

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Seagry Church of England Primary Academy

Upper Seagry, Chippenham, Wiltshire. SN15 5EX	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Bristol
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	September 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust
Date of inspection	11 July 2017
Date of last inspection	29 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 142318
Executive headteacher	Jill Rowe
Head of school	Emily Edmundson
Inspector's name and number	Revd David Hatrey 844

School context

Seagry Church of England Primary Academy is a smaller than average school. Most children come from a White British background. The number of children entitled to pupil premium funding is below national averages, whilst the number of children who have special educational needs is above national averages. The school became part of the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust (DBAT) in September 2015. It shares an executive headteacher with two other schools. A new head of school was appointed to the school for September 2016.

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

- The new leadership team have brought a clear focus to the work of being a church school introducing new initiatives which are making a difference to children's lives.
- The monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of a church school are now more focused recognising strengths and agreeing areas to be developed.
- Children have a growing understanding of Christian values and understand the contribution which these are making to their daily lives and achievements.
- Children's behaviour is of a high standard and they make good relationships within this caring community generally attributing this to the Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- Embed the new approaches to spirituality so that these are identified in planning and provide opportunities for children to express their deepening ideas in a variety of ways.
- Extend the role of the children's worship council to plan, lead and evaluate worship and develop a greater sense of ownership.
- Involve all members of the school community in creating a distinctive Christian vision which all can articulate and link to the school's Christian values.

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

Christian distinctiveness is good because Christian values are being embedded into the daily life of the school so children understand the difference they make to their lives and attainment. Following the move to become part of the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust, a review of the core Christian values was completed involving all members of the school community. They agreed honesty, diligence, trust, respect, kindness with love at the centre of them all. Children have a good understanding of these and explain what they look like in daily life. They confidently recognise where others show these by recommending them for a values award. This is celebrated in collective worship when children receive a certificate with the reason why the award has been made clarified so all recognise how values are influential across all aspects of daily life. These are prestigious as children's names are displayed on the newsletters linked to the value. Special silver awards are given where children show more than one value. Further, this has recently been enhanced by children who recognise peers using values which show how values shape the warm caring community. The language of values is evident in teaching and learning. Children talk about how being diligent encourages them to persevere with an activity they find challenging. Staff provide good role models for these values in daily interactions with children. Children show a high degree of respect towards one another as everyone is special and important to God. There is a growing appreciation of how values shape their relationships. Most children understand that values are given by God, which help them to become better people. Children have a greater appreciation of the Christian meaning of values, relating these to Bible stories which reflect their distinctive meaning. As a result, there are very few instances of inappropriate behaviour. Older children naturally become role models and support younger peers, which is a strength of the school. The school's character is effective in nurturing good attitudes to learning so all can achieve their God given talents. This enables children to make good progress from their starting points with attainment generally in line with national expectations. Disadvantaged children are well supported with individual plans to meet particular needs, which enable them to make encouraging progress. Thoughtful evaluations by the new leadership team determined that the provision for spirituality was not effective so decisive action was taken. Staff agreed an understanding of spirituality with additional opportunities for this. The use of 'windows, mirrors and doors' framework, allows children to explore these questions in a structure which supports their thinking. Children's understanding of this is growing with some thoughtful ideas emerging, however, these need to be better organised and linked to planning to enable greater progression. There are insufficient high quality experiences and children need to be able to express these in a variety of ways to develop a personal spirituality and deepen their understanding. The school has recognised that children's appreciation of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith is limited. Children have a growing understanding of other world faiths, exploring and making comparisons with their own beliefs and how they express these in different ways. This enables children to show a good degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own. There have been a number of developments in RE which are making a significant impact. Units from the 'Understanding Christianity' materials have been introduced and are engaging children in their learning, often through an enquiry approach whereby children are reasoning through and sharing their thinking. They consider 'big' questions of meaning and purpose and extend their understanding with more children beginning to perceive the contribution RE can make to their lives. Christian values are developed through RE, making links to Jesus' teaching enabling children to consider their relevance.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.

The children's worship council is making improvements to the quality of collective worship and shaping ways in which it is being delivered and these have begun to raise its impact. In November 2016 the council was created, it is well nurtured by an experienced Local Board member. They are active in suggesting improvements to which the new leadership team are listening and seeking to implement. The most significant is the creation of a tranquil garden which offers moments of calm and reflection. An inside area supports this well and is valued because it offers moments of calm. At present the council is at an early stage of development and has yet to achieve their full potential. Changes have been made which are beginning to make a difference. A good example is more detailed planning which contributes to developing children's understanding of values. This is supported by using the 'Roots and Fruits' resource through which a value is explored each term, with an aspect considered each week, linked to Bible stories to bring out the meaning of values. This approach enables all staff to take responsibility for worship, whilst more leaders from the community both clergy and lay church members enrich this programme, children appreciate the different approaches these offer. The contribution of the 'Open the Book' team who bring Bible stories to life through drama, is particularly appreciated by children. The school is seeking to help children make links between biblical teaching and their own lives and the impact of this slowly rising. There are good opportunities to extend children's understanding of the main Christian festivals which are built into planning. The church plays a significant role in creating experience days enabling children to explore these through first hand opportunities. For

instance, the 'Journey of Easter' story was considered through a series of workshops which included an activity and a reflection. These provided insights into key events and characters which deepened children's awareness of Easter. This has enabled children to acquire knowledge of Jesus and His teachings. The school has given particular attention to the Trinity, perceiving this as a difficult concept to understand, with work in religious education. Children are grappling with their ideas seeking to explain their understanding in creative ways. Younger children understand that prayer is way of sharing ideas with God. They write thank you and asking prayers, placing them on the prayer tree, from which prayers are taken for worship, so they can see their importance. However, there is limited development of these ideas as children move through the school, with few children perceiving the contribution prayer could make to their lives. Children are generally engaged in worship and able to make some responses through singing, but would welcome further opportunities to contribute. Previously children have led worship, but this has not been continued. Other changes include more contemporary songs and the creation of a cross, made by children as a focus for worship. Children could only recall a few acts of worship and were not confident that these had influenced their thinking or actions. Monitoring has largely been undertaken by leadership, there have been systems for children to make suggestions, but there is no evidence to show that this has resulted in any changes. Governors have monitored, but at a more informal level. Recently this has become more formal, but as yet it has not made a greater impact.

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

Leadership is good because the new leadership team have brought renewed focus and drive to the work of being a church school, linked to new initiatives which are steadily making a difference for children. The experienced executive headteacher and the new head of school have worked hard to secure the longer term sustainability of the school, which has seen numbers rise. This has been a major achievement. This is closely linked to astute reviews of the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness and prioritising what actions to take. New initiatives have been put in place in a number of areas such as the re-emphasis on Christian values and the action to raise the profile of spirituality. What are significant are the relationships which have been established with new Local Board members who have strengthened the leadership team. Together a new cohesive team have been created effectively. Through their federation with a local school and then the move to become part of the DBAT, they have acquired multiple vision statements. There is some confusion over these and children have a limited understanding of their strapline; 'Learning, listening and laughing together' and are not yet able to make links between this, their vision and values. The leadership and particularly the governors have a clear Christian understanding for the school, perceiving children as special to God, as they have been 'wonderfully' made. This informs their approach to children. For instance, they never give up on children who have behavioural issues, but seek to find ways to meet their needs. This is a good example of the school's Christian distinctiveness and the respect shown to one another. The monitoring and evaluation by the Local Board is emerging as one of the strengths where their knowledge and experience is influential in determining the impact of current provision. This has resulted in evaluations focusing precisely on issues from the current inspection framework, such as beginning to evaluate the impact of spirituality through focused discussions with children, as well as considering how vision and values contribute to children's achievements. This is providing good information to go alongside the leadership's ongoing assessments, as well as involving children in this process. These have been formed into action plans which are beginning to have an impact. This is leading to the leaders for RE and collective worship being fully supported to introduce new ideas and draw effectively on diocesan and DBAT expertise from continuing professional development opportunities. Relationships with the church are strong and continue to grow. There are good contributions to worship with annual experience days and contributions to governance and working with the children's worship council. The school plays an active role in the village. The pre-school was brought into the governance of the school from 1 June 2017 which has affirmed the existing close relationships. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.

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