

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

### Lacock Church of England Primary School

Lacock,  
Chippenham,  
Wilts,  
SN15 2LQ

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Bristol</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Wiltshire
Date of inspection	4 July 2017
Date of last inspection	16 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary voluntary controlled 126333
Headteacher	Richard Hearn
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Spitzer NS No 37

#### School context

This is a small school with 67 children on roll situated in the centre of the historic village of Lacock. Most children are from White British heritage families with a large number from Traveller backgrounds. More than half live outside the village. The proportion of children with special education needs and/or physical disabilities (SEND) is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion eligible to receive the pupil premium grant is below the national average. There have been significant changes in staff and governors over the last three years. The headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. In 2016 the school was graded as Good by Ofsted having been Required to Improve two years earlier. The school has restricted space both within and outside the building.

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

- The outstanding relationships promoted by the school's Christian values, and particularly friendship, have a strong impact on children's personal development and well-being.
- The quality of children's spiritual awareness promoted by the school's distinctive Christian character has a good impact on the whole life of the school.
- Progress since the last inspection is limited because school leadership have not fully addressed the issues for development from the previous inspection.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop a self-evaluation process to effectively monitor and evaluate outcomes as a church school which involves the whole school community, and which identifies areas for development for the school's Christian character.
- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality for all staff and children. Explicitly identify and formally plan opportunities and experiences within the curriculum in order that children further develop their own spiritual awareness.
- Develop planning for worship to ensure greater consistency in how themes are developed and allow children to deepen their understanding.

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

Lacock is a friendly and welcoming community where Christian values permeate daily life at school. Its Christian ethos creates a secure and inclusive environment in which children are cherished and grow in confidence and self-belief. Children enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Children talk with animation of the importance of the school's values, rooted in Christian teaching, in their daily lives. These values have a positive impact on children's academic achievement. Children talk about their understanding of the need to persevere when their learning becomes difficult, just 'as Jesus didn't give up' in his life. They speak highly of the school's current focus on the value of friendship and 'how to make friends' because Jesus was friends with everyone, 'even outsiders like Zacchaeus'. This has promoted children's strong belief in equality and justice. In this way, the school's values and Christian character are promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) very well. Children recognise the deep links between their Christian values and British values, suggesting for example that equality and helping others are common to both. Relationships between children are outstanding, built on the values of friendship and forgiveness.

Children help and serve others such as by supporting the local Food Bank which effectively promotes their spiritual, moral, social development. However these opportunities are not planned formally into the curriculum so do not provide for consistency and progression across the age groups. A reflective space within the central area of the school building is very effective in promoting spiritual awareness. Children appreciate its calming peaceful impact and enjoy reading the prayers as well as quotes including those from the Bible. Religious education is very effective in promoting the school's values. Children identify, through responding to questions posed from the creation story, how Christians believe God wants everyone to act in a friendly way towards one another. Children are confident about expressing their own beliefs on matters of faith. The school's open and accepting culture extends to staff who encourage others by sharing their beliefs, thereby promoting the school's distinctive Christian character. In this way, RE promotes children's developing spiritual awareness very effectively. Children have very positive attitudes to religious education (RE). They say it is transformational 'opening our minds to other cultures' and faiths. This is an example of their good levels of interest and respect for diversity.

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

Collective worship is distinctly Christian and an important time in the daily life at Lacock. The largest classroom is used for whole school worship and although the space is restricted, it is transformed into a calm and appropriate space for worship. Children are actively engaged and participate in a meaningful way. They have a good knowledge of stories from the Bible and use them well to explain their meaning, including those linked to the school's Christian values. For instance, the parable of the talents told by Jesus is understood very well to explain the need to recognise their own God given talents and use them to help others. Funds raised for charities are now being linked to themes in worship. For instance, children help families overseas by responding in practical ways to the question 'who is our neighbour?'

Times of prayer and reflection are integral to school life at Lacock and promote children's good sense of personal spirituality. Prayers are said before lunch and at the end of the day. The annual 'Prayer Space' event has a significant impact on the spiritual awareness of the community and is embedded in the life of the school. Children talk about the need to show forgiveness and the importance of 'letting go of their worries' by talking to God. Simple liturgical responses are a strong feature of worship. These include a response said at the end of worship introduced by the vicar. The coloured cloth covering the worship table is understood to represent the changing seasons of the church year and the lit candle is effectively used as the symbol of the presence of Jesus. Worship is developing children's understanding of the Trinity. In these ways, children are developing a good understanding of Anglican tradition. A time of prayer and guided reflection in worship promotes spiritual awareness very well. This was evident in a child's response 'I choose everyone' to the question 'How do we choose our friends?' affirming the inclusive nature of worship and the school setting.

The new collective worship coordinator works closely with the headteacher to raise the impact of worship and thereby promote the school's Christian character. For instance, resources and Christian messages linked to the week's theme are displayed in the school's central spiritual space to provide for further reflection for the school community. Planning for collective worship is satisfactory. It provides a simple framework of themes but lacks a detailed structure together with learning outcomes. It involves staff, the vicar and children on occasions, such as services in church for the main Christian festivals. Children's views are sought, shared with governors and used well for future planning.

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

Lacock has a clear motto, 'Learning Together, Playing Together, Succeeding Together', which succinctly summarises the school's Christian vision and has recently been underpinned by biblical teaching over the last year. Staff and governors have now spent time together, exploring and developing a greater understanding of the school's Christian distinctiveness. This training day was led by the vicar, at the start of his term as chair of governors, a year ago. Since then, the headteacher and vicar have developed a close working relationship informally planning the way forward in line with the Church of England's new vision for education. Progress since the previous inspection has clearly been made in developing the school's distinctive Christian character in some areas. However, not all issues for development from the previous inspection have been fully addressed by the school leadership in a way that has developed its Christian ethos. This has contributed to the reduction in the effectiveness of the church school self-evaluation process and the lack of a coherent strategic plan to improve its distinctive Christian character. The staff are a strong team, highly supportive of each other and the children. They live out the school's Christian vision and are valued by the whole school community. Professional development, including from the diocese has been effective in ensuring that staff training is up to date, particularly with regard to RE. The new subject leader has raised expectations of RE as a core subject and promoted a questions based approach which is developing spiritual awareness.

The vicar's contribution to the life of the school is substantial. It includes leading weekly collective worship and acting as chaplain to the school community. The school's partnership with parents is strong. Parents speak highly of the positive impact of the school's Christian character on their children's behaviour. The school's links with the church and village are mutually beneficial. The church is regularly used for collective worship and the celebration of major Christian festivals. Links with the local community include the use of the village hall for school productions and the playing field used to provide extra space at lunchtime. The school contributes to village events and plays a vital role at the heart of the life of the village. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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