



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Leonard's CE Primary Academy

Linley Road
Blunsdon
Swindon
SN26 7AP

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Bristol

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 21 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 15 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 137610

Headteacher: Jane Wheatley

Inspector's name and number: Patricia Morris 626

School context

St Leonard's is a single form entry Church of England Primary Academy set in the rural village of Blunsdon. There are 192 children on roll. The majority of children are of white British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of children supported by the pupil premium is also below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Leonard's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The very strong commitment and dedication from the leadership and management ensures continual development of the Christian character of the school.
- Core Christian values make a significant contribution to the children's behaviour and the excellent relationships between all members of the school community.
- Excellent quality learning experiences and displays, based on Christian values, enrich the learning environment.
- Children articulate an impressive understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for governors to be more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and religious education and their impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school so that they can identify ways to move forward in these areas.
- Extend opportunities for children to plan and lead collective worship so that good practice in class worship is shared with the whole school.

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

The Christian character of the school is outstanding because distinctive Christian values are deeply embedded and permeate the daily life of the school. Children understand the meaning of explicitly Christian values and confidently talk about their relation to Jesus' teachings and how they are relevant to their own lives. They discuss how they impact on the life of their school and how they make them better people. For example, one child explained how perseverance helps them succeed in lessons. Another child compared messages from Jesus' teachings through parables with their relevance in lives today. Relationships are a particular strength of the school creating a strong sense of belonging. This is evident in lessons and was observed in a religious education (RE) lesson through the excellent interaction between the teacher and children. This results in confident children sharing their opinions knowing they will be listened to and respected. The spiritual development of children is given a very high profile and is effectively promoted through inspiring areas for reflection in every classroom as well as an outside area where children sit on a bench engraved with The Lord's Prayer. Children are able to say what spirituality means to them. For example, children explain it as 'something inside that moulds you into who you are' and 'spiritual richness is what you have inside and not what you look like'. The aims of the school are explicitly Christian and are understood as a way of openly celebrating the love of God. The impact of this is apparent throughout the school and reflected in the abundant signs and symbols which children talk knowledgeably about such as their school emblem of a dove to represent peace and a new start. Children talk about different religions confidently comparing similarities and differences with Christianity as reflected in the many displays around school. Their understanding of Christianity as a world faith is very well supported through fund raising, often initiated by the school council. This includes local charities and a recent 'welly walk' for children in Africa. Children spoke enthusiastically about this and were proud of the opportunity to raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves. Such opportunities impact positively on children's awareness of the wider world. Children speak positively about the Trinity and with a very good understanding. It has obviously been well explained to them as they talk about 'God merging into the Son and the Holy Spirit'. They are especially proud of the clay tiles that they designed themselves to reflect the Trinity and the 'flexagons' constructed to show their individual interpretation. Behaviour and manners are excellent. Parents believe this is a result of children knowing what is acceptable and how they are encouraged to use values in their everyday lives. They feel that problems are dealt with quickly and effectively and speak highly of the weekly creative hour where children work in family groups. Parents say this makes an impact on children's attitudes to learning and the very good progress they make.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is highly valued and contributes strongly to the Christian vision of the school. Christian values underpin themes in worship and enable children to make connections between the stories they hear and their own lives resulting in a positive impact on all children. Worship is thoroughly planned using a variety of leaders. Children contribute to weekly class worship through regular planning and leading, based around the current value. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities this gives them to incorporate drama, power point presentations and to write and say their own prayers. Children acknowledge that prayer is an integral part of the school day. Prayers are said in worship, at lunch times and at the end of the day. They have an excellent understanding of prayer for saying thank you, asking for help or as a blessing. All children know the school prayer. One child explained 'The Lord's Prayer is a good example of the values Jesus wants us to live by'. Their understanding of the Trinity is reinforced as they pray to God 'through Christ in the power of the Spirit'. Prayer boxes are in every classroom where children have the option for prayers to be shared or kept private. Children welcome opportunities at the end of the weekly creative hour to use messages in a sand box to initiate their own instant prayers. Good opportunities for spiritual and moral reflection are part of worship and challenge children to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Opportunities for

reflection are an important part of worship as is the celebration of children's achievements. This was seen in worship when children received awards for poems written as part of a community project called 'My Blunsdon'. The partnership with the church is very strong with children participating in services of celebration at important times of the church year. The annual Star trail and Easter trail involving members from the church community clearly impacts on children's understanding of these special times in the church calendar. Children's work is regularly displayed in the church. For example, every class contributed to a Remembrance Day collage that included a wide range of media. This mutual support contributes to excellent links within the community. The local vicar, curate and Methodist minister are regular visitors to the school for worship, kids' church and the weekly creative hour. Monitoring and evaluation of worship takes place regularly by the worship co-ordinator and further opportunities to include children and governors in observations have been acknowledged.

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

The headteacher provides exceptionally effective leadership and is ably supported by governors and staff. Leaders have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for future development resulting in a shared vision that is deeply rooted in distinctive Christian values. The strong impact of the Christian vision is seen in the lives and achievements of children for whom it is an everyday part of the life of the school. There are excellent relationships between all members of the school community and the excellent pastoral care impacts positively on children's self-esteem. Links with the local church are very strong with visits to the church to enrich RE and to celebrate major Christian festivals. Clergy and governors visit the school on a regular basis allowing them to experience and appreciate the positive impact values have on behaviour and standards. Governors regularly attend courses run by the Diocese and use their knowledge and expertise wisely to ensure the best for every child. Governors are well informed through robust evaluation and monitoring and regular curriculum reports from staff. Parents praise the school's open door policy and say their children enjoy coming to school and are happy. They have opportunities to give their opinions and as a result workshops for various curriculum areas have been initiated. The leadership of worship and RE is given a high priority and this leads to effective practice in both areas. Standards are high and those in RE in line with other core subjects. Religious education is extremely well taught with teachers skilled at asking challenging questions and giving children time for reflection. As a result of this, discussions between older children are both mature and thoughtful.

SIAMS report July 2015 St Leonard's CE Primary Academy, Blunsdon, Swindon SN26 7AP