

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School

South Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3AF	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Bath and Wells
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	September 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	The Redstart Learning Partnership
Date of inspection	6 December 2017
Date of last inspection	11 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 144985
Head of school Executive Principal of The Redstart Learning Partnership	Jeremy Handscomb Suzanne Flack
Inspector's name and number	Jean Welch 878

School context

Holy Trinity is situated close to Taunton town centre and mainly serves the local community. There are 368 pupils on role. It has a lower than average proportion of children eligible for extra pupil premium funding. The school has undergone significant staffing changes since the last SIAS inspection. The head of school has been in post since September 2017. The previous head was in post for under a year. In November 2016, the school received an OFSTED judgement of inadequate. In September 2017 the school became part of The Redstart Learning Partnership multi-academy trust (MAT).

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Highly committed and focused leadership has led to rapid improvements in the overall effectiveness of the school. Senior leaders have fostered a culture in which staff and pupils are reflective and appreciate both 'where they are' and 'where they need to be'.
- The head of school and leadership team, along with parents and partners in the church and the diocese, are working well to develop the school's Christian character in a way everyone understands.
- The schools' recently agreed core values are contributing to the caring and supportive relationships that exist between all members of the school community.
- The enthusiasm of the new religious education (RE) leader and the development plan for the subject have made a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- Accelerate the development and effectiveness of the new local advisory board (governors) through training, so that they can support, monitor and challenge the school's Christian distinctiveness as a major factor in school improvement.
- Establish rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate RE and collective worship over time so that the impact on learners can be identified.
- Embed the chosen core Christian values by involving and consulting with the whole school community, so that these make an impact and contribute to raising standards of achievement.

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

In September 2017 six core values of respect, responsibility, courage, integrity, perseverance and tolerance were identified and adopted. This has provided the school with a clear framework through which to articulate a distinctively Christian ethos. The school's behaviour policy makes clear links to the Christian values, particularly those of respect and responsibility. The children are beginning to link these to Christian foundation. The school demonstrates tolerance and love to those few pupils whose behaviour falls short of expectations or whose attendance is low. As a result, attendance is now almost in line with the national average and reported incidents of challenging behaviour are very low. Effective strategies have been employed to raise the pupils' and staff self confidence, self belief and their sense of belonging to and respect for one another. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the value of respect and list it as one of the strengths of their school. The school's core value of respect is lived out in the positive and supportive relationships in the school. Outside the school care is extended by the leadership to parents who have found the recent changes at the school difficult to understand. They have appreciated the extra meetings and newsletters which have given them assurance and confidence in the school's future. There is no school council at the present time, although the children do have play and sports leaders. These pupils have the responsibility to lead and support others at play time. They value the trust the school gives them to 'make the school a happy place'. Charitable giving is clearly recognised as important in expressing the school's ethos of 'thinking for ourselves, caring for others, loving God.' The understanding of Christianity as a world faith is only just developing. Discussions in RE are beginning to expand the children's knowledge of Christian concepts and this, together with the opportunities to explore the school's values as part of the RE curriculum, means that RE is beginning to make a valuable contribution to the school's character.

The school's Christian character informs the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and makes a positive contribution to the children's wellbeing, regardless of their ability or background. The full impact of the Christian values on the pupils' learning and academic progress has not yet been embedded although improvements to the quality of teaching and learning are evident. For example, confident teaching in RE and varied learning tasks challenge pupils' understanding and encourage them to apply the knowledge they have acquired. Although the school has experienced a turbulent period over the last two years, the parents are very supportive and are confident in the future of the school. One parent said that they chose the school because it is a church school and their child would be cared for in a loving community.

The overall impact of Christian character is only be satisfactory because the core values have not yet become fully embedded in all aspects of school life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship is valued and becoming central to the life of the school because it is beginning to promote the school's Christian values. The children say that worship is a special time in the day to think and learn about Jesus and God. The behaviour of the children in worship is good because they are focused and engaged. However, the pupils do not yet take responsibility for aspects of worship. A plan for collective worship, with Christian values at its centre, is being developed by the head of school. This has been shared with the other schools in the MAT providing non-church schools with exemplary materials to support their collective worship development. As yet there is no clear system for the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of worship, by staff, pupils or governors, to bring about improvement. This focus for development from the last SIAS inspection has only just begun to be addressed. Through the head of school and the local incumbent leading worship every week some aspects of Anglican tradition are being introduced. For example, 'call and response', the use of liturgical colours on the table, lighting candles and saying the Lord's prayer. Pupils have limited understanding of the significance of the Holy Trinity and struggle to explain the meaning of their school badge with a Celtic symbol of the Holy Trinity at the centre of a cross. The school visits Holy Trinity church at the key Christian festivals of Christmas, Harvest and Easter. Consequently, they understand some aspects of the church calendar but have limited knowledge of other festivals, such as Pentecost.

Prayer is only just beginning to have a greater focus. Prayers are said before lunch and at home time. The pupils have little opportunity to write their own prayers for use in worship and do not yet understand different types of prayer. Reflection areas in every classroom, displaying different Christian artefacts, are used at class worship times. The pupils value these areas and use them to reflect on the worship theme of the week. As a result, they are beginning to link worship to what they do in their daily lives. Some impact of worship is seen in the Forest school activities, ably led by the assistant head, where the children are learning to respect God's creation and take responsibility for each other when they work together. The children are very excited about their fortnightly day outside, where they are given time to reflect on what is happening in their lives, experience new challenges and be the best they can be.

The grade is not better because the pupils are not yet involved in leading worship. A process for feedback, from everyone in the school community, is not yet in place to inform improvement and development planning.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The new subject leader for RE is enthusiastic and energetic in her commitment to the continuing development of RE across the school. There has been a significant investment in RE since the school became an academy. The leadership carried out a timely review and honest self evaluation of the RE curriculum, teaching and assessment procedures. This has led to a clear action plan with expectations to improve the grading of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good in the next academic year. The RE lead has undertaken training in using the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. Plans are in place to introduce this new creative way of teaching next term to improve the teaching of Christianity in the curriculum. Clear links between RE, collective worship and the schools' Christian values are evident. The children are given time to reflect on the weekly collective worship theme and to respond in different ways to what it means to them. In one class each child produced a booklet about respect and how the Bible stories and Jesus' teaching to love one another helped them be respectful in school and at home. Consequently, RE makes a good contribution to the Christian values of the school and the children's SMSC development. The children enjoy RE and are beginning to rise to the challenge of answering thought-provoking 'big' questions. Pupil work books and the RE overview plan indicate that the current curriculum, based on the local authority's RE syllabus, is being covered adequately. However, assessment procedures are not yet secure and as a result it is difficult to judge standards and consistency of progress. Assessment and increasing opportunities to visit places of worship were areas for improvement from the last SIAS inspection; however no evidence of progress was available from the previous leadership. Growing links with the parish church are beginning to support the teaching of RE. Key Stage 1 pupils have visited the church to experience acting out a baptism, which has supported development of their understanding of Christian beliefs and practices.

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

The new leadership team is passionate about creating a vibrant church school and continuing its development. They are dedicated to creating a strong, cohesive staff team. The head of school, assistant head and Executive Principal have a clear Christian vision for the school that has ensured the strengthening of the school's distinctive Christian character since their appointments. The school is making good progress in developing its understanding of the six core values and linking them to the children's learning and wellbeing. The Redstart Learning Partnership is fully involved in the development of the Christian ethos and has a good understanding of what the school does well and what it needs for continued improvement. The newly formed local advisory board has yet to meet. Although self-evaluation is limited it is based on a secure understanding of what it means to be a church school. Currently this does not include evaluating all aspects of Christian distinctiveness, the provision for spirituality and the impact on children's lives. Leaders have a good capacity to continue the improvement of this church school particularly with planned training in their new roles from the diocese and the MAT. The leaders have a good understanding of the school's performance, the quality of teaching and pupil progress. Development plans are in place to improve the school academically by providing a variety of new learning programmes in English and Maths. These are already improving the children's academic achievement. New tracking procedures are ensuring that every child is given the opportunity and support to meet their full potential as a unique child of God.

The new RE leader has been effectively supported by head of school and assistant head, ensuring that the subject is now a valued part of the curriculum. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship and both policies are brand new. The school benefits from support and advice from the diocese, particularly with regard to the development of RE. Regular staff training and attendance at courses and meetings ensures they are aware of the latest developments in RE and receive professional support as future church school leaders. Parents praise the school's care for their children and the openness of staff, saying "they are always there to listen and help." The relationship with the local church is good and the vicar makes an important contribution to school life by leading regular worship times. This is reflected in the children's enthusiasm for learning more about Jesus. The school's effectiveness can be clearly seen through the growing impact on the children's understanding of Christian values and how they affect individual lives.

SIAMS report December 2017, Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3AF