

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

<b>Lady Boswell's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	
Plymouth Drive, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3RW	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	Rochester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	11 July 2018
Date of last inspection	27 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 118721
Headteacher	Sharon Saunders
Inspector's name and number	Melanie Williams 911

### School context

Lady Boswell's is an expanding school in Sevenoaks, having grown to two forms of entry in most year groups. This has necessitated building work and a substantial increase in staffing. There are close links with the parish church of St Nicholas. An additional congregation, Grace Church, meets in the school. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage and from advantaged social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those with English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well below the national average. The headteacher has been in post for eight years.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lady Boswell's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school supports pupils to know their worth as children of God by finding and developing their gifts through a well-developed, broad curriculum.
- Pupils have excellent learning experiences that contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Leaders passionately live out and develop the Christian vision and values of the school so that it informs all decisions.
- Religious education (RE) provides rich and varied experiences which enable pupils to develop a range of skills.
- Through collective worship and the school ethos, pupils develop a deep, reflective approach to Christianity and spiritual matters that influences their thinking and the way they act.
- The school's values of love, honesty, faith, forgiveness, respect and kindness are instilled in pupils so that they support one another and work together very well, creating a calm, effective learning environment.
- The school maintains and develops close, mutually supportive relationships with local churches which benefit the whole community.

### Areas to improve

- Enable pupils to develop as leaders of worship by working alongside visitors so that they build good rapport and organisational skills.
- Develop the theology behind the school's vision and values and ensure that it is shared with the community.
- Improve pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith in preparation for life in diverse, global communities.

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

The school's Christian values of love, honesty, faith, forgiveness, respect and kindness are well known to the whole community. The values are consistently discussed and modelled so that pupils absorb them and act upon them. The biblical basis of this, however, is not fully explained. The school aims to help pupils 'feel their worth' as unique children of God and the curriculum is organised to this end. The school works hard to adapt provision and help all pupils to achieve their potential. Nearly all pupils reach national expectations with many working at greater depth. Pupils' results often exceed expected progress. Value is placed on other achievements such as playing musical instruments, drama and sport. The provision of a safe, stimulating environment ensures that attendance is high. The school's approach to pupils with more challenging behaviour enables them to be included, settle down and make good progress. This has been identified as a model of excellent practice by local inclusion officers. The school acknowledges that many pupils come from Christian families and the development of their spirituality enables them to safely explore their own beliefs and those of other faiths. High quality experiences, such as an annual prayer day, add to regular spiritual reflection in worship and to RE. Pupils express their thoughts with depth and insight. For example, one pupil, in discussing the values, said that God still loves us even when we have done wrong. Another said, 'Money can be a distraction in life'. Links with an orphanage in Mozambique support pupils' SMSC development well. They actively look for ways to show kindness and bring faith to that community. Pupils said, 'The money we raise brings the orphans better food and water. They also learn about Jesus when they might not otherwise have the chance'. Pupils' conduct around the school and their excellent engagement in lessons illustrates the impact that values such as kindness and respect have on their behaviour. RE successfully provides a platform to explore similarities and differences between faiths and cultures. Pupils make links and draw distinctions between faiths. However, their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is limited. Pupils enjoy the enquiry-based approach to RE and the challenges presented.

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

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Analysis of questionnaires shows how pupils and staff value worship. One member of staff commented, 'It makes you think about your own beliefs and gives you time and space to reflect'. Worship has a regular pattern of different groupings each week. Pupils in the Foundation Stage have their own, age-appropriate, worship which is often led by a children's worker from the local church. Older pupils make special cushions for their young 'buddies' to sit on. These are decorated with messages such as 'All things are possible with God' which support young pupils' spiritual thinking. Worship is well led, using a range of activities and visual images, so that pupils are highly engaged. They think deeply about the messages presented and, when asked, have requested additional reflection time. Themes frequently draw on biblical material. Older pupils are able to find suitable biblical references when they plan worship. They develop quizzes, for the rest of the school, based on these passages. Pupils are able to identify values, for example recognising compassion in the story of 'The Good Samaritan'. Pupils are familiar with some Anglican traditions, using sentences such as 'The Lord is with us – let us praise His name together'. They know about different festivals in the church year and how these relate to events in Jesus' life. Each of the school's core values is developed in turn in worship as a 'value of the month', during which time pupils particularly look for ways to put them into action. In this way, values such as love and forgiveness are instilled in pupils' relationships with each other from a young age. Pupils know traditional prayers such as the Lord's Prayer. They are confident to contribute their own prayers in worship. The quality of their reflection illustrates that they are each on their own spiritual journey. Over time, worship has helped to develop pupils' understanding of Jesus Christ and of the Christian life. They say, 'Jesus loves us and is always there for us. He is our role model'. Pupils have a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They comment that God lives in us through the Holy Spirit. Pupils regularly lead aspects of worship such as managing the audio-visual system and reading Bible passages. Older pupils form the worship council which plans and leads worship each fortnight. Staff, clergy and visitors are frequent and appreciated contributors to leading worship. However, the role of pupils as leaders is sometimes over-looked when visitors are present. Worship is monitored annually by governors. The views of parents are gathered informally. Pupils supply verbal and written feedback. As a result, worship has been developed to include younger worship councillors and the use of the school grounds for worship on special occasions. Parents and governors appreciate joining the school at the church for festival services several times each year because it brings the whole community together in worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

The standards of attainment in RE are strong and broadly in line with the school's high performance in other core subjects. The school regards RE as an academic subject and pupils find their work interesting and challenging. Pupils have been more engaged and enthused since the introduction of new, enquiry-based, teaching materials. Teachers plan interesting lessons that explore how religion affects believers' lives. Pupils develop higher level skills such as reflecting, evaluating, summarising and presenting their findings. For example, in one lesson, groups of pupils had to discuss aspects of the Sikh faith and their degree of importance to Sikhs before presenting their thoughts to the rest of the class. Activities allow for pupils to express their thinking in creative and original ways such as through art or poetry. Teaching of RE is always good and frequently outstanding. Assessment routines track pupils' attainment and progress through the year. This has enabled staff to adapt provision to support particular pupils in expressing their ideas so that their thoughts are not lost, for example, by slow writing. All classes have RE displays related to the current unit of work that help pupils to learn new, subject specific vocabulary and develop their thinking.

Christianity is the predominant religion taught with other world faiths introduced each year. Pupils visit places of worship for the major world faiths, such as a synagogue and gurdwara, which enhances their SMSC development. Pupils make comparisons and distinctions between faiths although their observations are not always adequately explored. Monitoring and evaluation is thorough, correctly identifying areas for development. This has ensured that staff are well trained and that provision meets the needs of all pupils. RE leadership is strong and reflective, actively seeking out ways to improve. There is a clear vision for the continuing development of RE.

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

School leaders have developed a vision for the school that puts 'Christ at the centre', and the values, curriculum and relationships flow out from this starting point. This is clearly stated in the school's documentation and examples of the impact on the community are plentiful in correspondence received as thanks and acknowledgements. Leaders have an excellent grasp of school performance and governors are robust in holding them to account. There is a shared understanding of the school's Christian distinctiveness which all leaders are determined to preserve and develop in this expanding school. Consequently, new staff are carefully inducted and supported to uphold the Christian ethos. Staff questionnaires help leaders identify if further training is needed. In response to a previous denominational inspection action point, the school gathers the views of all its stakeholders. This provides a wide range of perspectives that informs successful planning for improvement. The vision of the school to enable all its pupils to know their worth and discover their gifts drives its commitment to providing a rich, broad curriculum in the classroom and beyond. Opportunities for performing arts, residential trips and enterprise projects to support charitable fund-raising extend the curriculum. As a result, pupils' SMSC development is supported and they gain confidence. The school has a deeply rooted connection with St Nicholas church but also has excellent links with clergy from other local churches, enriching pupils' experiences in RE and worship. Parents support the school through a weekly prayer group and by volunteering in numerous ways. The school has significant links with colleges and is an outstanding provider of initial teaching training. The links with Mozambique give pupils interesting opportunities to learn new skills while making a difference in the world. Senior staff undertake diocesan and National Society leadership training which benefits the school and prepares them for future roles in church schools. Leadership of RE and collective worship is given high priority. They are well led by an experienced, senior member of staff, bringing about effective practice in both areas. RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report July 2018 Lady Boswell's Church of England VA Primary, Plymouth Drive, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN13 3RW