

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Eldersfield Lawn Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

Corse Lawn, Gloucestershire, GL19 4LZ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Worcester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Worcestershire
Date of inspection	22 June 2017
Date of last inspection	16 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 116807
Headteacher	David Paisley
Inspector's name and number	Marcia Harris 856

School context

Eldersfield Lawn Church of England (VC) Primary School is a smaller than average-sized school, with 107 pupils currently on roll. The large majority of pupils are of white British heritage and a few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also lower than the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Eldersfield Lawn Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The conviction and determination of leaders to place distinctively Christian values firmly at the heart of all decisions made and actions taken.
- The commitment of all staff who model Christian values in their daily lives and go the extra mile to support learners
- Strong and mutually supportive relationships between all members of the community are firmly rooted in the school's Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

- Plan systematic programmes of worship to include a clear focus on Christian traditions and festivals so that learners have a clear understanding of the relationship between the church calendar and the life of Jesus.
- Develop the governors' role so that they establish a cycle of formal monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctively Christian characteristics and of collective worship, leading to further improvement of the school's provision.

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

The Christian character of Eldersfield Lawn is expressed through the daily living out of its core Christian values, its relationships within the community and the commitment of all staff to providing a safe and stimulating environment in which every child can 'shine'. The core Christian values of friendship, forgiveness, truthfulness, courage, perseverance and responsibility pervade all aspects of school life and are lived out and modelled by staff on a daily basis. The resulting ethos is one where every child feels valued, safe and happy to take risks. Consequently, children enjoy coming to school, attendance is good and standards across the school are high. Parents talk about the 'strong sense of values' within the school and see the care for the children, the openness and approachability of staff and the varied extra-curricular opportunities as an expression of these values in action. Children understand the relational nature of their values and believe each one is important in creating a harmonious community. For example, pupils naturally connect the value of friendship with responsibility and believe that, 'If someone is sad it's everyone's job to help. That's why we have the buddy bench.' Children's behaviour and personal development are clearly shaped by the Christian ethos and values of the school, resulting in articulate, caring and confident learners who are respectful of each other and demonstrate a real social conscience.

As a result of the school's exploration of spirituality, staff provide meaningful experiences across the curriculum and are confident in encouraging children to reflect on current events, thus supporting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The school environment supports spiritual development through the use of the beautiful chancel as a place of quiet reflection and stimulating and vibrant displays which emphasise the importance of the school's core values. An exciting RE curriculum and extensive programme of visits to places of worship ensure that children develop an exceptional understanding of and respect for other faiths and cultures. Consequently, RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school, ensuring a previous focus for development has been successfully addressed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is at the heart of the school's life and is engaging and valued by the whole school community. Staff and pupils come together to worship daily and parents appreciate being welcomed to worship with the school at special times during the year. Parents see worship as 'a happy time' and believe that it adds real meaning to the lives of their children. One parent commented that, 'The Christmas service turned a fraught time into a magical time, making Christmas what it is meant to be.' As a result, worship is relevant to the whole community and contributes to the spiritual development of pupils. The school's Christian values are explored through worship and clear links are made to biblical teaching and current events. Children can explain with confidence how they learnt to 'stand up and be courageous' from the story of David and Goliath and how worship teaches them to 'respect other faiths and cultures'. Consequently, worship makes a positive contribution to pupils' SMSC development. Children sing with great jubilation during worship and are inspired to spontaneously link arms in unity at appropriate times. Such moments are worship experiences of the most joyful kind and as such support pupils on their spiritual journey.

Prayer and reflection are seen as important to the life of the school and are undertaken at key moments during the school day. Children are encouraged to say 'hand prayers' and prayers added to the prayer tree are used regularly in worship. Parents believe that children are inspired to pray by the local clergy; a Reception parent talked about how her daughter repeats prayers at home, imitating the rector. As a result, pupils are comfortable to make use of prayer in their daily lives and can talk about the purpose of prayer and how praying makes them feel. The use of three candles supports the children in their understanding of the Holy Trinity and a focus on biblical teachings has ensured that children can talk with a degree of confidence about the person of Jesus Christ. One pupil explained that, 'Jesus was God on earth. He was born in Bethlehem and died for us.' However, a lack of focus in the medium term planning of worship means that children are not yet confident to talk about Anglican traditions or about the symbolism of liturgical colours. The introduction of a 'Chancel group' has supported the school in addressing a previous focus for development. Pupils are involved in planning and reflecting on worship experiences and creating displays based on Christian values. Pupils take part confidently in worship and particularly enjoy participating with the 'Open the Book' team. As a result, the worship experience offered is relevant and supports spiritual growth. Worship is not yet outstanding because monitoring and evaluation is not embedded fully within the school self-evaluation cycle and consequently does not lead directly to significant improvements.

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

The headteacher's vision, based on the Christian teaching that everyone is known and loved by God, underpins all aspects of school life in this inclusive community where the education of the whole child is paramount. This vision,

supported by the six core Christian values, is shared by staff and governors who work hard together to ensure that it is lived out daily through the creation of a distinctively Christian ethos. Fully embedded in school life and reinforced through worship, the focus on core values ensures that children learn to forgive, act responsibly and to persevere when things are hard. Consequently, behaviour across the school is excellent and standards of achievement are high. Parents speak warmly of the way in which their children are valued and nurtured and believe that the school ethos creates a supportive 'family' feel where children are comfortable to take risks. One parent said, 'The school strongly promotes care and respect and this is often spoken about at home.' Eldersfield Lawn is a school where children regularly have the opportunity to 'Enjoy, Learn, Succeed' and do so on a daily basis.

Despite the challenge provided by the distance between school and church, links are strong and mutually supportive. Regular visits from the rector and the 'Open the Book' team reinforce the school's values and clergy appreciate the bridge that the relationship with the school provides to the local community. Families within the school community go to great lengths to ensure their children are able to worship with school in church, thus demonstrating the value placed on this partnership. Parents contribute regularly to school self-evaluation and believe that consultations through questionnaires and a successful parent forum are responsible for the strong partnerships between home and school. Leaders' commitment to developing the Christian character of the school is clearly articulated through the school development plan. Informal monitoring and regular visits to school ensure that governors know their school well and are able to challenge leaders and hold them to account. However, strategies for improvement are not fully effective because of the lack of formal monitoring. A determination to ensure that every decision made reflects the school's core Christian values has supported leaders in the development of a strong, coherent and deeply Christian vision for the future direction of the school. Leaders are clear on their commitment to remaining part of an inclusive community of schools where no-one is left behind. Professional development of staff is strong and leaders regularly access diocesan training and support. Consequently, staff are being effectively prepared as future leaders of church schools at all levels. High priority is given to the development of RE and collective worship and leaders have an accurate understanding of future developments required to progress further. As a result, collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements and the school is well placed to continue developing as a church school. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are outstanding in maintaining and developing the school as a distinctive and inclusive church school.

SIAMS report June 2017 Eldersfield Lawn CE Primary School, Gloucestershire, GL19 4LZ