

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great Budworth Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Great Budworth, Northwich, CW9 6HQ	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Date of inspection	18 th May 2017
Date of last inspection	July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	111248 Aided
Headteacher	Sandra Finney
Inspector's name and number	Tracy Beatty 890

School context

This is a smaller than average single form entry primary school with 87 pupils on roll including a small nursery. The Head was appointed in 2010 when there were just 31 on roll. The school serves the village and surrounding communities around Northwich. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion eligible for pupil premium, extra funding for disadvantaged pupils, is low. Stability is much lower than the national average. In September 2016 the Headteacher became the executive headteacher of Great Budworth and another local church school. The school changed its status from Controlled to Aided in 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Budworth as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Inspirational leadership by the Headteacher, supported by her leadership team and able governors, leads to excellent provision for all members of the school family.
- The school's Christian character is celebrated and clearly evident in the environment and all documentation.
- There is expert teaching and modelling of Christian values by dedicated staff who live and breathe a Christian vision.
- The behaviour of all children is exemplary. Christian values are not only articulated by all members of the community, but also truly influence how they live. This has a strong impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Areas to improve

- Develop a core set of Christian values that the school community can articulate, to clarify the Christian ethos for all.
- Develop a pupil ethos group in order to further develop pupil leadership of Christian distinctiveness and collective worship throughout school.

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

The headteacher has a strong Christian vision stemming from her personal faith which is understood and echoed by all members of the school community. The school's tag line 'By God's grace, we learn to love and love to learn' sums up this vision very effectively. All pupils could confidently state their motto and explain how it makes their school distinctive. The needs of all learners are very effectively met through a strong commitment to this vision and through the school values, which are the fruits of the Spirit. Although not all pupils could remember all nine, they knew where to find them in the Bible, and the school has displayed them prominently. These Christian values have a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners. The leaders have created a caring, nurturing and supportive environment in which every child is valued and pupils feel safe and secure. The school's Christian ethos is clearly evident in all documentation, such as policies and development plans, and has a Christian ethos section on the website. A thorough cycle of monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctiveness, RE and collective worship (CW) indicates the high priority afforded to its identity as a church school.

Behaviour is exemplary as pupils are taught strategies for dealing with conflict that are rooted in principles of forgiveness, understanding and respect. For instance, their 'thinking sheets' result in time for reflection and restitution. One pupil stated 'there are two sides when something goes wrong so both sides need to make it right, by saying sorry and forgiving'. These are just some of the contributing factors that lead to the behaviour of all pupils in the school being praised in the community. It is evident that the pupils have been instilled with a strong motivation for learning, resulting in good progress for all groups and excellent attainment. The school's own data and that from the Ofsted report earlier this year confirm these outstanding results, which stem from the Christian care and support given to all pupils.' Their self-esteem and sense of worth are developed through encouragement, affirmation and an understanding that each pupil is a child of God. The Christian context is constantly promoted through a strong sense of Christian stewardship, with the school regularly supporting a range of charities. The school has strong links with the church and the wider community. The school environment is rich with opportunities for pupils to reflect on the Christian faith, through displays, artefacts and reflection areas. The high quality reflection areas in each classroom are changed regularly in line with the ecclesiastical calendar. Work on the outdoor environment has extended the Christian distinctiveness into the grounds in response to the development point from the previous inspection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is central to daily life in the school. All members of the school community value opportunities for worship and feel included. The school has made the evaluation of worship by pupils a priority since the last inspection and have listened to their views, leading to improvement. At the request of the pupils, the call to worship is now confidently led by them, along with the selection of songs. The introduction of a new worship scheme has resulted in it becoming more interactive and thus children participate in practical ways far more regularly. Using this resource, the themes for collective worship are well planned around the Bible to encourage pupils to be reflective and respectful about their own faith and the faith or beliefs of others. However, there is not yet a system to facilitate regular leading in worship and Christian distinctiveness by pupils. The school has drawn on a range of visitors to enhance collective worship, such as clergy from other local churches, the local church youth team and Bible Encounter trust. A good balance of learning about and learning from Christianity is presented. For instance, in the worship observed the pupils learnt about the wise and foolish man. When asked what they had learnt afterwards, a pupil answered 'If you don't listen to God, your life could be ruined. Your life will be a lot better if you listen to Him. We listen to God through prayers, songs and the Bible.'

The school has a strong link with the church. Parents described the church building as another classroom because pupils go so regularly. Their confidence in school is mirrored in their willingness to contribute in church services. The school values opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of prayer and reflection, such as through the highly developed prayer spaces. Pupils are confident to pray with their own words and also know a range of Anglican responses and familiar prayers. Parents report their children write prayers at home. A year 6 pupil talked about the different opportunities they have in school to pray and explained, 'anything you say to God is basically a prayer; thanking him, asking questions or asking for help.' Parents welcome the opportunity to share in the worshipping life of the school, many of them attending every Friday.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Leadership of RE is strong and as consequence, progress is excellent and pupils are engaged, articulate and confident. The RE lead has very effective systems for monitoring the subject and staff value the support and training she offers them. Teaching is consistently of a high standard resulting in excellent achievement in this subject. The creative and stimulating lessons are well structured for different levels of ability. A pupil said 'we don't just sit around in RE lessons, we do drama, freeze frames, art and all sorts'. All pupils agree the teachers make them think in RE and believe their good behaviour stems from their faith, one saying 'we act differently now we know more about God'. The responses given by a year 6 pupil when asked how we can be salt in the world showed incredible understanding and maturity, 'Salt has healing properties and is useful so if we are like salt we can heal people with kind words and use our goodness to love and help others'.

RE displays and the quality of work in books are exceptional. The pupils are rightly very proud of their presentation and achievement in RE. The school is embracing the new syllabus from the Diocese and the subject co-ordinator has been on training for the new resource, Understanding Christianity. She is currently weaving this into the teaching of RE resulting in good progression and a greater depth to the teaching of Christianity. There is a good balance of teaching about other faiths which the pupils describe with enthusiasm. Moderation activities take place with the partner school, enabling good practice to be shared. The school achieved a silver award in 2016 for the quality of RE provided and are working towards gold. There are effective systems in place to track pupils' progress. The school is implementing new assessment systems to reflect the new curriculum which ensure close links between planning and assessment. Marking is thorough, addressing misconceptions and providing questions to encourage pupils to explain their reasoning more.

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

The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. Her clear and uncompromising Christian vision is supported extremely well by her deputy and governors, which has led to constant improvement since her appointment. She describes how her faith has informed every decision and conversation. Her integrity was reinforced by governors, staff and parents. The example she shows has resulted in faith being demonstrated in the lives of pupils. As one pupil said, 'Jesus told parables to show us how to live, but most of all he said we must love one another'.

Governors emphasise the upholding of the Christian ethos when recruiting and as a result, all staff actively promote a way of living that is grounded in Christian values. The curriculum is clearly informed by a Christian vision and a desire for children to reach their maximum potential academically and develop socially, morally, socially and culturally. All members of the school can articulate this vision despite the headteacher recently taking on an executive headship. Self-evaluation of collective worship and RE is robust, regular, effective and leads to progress and improvement driven by the governors. They regularly participate in worship and observe RE, giving them a good understanding of the strengths in these areas. The school has good links with the church and leaders ensure that a good breadth of visitors come regularly to school to deepen pupils' faith and understanding. The vicar is often in school to lead collective worship and rejoices in the mutual benefits arising from the partnership. The governors stated that Christian distinctiveness is always a priority. Their decision to change status from Controlled to Aided was made so as to reinforce the Christian character and identity of the school. Governors and parents describe the high mobility of pupils in the school and as one parent stated, the 'huge triumph of succeeding with newcomers where other schools have failed'. An individual parent spoke of the individual warm welcome her family received when transferring to the school mid-term, and the all-pervading love which embraced them. A strong partnership with the diocese through discussion and training has contributed to the highly effective development of church school distinctiveness. Since the last inspection, the leaders have very effectively addressed development points, building upon previous strengths even further.

SIAMS report May 2017 Great Budworth CE Primary School, School Lane, Great Budworth, Northwich, CW9 6HQ