

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### THE BATT CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL WITNEY OXON

Corn St, Witney. Oxfordshire. OX28 6DY

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Oxford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	October 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust
Date/s of inspection	<b>24 November 2016</b>
Date of last inspection	17 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VA Primary Academy 142377
Head teacher	Christopher Payne
Inspector's name and number	Rev Tim Harper 827

#### School context

The Batt is a large primary school in Witney Oxfordshire, a prosperous market town. KS1 is one form entry but extra pupils admitted in year 3 means KS2 is 2 form entry. Most children are White British, with a lower than average number of pupils with English as a second language. The school is an Academy, part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST). The head teacher has been in post since April 2003, and deputy head since September 2004. A new post of assistant head teacher was created in September 2016.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Batt as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Batt is an inclusive school with a strong Christian ethos which ensures that the learning, social and spiritual needs of all pupils are fully met.
- The distinctive Christian values of the school, are owned and practiced by the whole community, with a transformational effect on behaviour and relationships.
- Religious education is inspirationally led and has improved rapidly since the last inspection.
- The school's core values inspire all key stakeholders to attempt fresh learning challenges resulting in significantly improved levels of self-esteem for all learners.

#### Areas to improve

- Enrich pupils' spiritual experience still further by using an even wider range of creative and vibrant approaches to prayer and worship both in and beyond collective worship (CW) times.
- Develop the warm but embryonic relationship with the regular congregation at the parish church to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.
- Plan for development of the established senior leadership team and have appropriate strategies in place to ensure the continued improvement of the school as a church school.

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is outstanding because all key stakeholders have played a part in selecting the core set of Christian values. These are friendship, perseverance and respect. The values are owned and practiced in all sections of the school community. As a result, they are well embedded in policy and practice, giving the school its exceptionally strong and vibrant Christian ethos. A parent commented that everyone from the head teacher to teachers, pupils and support staff behave in a correspondingly positive Christian way. The school is actively inclusive, and the curriculum is broad and vibrant. This gives many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally (SMSC) through the arts, exploring the natural environment and developing cross-cultural understanding. The small number of children of other faiths or none are affirmed and invited to share their beliefs with the community. All pupils flourish in a warm and nurturing climate. This also ensures that attendance is above the national average. Learning outcomes for all pupils have continued to be above average, driven by this strong Christian ethos. Outcomes are greatly helped by the new Growth Mindset programme, sometimes called the Resurrection Mindset, which has had a profoundly beneficial effect on the attainment of all learners across the school. This includes the Governing Body. The children demonstrate the way its core principle affects their learning by readily quoting, 'You can't say I can't, only I can't yet.' Again, parents of pupils of all ability levels comment that through this programme their child's self-esteem and willingness to learn has improved markedly by the end of their time at the school. Space for personal reflection is given both in CW and lesson time, and is a highly valued dimension of school life. The Christian values inform behaviour choices and foster good relationships at all levels of the school. Through the inclusive curriculum the children develop empathy and respect for other people and cultures. Behaviour is consequently very good as are relationships between all key stakeholders. Parents affirmed that on the rare occasions it is required the anti-bullying policy is actioned sensitively and effectively to resolve issues. The school is aware of and conversant with the Church of England's guidance on homophobic bullying, 'Valuing all God's children.' Parents comment that any pastoral issues the children may have are sorted out speedily and sensitively. The impact the distinct Christian values have on relationships is demonstrated by the way the children comment how the community 'makes us feel good about ourselves.' Safeguarding is exemplary, which supports the Christian vision. The Christian faith as understood in the Anglican tradition is taught and reinforced weekly by the parish clergy in CW. Consequently the children have a good understanding of Christianity and other faiths in the context of diverse British society and its values. Religious education affirms this approach and further embeds understanding and tolerance of other viewpoints across the curriculum. This is shown by the children's ready observation that faith of all kinds is important to societies and individuals.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is Outstanding**

Collective worship is outstanding because it is very well planned and lead by the subject leader and steering group, enabling children to learn about, experience, understand and reflect on faith and personal spirituality. All members of the school appreciate acts of worship as a time of coming together to reflect on God's presence. A variety of stimuli are used to help children engage with CW through listening, reflection and discussion, and relate it to the school's Christian values. Further reference to these values is made in class, with the result that all staff and children talk knowledgeably about them. Evidence of this cogent application of what is learned in CW to daily life is found in the 'Question of the Week' responses in the class RE books and CW planning records. The school follows the Christian liturgical calendar which develops children's understanding of why key Christian festivals are celebrated and the rhythm of the church's year. This is enhanced by visits to the parish church for worship at festivals and end of term where children lead the services. These are very well attended by parents and friends who comment favourably on the positive impact upon all concerned. Clergy and others from the church are fully involved in the life of the school and contribute significantly to the depth of worship and developing the strength of the relationship between school and parish. However, further work is needed to encourage the warm but embryonic relationship between the regular congregation and the school. Prayer permeates the life of the school. For example, written prayers are hung on the prayer trees and attached to displays in the public areas of the school and classrooms. Special reflective areas demonstrate how prayers are used and encourage the personal spiritual life of the children. In year one a child spoke warmly of how he and his classmates write prayers on ribbons and then attach them to a prayer 'net' for class use. Reference is made to the Trinity at each act of whole school worship, and an elementary understanding is encouraged by use of Bible story in class worship. The impact can be seen in the way the children can articulate an age appropriate understanding of God as Holy Trinity, and the person and work of Jesus Christ. This develops their appreciation of what it means to believe and live as a Christian in today's world. Effective planning, monitoring and evaluation is informed by feedback from the children at the school council, in classes and by staff, clergy and foundation governors. This has led to a greater involvement of the children in planning and leading worship and ensures it meets statutory requirements.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is Outstanding**

The leadership of RE is enthusiastic, evaluative and highly effective. A new RE scheme of work for Oxfordshire schools has been introduced with considerable success. Staff are more confident teaching the subject and children's achievement is in line with other subjects in the school. The impact of this is seen in the way some pupils who struggle in other subjects are achieving higher levels in RE. Children have an increasing sense of awe and wonder, and are developing the skills of enquiry, analysis and interpretation. Book scrutiny demonstrates good progress in knowledge and understanding of the subject. Great efforts have been made to encourage and develop staff skills in the teaching of the subject. New staff have their lessons regularly observed by the subject lead. This has raised standards and enjoyment, particularly in the junior departments by the sharing of high quality planning. Monitoring and evaluation use up to date methods such as the Seesaw App on iPad. Here the work, reactions and progress of the children can be recorded, examined and measured in qualitative ways as well as quantitative. Records of discussions are kept in the class RE book. Assessment grids and learning journals are kept and regularly scrutinised. Clergy also make significant input to planning, and foundation governors undertake regular book scrutiny. Again all this is highly effective in providing detailed feedback to inform future planning. The curriculum is challenging, cross subject and progressive. Christianity is the majority study, with secondary units on Judaism and Islam. Godly Play is used extensively, which helps the children explore and understand Bible stories more readily. As a result, children talk confidently about Christianity and other faiths, showing interest and respect for the beliefs of others. The distinctive Christian values of the school are reinforced and embedded by RE in the lives of the pupils. The children are articulate on the ways they enjoy RE and find it helpful to their learning. They particularly like how the study of symbols such as religious foods increases their understanding of their own and other religious traditions. Study of significant religious leaders have enlarged children's SMSC understanding. The improved quality of work and teaching of RE throughout the school and the development of effective marking that further extends the children's thinking (a focus from 2011) represents significant progress since the last inspection.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is Outstanding**

The leadership and management of the school is outstanding because the grasp of operational matters by the senior leadership team is exemplary. The explicit Christian vision of the school is well articulated by the governing body and clearly understood and welcomed by the large majority of parents. This has led to the distinctive Christian ethos continuing as an integral part of school life. Governors successfully challenge and support the leadership to consolidate and develop the church school aspect through monitoring and evaluation. Their close involvement in the management of the school is clearly shown in a detailed SIAMS pack, containing governing body and PCC minutes. This has secured excellent standards of teaching and very good levels of pupil progress and attainment. A strategy document has been produced by chair, governors and head teacher expressing a detailed long term plan for the development of the school. This is revised termly. The impact of this can be seen in the clear vision for the school expressed and owned by all key stakeholders. Parents comment that the school is an inclusive one and gives opportunity to all irrespective of background, culture or physical ability. 'It feels like a village school.' A new Ethos and Community committee has also been formed focussing on this aspect of the school and how this relates to wider community issues, together with reviewing the Mission Statement. Thus, the school radiates a sense of well-being. Parents play an integral part in the success of the school, giving help in and out of class. They provide effective PTA support, and are supportive of the Christian character of the school. Clergy and other foundation governors are fully involved in the life of the school and contribute significantly to its all-round success. The Rector is chair of governors, and the curate a foundation governor. They lead CW every week and are closely involved planning, monitoring and evaluation of CW and RE. This embeds an already close relationship with the parish church. The school since converting to an academy has developed a good working partnership with the ODST. As a result, it has maintained its distinctive Christian ethos despite moving to a new cooperative partnership with other schools. Training in professional practice and for future leadership, including in church schools, is an ongoing priority for all teaching and some support staff. This is shown by senior teachers receiving specific leadership training, and one has recently moved school to a post of greater responsibility