

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

North Marston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
School Hill North Marston Buckinghamshire MK18 3PE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Oxford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Date of inspection	30 April 2018
Date of last inspection	25 April 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 110412
Headteacher	Cathy Gouldstone
Inspector's name and number	Angela Wheatcroft 872

School context

North Marston is a smaller than average village primary school serving the local communities of North Marston and Granborough. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than average but has increased significantly over the last three years. Most of the pupils are White British. Staff turnover is low, however a new assistant headteacher was appointed to the role in September of this academic year. The school structure has recently changed, with Key Stage 1 pupils now being taught in a mixed age class.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of North Marston as a Church of England school are good

- The strong partnerships within the school community, which make a significant contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- The importance of collective worship and prayer within the school and how this is valued by all stakeholders.
- The involvement of the school with 'The Linking Project' which has developed pupils' understanding and respect for different faiths and cultures.
- Pupils exhibit high standards of behaviour which are attributed to the Christian values of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is prioritised by leaders. This ensures that pupils' individual needs are nurtured, resulting in a positive impact on their academic achievements.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all stakeholders can articulate the school's core values of courage, justice and compassion and have a better understanding of how these values are distinctly rooted in Christianity.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to plan and lead daily acts of worship so that they have a greater understanding of Anglican traditions.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to explore Christianity as a worldwide faith so that they have a deeper understanding of the world in which they live.

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

This school provides a high level of nurture and care to its school community through a strong and established Christian ethos, which underpins the daily life of the school. This is evidenced by the inclusive atmosphere of the school. The family feel of the school is valued by staff and parents alike. As a result, the school is held in the highest esteem within the community. Parents and staff value the Christian ethos of the school and the impact that the values of courage, justice and compassion have on the daily lives of the pupils. They talk about compassion being shown on the playground when the older pupils care for and look after the younger ones. Pupils discuss the value of courage impacting positively on their behaviour for learning. One pupil said, 'We need to have courage with our learning. We are not scared to make a mistake.' They talk about demonstrating the value of justice by trying to make sure that the world is fair for all. This is shown by the school's commitment to sponsoring a child to attend school in a Kenyan Christian community. Although these Christian values are understood by stakeholders, the reason the school is not yet outstanding is because not all stakeholders can say how these values are explicitly Christian and reflect the teaching of Jesus.

The Christian values of this school inform its approach to behaviour and attendance. As a result, attendance is above the national average and pupils and parents report that there aren't any incidents of bullying. However, pupils are very aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns and feel that they are listened to and are treated fairly. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress.

SMSC is given a high priority in the school. All Key Stage 1 pupils regularly access forest school and are able to reflect on relevant themes and topics. The eco council is proactive in helping to bring about change and has set school targets on the use of plastic in order to demonstrate pupils' commitment to making a difference. Both religious education (RE) teaching and class thinking books display the opportunities that pupils have to ask deeper questions and appreciate the world in which they live. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their RE work and say, 'It is interesting learning about other religions because if we met someone from a different religion, then we know about it and we won't say anything disrespectful.' Pupils have a sound understanding of different faiths and diversity within their local area. They talk positively about their friends at a local multi-cultural urban school. Pupils are proud of belonging to a small school and recognise the additional benefits to relationships that this brings. However, the reason the school is not yet outstanding is because pupils do not have an understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of the daily life of the school, exemplifying and reinforcing key aspects of the school's Christian values. Worship is carefully planned to incorporate the values of courage, justice and compassion. As a result, key messages are consistently reinforced throughout the school day which positively impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The school's Christian values are explored by looking at Bible stories and stories from other religions. This results in pupils being able to link these stories to their own lives. Worship is relevant to pupils' experiences and so they have an understanding of what it means to act compassionately and with justice. An example of this is the commitment of the pupils to fundraise to support a child from another country to attend school. They say, 'We need to make the world a fairer place so that Evans can go to school.' Pupils understand the role that Jesus plays in worship and speak enthusiastically about their work on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils and staff value worship time and recognise the importance of all being together. Parents attend the weekly celebration worship where pupils' individual achievements are celebrated. They speak highly of both the inclusive nature of this worship and the positive reinforcement that parental involvement gives to the pupils. Pupils enjoy leading acts of worship. However, they do not have significant opportunities to plan and lead daily acts of worship, nor do pupils have a clear understanding of the different traditions in worship, Anglican practice or the seasons of the church year. This is the reason why the school is not yet outstanding.

Prayer is central to the life of the school. The school has worked hard to address the development point from the previous inspection and as a result all pupils value the importance of prayer. They speak enthusiastically about working in mixed age groups to write prayers and the significance of the prayers at the church service. Pupils recognise how prayer can help them in their daily lives. One pupil said, 'If I need to pray, I can write a prayer and put it in the prayer box and I know that God is listening to me.'

Priority is given to the monitoring of collective worship. The foundation governors have a programme in place for observing worship and talking to pupils. They report to the full governing body and implement and monitor changes. Likewise, the headteacher is systematic in gathering the views of pupils and staff and implements ideas and suggestions. A range of staff lead worship and the school has been supported by a number of clergy during a long period of interregnum. The pupils value the different leadership styles of worship and particularly enjoy times when they worship in the church. One pupil said, 'Our church is really important to our school. When we worship there, it feels as though God is with us and we are closer to Him.'

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

The headteacher and governors of the school have ensured that all stakeholders have an understanding of the three core values. As a result, all pupils and staff are able to talk about the positive impact that these values have. In particular, leaders have demonstrated these values through their exemplary work with the young carers group. Leaders are very clear as to how these values positively affect the pupils' academic performance. Leaders are rigorous and robust in their monitoring and are able to identify the needs of all pupils. As a result, all pupils are supported in both their SMSC development and their academic achievement.

The headteacher consistently displays the values of the school at all times. Staff, governors and parents recognise the strong contribution she makes to the life of the school. One parent said, 'The headteacher demonstrates compassion to all the staff, the staff then demonstrate this to all the pupils and the older pupils demonstrate this to the younger ones.' Equally, governors exhibit the values when carrying out their role. They understand the purpose of robust monitoring and have an inclusive approach to ensuring all staff and pupils feel valued. The impact of this monitoring is evidenced by the detailed feedback given at governing body meetings. They prioritise the wellbeing of their headteacher, whilst ensuring that she is appropriately challenged and supported. Governors are proactive in ensuring that they are preparing for the future of the school and have a clear succession plan in place for the governing body. The headteacher ensures that when staff are appointed they have an understanding of the church school distinctiveness and the importance of maintaining this.

The headteacher has ensured that links between the school and the wider community have been strengthened and as such the school is held in high esteem amongst the community. The headteacher is responsible for RE and collective worship and they both contribute positively to the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship are being met.

SIAMS report April 2018 North Marston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School MK183PE