

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bishopton Redmarshall Church of England Primary School

Cobby Castle Lane, Bishopton, Stockton-on-Tees, TS21 1HD

Current SIAMS inspection grade **Good**

Diocese **Newcastle**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade Good

Date of academy conversion August 2011

Name of multi-academy trust BRandH

Date/s of inspection 16 February 2017

Date of last inspection 13 March 2012

Type of school and unique reference number 137021

Executive Head Teacher Neil Parker

Inspector's name and number Richard Goodman 889

School context

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school where the vast majority of pupils are White British. Both the proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium and who have special educational needs are below the national average. The school is part of a multi-academy trust with another local church primary school. The head of school has recently announced her retirement following long-term absence. The executive headteacher will continue to cover this role until the end of the academic year. In October 2016, Ofsted judged the school to require improvement.

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

- The executive headteacher passionately promotes a coherent vision based on distinctively Christian values which positively impact on the development of all pupils and inform their daily actions.
- Religious education (RE) makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of Christian values and in providing opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Pupils are provided with a myriad of ways to pray and reflect; they understand what the purpose of prayer is and the spiritual benefit it brings.

Areas to improve

- Implement sharper and robust evaluations of the school's effectiveness as a church school by governors and leadership to drive improvements across the school further.
- Ensure that pupils clearly articulate how the school's Christian values inform their actions and how these link to biblical teachings.
- Establish more formal systems to monitor and evaluate the impact that collective worship has on the lives of the whole school community in order to drive and sustain improvements.
- Establish formal systems to utilise and evaluate pupil voice within RE to identify strengths and areas for development and so maintain improvements in standards.

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

The school's vision to live 'life in all its fullness' (John 10) is passionately promoted by the executive headteacher and informs how the entire staff approach their vocation. Each child is regarded as a unique child of God. The school believes its role is to celebrate each person's individuality and to allow each child to develop to the full. This vision is underpinned by distinctively Christian values, such as love and tolerance, which are explored further in collective worship and RE. The executive headteacher explained how the school's Christian values are flexible to adapt to the specific needs of pupils. For example, with the advent of more rigorous and demanding end of Key Stage 2 tests the school focuses on the values of resilience, perseverance and humility to combat pupil stress. The school is taking more effective steps to ensure pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve their full potential. The school community is characterised by a loving and caring nature from pupils and staff. Pupils and parents both talk of how children enjoy coming to school. Pupils' behaviour is of a very high standard. A number of pupils linked Jesus' teaching of treating others the way you would like to be treated to the way they should act towards others in school. However, although it is apparent that Christian values inform pupils' actions not all could articulate this link or relate to biblical teaching. The annual Year 6 leavers' ceremony is a celebration of each pupil's life in all its fullness. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate pupils' God-given gifts and how their actions have been influenced by Christian values. One governor likened the service to an 'exploration of how their education has provided pupils with the tools to live their life to the full'. The RE curriculum, collective worship and the wider curriculum provide a rich mix of opportunities that allow for the SMSC development of all learners. RE and assemblies are clearly linked to Christian values and pupils learn about Bible teachings and are able to apply these to their own lives. For example, pupils speak of the Ten Commandments and how they create modern versions linked to the world outside school. Pupils are encouraged to explore their own spirituality within class-based worship. Displays in each classroom show pupils' prayers and highlight the range of things they are thankful for. RE and collective worship contribute to developing pupils' understanding of and respect for diverse communities. Pupils consider the question of why people have faith. This provides an opportunity for pupils to discuss a range of opinions and beliefs helping to foster an understanding of diversity and recognising the importance of the value of tolerance. The annual harvest festival celebration develops pupils' understanding that there are those less fortunate than themselves and links to the Christian duty to help those in need.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is referred to as 'assembly time'. However, the focus of assembly time is to develop the vision of the school and is focused around Christian values. Pupils speak excitedly about collective worship and how it guides how they should behave and act towards others. For example, one group of pupils explained how a recent assembly taught them of the Parable of the Good Samaritan and how they should treat all people with respect. Another group of pupils volunteered confidently to explain how the worship corner in their classroom provided opportunities to reflect on the Christian values and to be thankful to God. Parents also speak candidly about how Bible stories and teachings learnt in assemblies, such as Noah's Ark, are discussed at home by the children. Creative opportunities such as music and singing are used regularly within worship. All pupils and staff join in and great joy is shown through this collective worship experience. Collective worship helps to develop pupils' understanding of festivals in the Church's year. In particular, Christmas, Easter and harvest festival services are planned with local clergy and pupils take part with enthusiasm. The teachings of Jesus are central to collective worship and help to develop pupils' understanding of Christian values. Through collective worship and RE pupils develop a good understanding of who Jesus was and how God can be understood through the concept of the Trinity.

Pupils are provided with a myriad of opportunities to pray and reflect. There is a clear understanding of what the purpose of prayer is and the benefits it brings. School displays, including classroom worship corners and class SMSC books, highlight the range of prayer and reflection pupils complete. Personal spiritual development is seen through prayers written for themselves, their family, those less fortunate than themselves and in thanking God for the good things in life. Pupils also speak engagingly about how the prayer room provides them with the option to write a prayer and communicate with God, especially when something is not going right. Pupils encounter a range of worship leaders including staff, local clergy and pupil-delivered worship. The school benefits from the close link developed over a number of years with a local vicar who regularly leads worship and Eucharist services, as well as offering pastoral support to staff and pupils. The school, however, will benefit when the parish priest position is filled and this vital partnership can then be strengthened. Pupils are encouraged to be significantly involved in the planning of assemblies and to contribute their thoughts. A recent assembly focusing on inspiration garnered so many responses from pupils that the theme was extended so all pupils' opinions were then able to be shared. The executive headteacher recognises the importance of establishing more formal systems to evaluate the impact worship has on the lives of the school community. He understands that this can then be used to drive and sustain improvements.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is regarded as a core subject and is seen by both staff and pupils as an important curriculum area. Standards attained by pupils at the end of each key stage are high and pupils make good progress in RE. The school uses the diocesan scheme of learning as a framework to deliver RE and the curriculum is planned with clear links to Christian values. RE makes a good contribution to developing pupils' understanding of Christianity, the school's Christian values and SMSC development. Each topic allows pupils to find out about stories from the Bible, teachings of Jesus and how to apply these to their own lives. The RE curriculum also allows pupils to learn about people of other faiths and none. Pupils speak with enthusiasm of being able to discuss their opinions, share different ideas and develop an understanding of the value of tolerance. One pupil commented, 'RE helps me see that people have different beliefs and that it is important to respect each other's views. Even if we disagree with them'. The quality of teaching in RE is good. The subject lead, although based at the other school in the trust, spends some time each week at the school supporting RE. This teacher benefitted from recent training in implementing the diocesan scheme of learning. She then held a training session for all staff on how to teach RE effectively. Pupils enjoy and feel confident in their RE lessons as work is differentiated so that the less able are supported and the more able are challenged. RE learning activities provide pupils with the opportunity to access a range of higher order skills including analysis and evaluation. An effective range of assessment tasks within the RE curriculum allows teachers to develop a clear understanding of pupil progress. Teaching activities can then be accurately adapted to suit the needs of all learners. Regular self-assessment contributes to pupils becoming independent learners. Pupils consider what they have learnt, how they can improve and how the work links to the Christian values. Pupils' RE books clearly show structured feedback that teachers give to pupils and the opportunities they have to respond, highlighting the further progress that is made. Foundation governors have been involved with senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning within RE though this has been less apparent recently. The executive headteacher understands the importance of establishing more regular systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning of RE. He recognises the benefit in utilising pupil voice, for example, to identify strengths and areas for development in order to drive standards within RE further.

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

The executive headteacher articulates a clear Christian vision based on distinctively Christian values which inform the way pupils and staff treat others around them. School leaders have an understanding of pupil achievement and progress and were disappointed by the outcomes of the recent Ofsted report. However, a robust action plan has been created with improvement strategies linked to areas for development. The executive headteacher has recognised that the school acted too slowly to put in place strategies designed to consistently challenge and stretch higher ability pupils, particularly in Maths. Effective improvement strategies are now being put in place to address these issues. This includes the school now working closely with diocesan improvement partners with noticeable improvements already being felt. The recent absence of the head of school has stalled improvements, particularly with regards to RE and collective worship. Areas in need of development have not been identified quickly enough and therefore strategies have not been put in place to drive forward improvements. Governors have worked with school leaders to address the issues in 'focus for development' from the last inspection. Governors were involved in reviewing the school's vision statement. Foundation governors have also been involved in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of RE and collective worship. However, the recent lack of leadership capacity has meant this has not been a significant focus over the past two terms. Governors have an understanding of the school's Christian vision and values, with Christian ethos being a regular item at governors' meetings. However, they are less clear on being able to articulate the impact these values have on pupil achievement and wellbeing. The new governing body understands that sharper and more robust evaluation of the school's effectiveness as a church school is needed to ensure that improvements are made faster and have greater effect. Staff benefit from professional development opportunities which positively impact on their practice and enhance the Christian character of the school. The RE lead across the trust attended diocesan training linked to the implementation of the new RE syllabus which was then shared across the school. A number of key staff with future leadership potential of church schools have been identified. These teachers have been awarded leadership responsibilities and have opportunities to share their good practice with others.

Parental engagement with school and parents' contribution to school life is effective. There is a well-established programme of parent volunteers into classrooms which helps to enhance pupils' learning experience. Parents speak of how they appreciate the regular communication that now comes from the executive headteacher keeping them informed of school life. An established link exists between the school and a local vicar. He contributes effectively to collective worship and the spiritual life of the school. The executive headteacher recognises the importance of establishing secure links with the local parish priest once the vacant position is filled. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.