

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

### BLOXHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tadmarton Road, Bloxham. OX15 4HP

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Oxford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date of inspection	15 March 2017
Date of last inspection	7 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC primary 123098
Head teacher	Matthew Ingall
Inspector's name and number	Rev Tim Harper 827

#### School context

Bloxham is a large two form entry primary school sharing a site with a separate pre-school group. It serves the small town and the local rural community. Pupils are mainly White British ethnicity with a small number of Muslim and Hindu families. Numbers of children from Romany, Traveller and Fairground ethnic groups are higher than national average. There are pockets of significant deprivation in the area. The head teacher has been in post since 2004.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bloxham as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Bloxham is an inclusive school with a highly developed Christian ethos, which ensures rapid progress in learning by all pupils.
- The distinctive Christian values of the school are actively encouraged by inspirational leadership from the head teacher and senior leaders, resulting in very high standards of behaviour and high quality relationships across the school.
- The school's relationship with parents, St Mary's Church and the community are outstanding, stemming from the school's Christian vision to promote the God-given potential of each child to the full.

#### Areas to improve

- Enrich pupil's spiritual experience further by utilising a wider range of creative and vibrant approaches to collective worship both in class and whole school contexts.
- Enhance creative opportunities in the school to deepen pupils' appreciation and experience of personal prayer.

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

The Christian character of the school has a highly beneficial effect on children and families of all faiths and none. This is because the core set of Christian values are well understood and accepted by all key stakeholders. The school's Christian vision is to prosper the God-given potential of each child. They achieve this successfully through the application of a Christian understanding of the values: Courage, Forgiveness, Friendship, Honesty, Hope and Respect. The school's Mission Statement, Collective Worship themes and the Christian Value for each term are on display in the classrooms and the hall. These give a clear statement to all about the school's ethos, and the active promotion of Christian values by all school leaders ensures they are well embedded. This results in a caring Christian community where all are included and where everyone seeks the good of one another. It is an inclusive and friendly school. Pupils of all faiths and none feel safe and socially secure. This ensures good discipline in the school. Parents comment that the staff are nurturing and provide sensitive pastoral support to families. 'Emotions are OK, and we learn how to deal with them productively.' Achievement by all pupils rapidly improves on entry to the school. Data is monitored, evaluated in an exemplary manner, and informs curriculum planning. The result of this is a clear learning path for all children and above average achievement across the school. The children remarked that, 'Lessons are never boring!' The school curriculum is lively and vibrant. It gives many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally (SMSC) through the arts, exploring the natural environment and developing multi-cultural experiences. Visits to a Mosque, Synagogue and Hindu Temple prepare pupils for the future by developing skills of empathy and respect for diverse communities. The children remarked that they welcomed the many visitors to collective worship (CW) and valued the fresh insights they bring to Christianity as a multi-cultural faith. A Moslem parent commented that the school is noted in the community for its proactive approach to the safety and nurture of all pupils. For example, sensitive handling and consultation with parents about sex education has resulted in parents with reservations about their children receiving instruction being reassured. Religious Education (RE) has a strong impact upon developing the core Christian values and upon pupils' SMSC development. The result of this is that parents and children all speak enthusiastically of the way RE informs both understanding and behaviour. The children also commented favourably and enthusiastically about 'Discovery RE'. They particularly enjoy its interactive and experiential approach and the visits to a mosque, synagogue and Hindu temple. It underpins the academic curriculum and is very well monitored and evaluated by the subject lead, head teacher and foundation governors. It reinforces the pupils' understanding of the school's values and is taught with passion.

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

Collective worship (CW) plays an important part in expressing and supporting the school's Christian foundation because it is valued by the school leadership and well led. Whole school CW takes place on a Monday Wednesday and Friday, class CW on a Tuesday and Thursday. The result of this programme is that the children enjoy CW, they absorb what they learn, with consequent beneficial effects on behaviour and relationships across the school. CW reinforces the school's values well. CW is well planned, monitored and evaluated by the subject lead, head teacher, clergy and foundation governors, a focus for development point at the last inspection. The pupils have opportunity to participate in the planning and delivery of CW both in their classes and for whole school worship events. This results in very good attendance at major festivals in church and school when parents and friends of the school are invited to join the children. Parents spoke of the positive impact these services have on them and their family life. Parents of children from other faiths remarked that differences in understanding were handled with great empathy by staff. Mostly they are content for their children to be fully involved with the school's distinctly Christian CW but if on occasions they prefer their children not to attend this was no problem for the school. A Moslem parent commented that while they rarely did so, 'Opting out is OK.' The positive impact of this tolerance and flexibility is seen by these parents as 'stemming from religious strength'. Each term the 'Voice of the child' programme invites feedback from the children about their CW times. Similar soundings are gathered from the 'Pupil Parliament', staff and governors, all of which is collated by the subject lead. This is then considered by the SIAMS Committee and fed back into CW planning. The positive impact of this involvement by the whole school community is seen in the way the 'Pupil Parliament' remarked how much they valued the opportunity to come together to reflect upon God's presence. The head teacher's use of Bible story, life application and his personal reflection in CW is particularly enjoyed by the children. 'We get inspired by it.' Each classroom has a reflection area, and some have a 'prayer chair' where children may rest awhile and write prayers if they wish. Classes also have a 'memory book' for the same purpose. A nurture area with symbols, stories and prayer suggestions near the staff room is regularly used as a space to be alone and reflect by pupils across the school. However, opportunities in the school are not as broad or creative as they might be to deepen pupils' appreciation and experience of personal prayer. Through CW teaching from the vicar, and in RE, pupils have a good awareness of the importance of Jesus Christ and his teachings for Christians, which results in their acquiring a basic age appropriate understanding of God as Trinity. They remembered and spoke of his illustration of an egg having three parts, shell, yolk and white in the same way as Christians understand God to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The involvement of the clergy, both Anglican and Baptist, and the church team in CW has a positive impact on the children's

understanding of the Anglican tradition and the seasons of the church's year. This is shown in the way children spoke with confidence of the major festivals and their significance.

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

The inspirational leadership of the senior staff and governing body has led to sustained progress in learning and achievement across the school. They have created a caring and inclusive community based on a clear Christian ethos which enables all to flourish. The explicit Christian vision of the school is well articulated by the governing body and accepted by all key stakeholders, becoming an integral part of school life. Relationships and behaviour consequently are outstanding. Planning, monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress is exemplary. The impact of this is seen in the way nurture provision actively supports children in overcoming the social and economic disadvantage found in the area. The school is an inclusive one and gives opportunity to all irrespective of background, culture or physical ability. The leadership of the school makes sure that the curriculum is broad, interesting and underpinned by Christian values, thus developing the God-given potential of each child. Governors successfully challenge and support the leadership to consolidate and develop the church school aspect through careful monitoring, evaluation and being actively involved in the school. The school is most effective at succession planning and developing the leadership capacity of its staff. The impact is that two teachers have been promoted to headship in church and community schools, and others have successfully applied for or completed vocational or emerging and middle leadership training. Further positive impact is seen in the way the head teacher has offered support to other schools, the Local Authority and Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance. This involves those who have just entered special measures through to those who aspire to be outstanding. Parents play an integral part in the success of the school. This can be seen in the way they provide help in and out of class, effective PTA liaison, and are supportive of the Christian character of the school. Relationships with the wider community are excellent, as is that with the parish church, stemming from the school's Christian vision to promote the God-given potential of each child to the full. This can be seen in the way the new vicar and other clergy now make significant contributions to school life, and the children regularly participate in their own services in church in addition to those at major festivals. The positive impact of their contribution can be seen in a successful weekly 'Church Club' run by Foundation Governors and volunteers from the parish church. Foundation governors take their duties seriously. Regular evaluation of the school's Christian ethos is an annual item for the governing body following a bi-annual meeting and feedback from the SIAMS Committee. This was a focus for development point at the last inspection. RE is closely monitored by the Foundation Governors who report back to the Parochial Church Council annually. The commitment to and positive impact of their work is seen in the way both CW and RE policies for the school have been revised and re-written towards the end of 2016. In following the Oxon agreed syllabus the school meets the statutory requirements for RE and CW.

SIAMS report 15 March 2017 Bloxham C/E VC primary school, Tadmarton Road, Bloxham. OX15 4HP