

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Brackley Church of England Junior School

Manor Road, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 6EE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Peterborough
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Date of inspection	9 November 2017
Date of last inspection	1 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 121961
Headteacher	Rosalyn Peet
Inspector's name and number	Carolyn Gleeson 929

School context

This is a junior school with 207 currently on roll making it slightly smaller than schools nationally. The majority of children are White British (90%) which is fewer than the national average (67.2%). The number of children with a special educational need or disability is below average. A new headteacher was appointed in 2014. The school population is more stable than the national average. The majority of children join the school in Year 3 from non-church schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brackley CE Junior School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's distinctive Christian vision of a 'caring, celebratory, courageous, Christ inspired community, rooted in love', inspires the positive relationships between all members of the school community, the excellent behaviour of the children, their positive attitudes to learning and their improved attainment.
- Everyone within the school community treats each other with respect following Jesus' example.
- Prayer and Biblical teaching are strong features of the school's worshipping life, nurturing children's spiritual development.
- Religious education (RE) is given high prominence in all year groups and is exciting and challenging, contributing significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all the children.

Areas to improve

- Deepen the understanding of the school's definition of spirituality so that the whole school community is able to clearly articulate what this means to them.
- Give more regular opportunities for the children to be actively involved in the leadership and planning of collective worship to further enhance their spirituality.
- Ensure the sustainability of the distinctive Christian character of the school through clear leadership succession planning.

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

The distinctive Christian character of the school is evident throughout. Vibrant displays around the school emphasise and reinforce the core Christian values. The whole school community can articulate these values and understand how they have helped improve behaviour, attitudes to learning and attainment. The Christian values have inspired the children to be confident enough to make mistakes as they know they can learn from them. They support each other, both in their learning and in times of need and they celebrate each other's successes. The distinctive Christian character of the school has also had an impact on attendance, which has been above national average since 2014. The success of the behaviour code, which is firmly rooted in its Christian character, is evident in there having been no permanent exclusions since 2014. The children feel well supported by all members of staff and also by their peers. Parents are aware of this as indicated in a comment about how all the staff, 'love and nurture the children'. Adults within the school community also feel well supported, particularly when they have experienced difficult times in their own lives. The detailed planning and assessment of religious education (RE) has led the way in raising standards of teaching and learning in all subjects. The teaching of RE and the planning of collective worship are always the first focus of staff training at the start of every academic year. The high standard of RE teaching has been acknowledged by the school achieving the silver level of the RE Quality Mark. The reflection areas within each class are used regularly by the children if they are worried or need some time to reflect on their school work. They say that praying inspires them to do their best and to behave well. The majority of children join the school from non-church schools but the children say they soon feel included and inspired as they learn the Lord's Prayer on induction days so that they can join in saying it with everyone else. The school also has a reflection room and examples of the children's own prayers are evident, clearly demonstrating the depth of their belief. Every child in school has a Bible and these are used by children with a faith and those of other or no faiths, as it is seen as a book to be read alongside others everyday. The children say that they enjoy reading the Bible and that it teaches them how to behave and treat others through the example Jesus sets us. The school has a policy of using members of different faiths as first hand educators and the children readily recognise the similarities as well as the differences between the faiths they have studied. Through the opportunities they have in collective worship and RE lessons and by supporting a variety of charities children's spiritual development is good. The children make suggestions as to what they should be praying for and how they can help others in need, both locally, nationally and globally. This supports the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. Whilst the school has a definition of spirituality, not everyone is able to clearly articulate what this means to them. It is evident from the work in the children's books, that RE is challenging and as a result, encourages them to think deeply about their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. The children are able to talk about the Trinity and its importance to the Christian faith. They have an understanding of the Christian concepts of incarnation and salvation. The link with Mapane School in Uganda is very strong and supports the understanding of Christianity as a world wide faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship plays a prominent part in the daily life of the school. Everyone in the school talks about looking forward to daily worship. They say it centres their day and focuses their minds on how to be their best and do their best every day. The children are able to talk about Bible stories they have heard during collective worship and clearly enjoy visitors from 'Open the Book', who involve the children in delivering the worship. The children in the worship committee work with leaders to deliver aspects of worship. The children would like to be involved more directly in the planning of the worship, selecting their own Bible stories to present. Music and singing are valued as a way of praising God and the Christmas service in church is highly acclaimed by children, parents, governors and staff alike. When planning worship the leaders are very aware that children join the school from non-church schools and they introduce the Anglican traditions over the year. Children with no experience of worship when they join the school in Year 3, soon become involved with it as a daily act and say, that even though they may have no faith, they still find it inspires and calms them. The lighting of the candle in collective worship, followed by the school's own candle prayer, focuses the children on Jesus being the light of the world and his significance to the Christian faith. Children have been involved in designing and sewing altar cloths and also in painting a wonderful frieze behind the altar. This tells the story from creation to ascension. Clear references are made between the core Christian values the school has adopted and Bible texts. The children use their hands to demonstrate these core values, enabling them to keep them close at all times. The themes for collective worship have been chosen carefully to link closely with the values. The children are able to relate Bible stories and teachings to the way they live their own lives today. Prayer forms a special part of worship, nurturing the spiritual development of the children. A Year 6 child said that praying was like, 'talking to God in his head'. The school has prayers the children themselves have written and learnt by heart. During worship the children appreciate the time given to pray individually and then reflect on the story they have heard and its meaning to them. The Grace is used to focus the children on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The children have a clear understanding of the Trinity and can explain its significance to Christians. Each week the children reflect on a value they have demonstrated that week. One is then selected and these form an ongoing

display in the hall. Through these the children focus on actions to further their own spiritual journeys. Children and leaders are involved in the effective evaluation of collective worship and understand the positive impact it has on the daily lives of the children and staff. They use these evaluations wisely to make improvements.

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

The headteacher, RE subject leader and governors unmistakably demonstrate the Christian vision within the school. This is manifested in the way they work with each other, teach the children and engage with families. The ethos committee has clear terms of reference to strengthen the school as a church school. They have developed the clear Christian vision for the school and this is readily understood by the whole school community. They have ensured that worship is a prominent feature of everyday school life, focusing on the importance of prayer in supporting the spiritual development of the children. Father Nicholas, the parish priest, has written prayers for each of the governing body committees, enabling them to focus on Christ-inspired leadership and governance before every meeting. Governors say these prayers have helped them in their decision making, reflecting on aspects of God's teachings. The 'open door' policy and the eagerly awaited weekly newsletter, are valued by parents as they feel included and involved with the school. Parents say they feel all the staff know each child really well and go the extra mile to support both them and their families. The RE leader is inspirational and her example has led to improved teaching and learning in other subjects across the school. The new Understanding Christianity units of work have been incorporated into the RE syllabus. She is well supported by the leaders in the school to enable her to ensure that RE teaching is both challenging and inspiring for the children. Leaders use self-evaluation very effectively, taking account of the views of all members of the school community to enhance the strategic planning. This enables the school to meet the needs of all its learners. Leaders work hard to ensure that the school's distinctive Christian ethos is underpinned by deep theological understanding. Through their monitoring and evaluation, leaders have a thorough understanding of the very positive impact the Christian distinctiveness has on the daily lives of children and staff within the school. This has led to highly effective strategies for improvements being put into place. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure that the Christian vision and distinctiveness are sustained in the future, through clear succession planning. Everyone within the school says they feel included and supported in all that they do, irrespective of their abilities or different faiths, as well as those having no faith. Links with the local community are very good. Examples include the Remembrance Day commemorations where children have taken part and even sung solos. Father Nicholas plays an active part in school life, leading collective worship both in school and at church. He is a member of the ethos committee. There is a smooth transition from the local infant school, which is not a church school and also to the secondary school.

SIAMS report November 2017 Brackley CE Junior School, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 3EE