

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ruardean C of E VC Primary School

School Road, Ruardean, Gloucestershire. GL17 9XQ	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Gloucestershire
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Date/s of inspection	04 October 2017
Date of last inspection	24 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 115647
Headteacher	Simon Manning
Inspector's name and number	David Scorer 841

School context

Ruardean Church of England VC Primary is a smaller than average size primary school. The vast majority of children are from White British backgrounds. The number of children with special educational needs and /or physical disabilities (SEND) is well above the national average. The school has a Communication and Interaction Centre which serves the Forest of Dean. The number of children who are eligible to receive additional funding through the pupil premium grant is above the national average. The current headteacher has been in post since September.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ruardean VC as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body are effective in promoting the school's distinctive Christian character. As a result the personal development of all stakeholders is championed.
- The school's inclusive nature is recognised and articulated by all stakeholders, which results in high quality care given to all members of the school community.
- The explicit Christian messages delivered through engaging collective worship in a variety of formats, contribute to the children's spiritual awareness.

Areas to improve

- Broaden the children's understanding and experience of diversity, so they can fully appreciate Christianity as a multicultural world faith.
- Provide the opportunity for pupils to systematically plan and lead worship, to further enhance their spiritual development.
- Formally record the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of recent initiatives by senior leaders and governors, to clearly identify success and areas of improvement, which will inform school development planning.

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

Ruardean is an inclusive and welcoming Christian community. The message of the school's vision which is 'Love of learning, love of life, love of one another' and a focus on six core values is referred to by all members of the community. The result is that relationships are harmonious and supportive with clear evidence of respect and care throughout the whole school community. Children display clarity about the importance of the school's Christian values in their lives. One child said, 'Our school is a happier place with our values because they help us understand God's plan for us all, for everyone to live in a kinder world'. This was particularly evident in the wide range of displays around the school and one child explained, 'Our displays in our school have been created by us all, many reminding us of the lessons taught by Jesus. We have learnt that if we listen to his teaching, we can all do our bit for everyone's happiness.' Following the introduction of the new Gloucestershire RE curriculum, supported by the newly adopted Understanding Christianity resource, RE lessons are planned to ensure that there is an appropriate emphasis on the stories of Jesus. As a result, the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity is good. Lessons which promote the Christian values of the school, as well as developing the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, are carefully planned. Academic achievement, attendance and behaviour have shown inconsistency since the last inspection due to the complexity of the needs of a wide variety of the children that attend. However the school's unwavering support for children of all ages and varying levels of confidence, embodies the very essence of a Christian school. This is largely attributed to the School's focus on its distinctive character. The school has developed a shared understanding of spirituality and how spiritual development can be encouraged. This is achieved through explicit curriculum planning as well as reflective areas in and around the school. One child explained, 'Our reflection areas are a great place to go to quietly think, especially if something is on our mind that might be worrying us.' The school site offers various places where children can think and pray, however the provision within these places is still under development and is not sufficiently focused to challenge their thinking. Children and staff display very positive attitudes towards their school community. This is reflected in the school's involvement in and commitment to fostering links, both with the local church and beyond. The school has demonstrated its commitment to the local community by contributing to charitable events and singing at the local care home. The children have yet to develop their understanding of Christianity as a multicultural faith. They do, however, know that it is important to show respect to people of other faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is highly valued and plays an important part in the daily life of Ruardean. The school has clear planning, which is based on the school's Christian values. Each one is explored during a term. The children are able to talk about the Christian values that underpin all that they learn. As a result, the key messages permeate all aspects of school life and are clearly visible throughout the setting. Children display strong relationships with each other, clearly evident in the way mixed age groups positively interact during play times. This has been fostered through the school's buddy system, through which friendships created often extend well beyond the children's time at the school. However, there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship, to further enhance their spiritual development. The candle, cross and Bible are a constant reminder of the importance of Christian traditions, with one child explaining, 'Each day we come together to share a story from the Bible. We learn that sometimes the right thing to do might be the hardest thing to do but it will be worth it for everyone in the end.' Pupils are able to describe what the Trinity is. They understand that Jesus is a key person in Christianity and are able to talk about God the Father but do not find it as easy to share their thoughts about the Holy Spirit. Worship is often a time of quiet and stillness although at other times it can be highly interactive with enthusiastic singing. Pupil engagement is included in the school's collective worship planning. For example, children spoke enthusiastically about the collective worship at the local church for Ash Wednesday, where they had an opportunity to first publicise and then lead the service in front of many family and friends of the school. Pupils display positive attitudes about worship, with one pupil stating, 'I like our collective worship because each day we sit together as a family and find out how we can be better for each other. Our prayers help us think about those less fortunate than us and remind us to make better choices in our lives.' The children have opportunities to take part in Bible readings, drama and storytelling, which encourages pupil engagement. However, the school does not provide enough opportunities for children and senior leaders to evaluate collective worship. Parents speak favourably about the school's celebration services which are held at the parish church. One parent said, 'the school's valuable input into the lives of our children, strengthens our community togetherness, where positive habits are nurtured and celebrated.' These serve to further strengthen the links between the whole school and wider community. The special setting of these services promotes spiritual development very well. Prayer is an important part of the school day beyond collective worship. Children are actively involved and engaged in creating, sharing and valuing reflection opportunities, enhanced by the dedicated reflection areas provided in each classroom. The impact of this has resulted in worship having a greater relevance to the lives of both children

and adults.

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

The headteacher, together with staff and governors, has ensured that the school has addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection report. The senior leaders' Christian vision for the school is clear. This is epitomised by the headteacher's desire to 'promote Christian values as part of essential skills for life to create happy, safe and well-supported children that will flourish'. As a result, all members of staff work as a cohesive team, supporting each other in times of challenge, demonstrating key Christian values such as friendship. One member of staff explained how the school's Christian distinctiveness had been instrumental in the fabric of the school when saying, 'Our values inspire everyone to work as a cohesive team, to go above and beyond. This results in our pupils flourishing in an environment that is inclusive and tolerant.' School leaders and governors have a well-established understanding of how the Christian faith underpins all aspects of the school's life. This was supported by one governor who said, 'We welcome all children to our Ruardean family regardless of the barriers they have to their own learning. The school's Christian character is fundamental in developing the close bond we have between each other and establishing a nurturing environment for all.' A core set of values has been reviewed, based on the Christian vision for the school. These were agreed following wide consultation which included the whole school community. As a result, the school's Christian values are becoming more firmly embedded and are already having a significant impact on the whole community. Governors and parents express their support for the way the school is promoting its Christian ethos. However, there is limited formal monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's distinctive Christian character by senior leaders and governors. This is necessary to effectively support the identification of areas for development. The school has a very effective partnership with parents who describe the school as having a clear Christian vision that is inclusive of all. The church sees the school as an important part of the community and welcomes all stakeholders to Christian festival services, which are well attended. The governors understand the need to prepare for future leadership. This has brought measurable success with the development of the leadership team since the last inspection and succession planning for the future. The arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet the statutory requirements.

SIAMS report October 2017, Ruardean C of E VC Primary School, Gloucestershire, GL17 9XQ