the academy are illustrated more strongly so that pupils are more fully aware of their contribution to the academy's Christian distinctiveness.
- Expand the role of pupils in the collective worship programme to increase their involvement in planning and evaluating the impact of worship.
- Raise achievement RE by developing opportunities that challenge children's thinking in greater depth.
- Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning is effective in bringing about further improvement in children's learning.

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

The distinctive Christian ethos permeates throughout this caring school and results in happy, safe and secure children. The trusting relationships, evident across the school, are due to the commitment of leaders and staff to ensure that the ethos is sustained for the personal development, well-being and benefit of all children. The achievement of children is rising rapidly because learning opportunities are well planned and take account of children's starting points. Parents value the school's work; trust in the school is strong because time is given to each pupil and their family. The school also takes time to develop a respect for, and understanding of, all cultures and faiths, including an appreciation of Christianity as a multi-cultural worldwide religion. Everything the school does in worship, religious education and the curriculum has a clear purpose for and positive impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the last inspection, a set of core Christian values has been distilled that focus on Love, Compassion and Hope. The impact of each one can be seen in the high quality of relationships between pupils and staff, characterised by a genuine sense of community. The emphasis on Christian values helps pupils to develop a growing vocabulary to discuss their meaning and use powerfully to guide their actions, words and thinking. However, there is more that can be done to make the Christian values more explicit and consequently enhance the academy's Christian distinctiveness. Pupils treat each other with respect, regardless of background and as a result relationships are strongly based on an awareness of others. Pupils listen to each other attentively and have a good appreciation of the need to show tolerance of the diverse range of cultures and faiths that make up Britain. RE makes a good contribution to this. RE also makes a telling contribution to the Christian character of the school and pupils' spiritual development. This is because other faiths such as Islam, Hinduism and Judaism are now studied in detail. Consequently, children can adeptly make comparisons and draw similarities between a range of religions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The profile of collective worship has been significantly raised and is distinctly Christian. Pupils appreciate that worship is an important part of being a church school. Themes are closely based on the school's values and help pupils to understand them within a Christian context and the pupils' own experiences within school and in the outside world. Acts of worship provide times for children to think about faith and what it means to them. They understand that collective worship has different parts and each one is special and has significance. Pupils and staff enjoy collective worship and it is an important part in the development of the academy's Christian distinctiveness. Pupils help with some roles within collective worship but do not plan or evaluate the impact of collective worship in sufficient depth. Leaders encourage collective worship well as a time to reflect and talk to God, as well as for listening to and reflecting on Bible stories and what they tell children about how to lead their lives. Worship is planned in depth by the principal and is carefully organised to emphasise the connection between the academy's values and Bible stories alongside improving children's understanding of the Christian calendar. Pupils contribute to the programme of worship themes but do not have regular opportunities to contribute their ideas as to how these themes can be developed over time. Pupils approach collective worship with reverence and the lighting of the candle signifies that it is an important time in the school day. Worship is good because it inspires a strong level of spiritual and moral reflection and pupils can explain its significance for them personally. The importance of prayer and its central place as a part of worship was very evident during the period of quiet reflection and culminating in the Lord's Prayer. The parish priest leads worship and children attend and take part in worship at the local church. These occasions, coupled with a clear pattern within collective worship that highlights the Holy Trinity, help ensure a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards in RE have recently improved strongly and are now good. Pupils of all abilities, including those with additional educational needs, make good progress to attain levels that are typically in line with national expectations. Pupils make good gains in knowledge about Christianity and other world religions. However, there are times when pupils' thinking is not stretched and this slows the progress that they make. Evidence in pupils' work, written or through a range of different media, shows a positive impact of the improved use and detailed planning of the units of work on their achievement. The teaching of RE is good because long and medium-term plans provide a secure framework for teaching across the school. There is appropriate emphasis on the teaching of Christianity and other religions which is demonstrated through planning, scrutiny of work and discussion with the children. The development of children's knowledge and understanding of facts and concepts is supported by a variety of effective teaching styles which encourage investigation and questions. The RE curriculum enables children to explore ideas in stimulating ways including visits to the local church that link with distinctive Christian values and support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The teaching of Christianity is effective because of teachers' strong subject knowledge and the subsequent well planned activities which stimulate creative thinking and

discussions. Teachers encourage children to investigate Christianity fully, for example the different characters within the Easter story. Skilled questioning by staff enables children to articulate their thoughts and ideas with confidence and to be helped to understand when they have misconceptions. The interim principal, who acts as RE coordinator, provides good leadership of the subject. She has cleverly developed the skills of another member of staff to ensure the future leadership of RE is strong and taken forward without any slowing of momentum. Together, they are committed to the subject and ensure that it has a high profile in the curriculum. They have a good grasp of the subject and what needs to be done to continue to take it forward.

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

The interim principal and future RE leader have a clear vision of the way in which the school's distinctive Christian ethos enriches the experiences of children. They identify clearly the considerable skills, commitment and potential of staff in successfully sustaining the school's distinctiveness. They are introducing a wider distribution of leadership to enhance opportunities for professional development. Together with staff they lucidly articulate how Christian values impact upon the lives of children, the curriculum and the life of the school. For example, leaders and staff highlight specifically for pupils how they can act out forgiveness at different times of the school day, such as when playing in the playground and during lessons. Leaders, including governors carefully and accurately monitor the impact of the Christian ethos on each child's well-being, personal development and academic achievement. They have a clear view of the strengths of the school and ensure formal as well as informal self-evaluation informs development planning well. However, monitoring and evaluation is not developed sufficiently widely so that learning is as rapid as it could be in RE and other subjects. Leaders plan to refine the method for using and recording the results from the monitoring, assessment and self-evaluation processes in order to set clear achievement targets for the future. Leaders have a clear view of the importance of supporting the staff to improve their practice. They actively encourage professional, spiritual and personal development that is effective in developing them as teachers and members of a Christian community. This is demonstrated through the strong support and guidance for all staff and governors as leaders in a church school. There is visible and tangible support from the Diocese. These aspects combine well to ensure that future school leaders' skills are being systematically grown. The links with the local church and clergy are effective. The vicar makes a telling contribution to the life of the school and is a familiar member of the school community. She leads acts of worship and welcomes children to the church to celebrate services such as Easter and Christmas. The commitment of the 'Open the Book' team to worship is a further indication of the strength of the links between school and church. Children comment very favourably about the difference 'Open the Book' makes to their knowledge of Bible stories. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report March 2018, St Columba Church of England Primary Academy Fareham, PO15 6LL