

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Woodbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Castle Lane
Woodbury
Exeter
Devon
EX5 1NB

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Exeter |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Devon |
| Date of inspection | 28 November 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 30 November 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Primary 113440 |
| Headteacher | Alison Sparks |
| Inspector's name and number | Patricia Morris 626 |

School context

Woodbury is a smaller than average sized primary school with 201 children on roll. The school roll is expanding enabling it to have single year classes. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number supported by Pupil Premium. Attendance is above the national average. The headteacher and leadership team were appointed in September 2015. Over the last two years, fifty per cent of the teaching staff has changed.

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

- The dedication and drive of the headteacher, supported by an exceptionally effective leadership team, is continually moving the school forward as a church school
- Distinctive Christian values are deeply embedded, successfully impacting on children's excellent behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning.
- The outstanding leadership of religious education is having a very positive impact, generating high quality teaching that encourages children to deepen their thinking.
- Excellent partnerships with the church and local community provide invaluable contributions to the life of the school.
- The inclusive Christian ethos of the school encourages children to express their thoughts with confidence and to know that their opinions will be valued.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that plans to develop the spiritual garden enable children to experience high quality opportunities for spiritual development.
- Monitor progression in spirituality across year groups in order to evaluate the impact on children's continuing spiritual development.

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

The Christian ethos and welcoming atmosphere of Woodbury school is apparent from the first moment you enter. Six distinctive core Christian values of love, forgiveness, generosity, respect, trust and courage are made explicit and deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. Deciding these values evolved over a year and involved the whole school community. Children speak of the importance of this process and how they debated about 'how values would look and be reflected in our school'. Children led a series of high quality presentations on different values, which generated a genuine sense of ownership. They explain how they use their fingers to remember each value with 'love as the central link in the palm of our hand'. Values are firmly linked to Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus. They set new aspirations for children and permeate every aspect of school life. Children are proud when they receive a certificate to show a value in action and when their names are then written on leaf templates and hung from a tree in the hall. One child stated that, 'you should see the tree by the end of the year, so full of values, it is beautiful'. Values make a distinctive contribution to the Christian character of the school, which has a very high profile and inspires everything in which the school is involved. This is seen in the excellent relationships within the school community, outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. There is a highly developed interpretation of spirituality within the school with children thoughtfully explaining spirituality as 'reflecting on, and respecting, the world's beauty' and 'your inner soul changing your outer behaviour'. Opportunities to support children's spiritual development are identified across the curriculum and are evidenced in displays. Children are enthusiastically looking to develop an outdoor spiritual garden and are confident about how this will look in practice. Such experiences have a positive impact on children's spiritual development and encourage positive attitudes about themselves, others, the world around them and beyond. The school are now exploring ways to monitor progression in spiritual development across the school. Religious education (RE) makes invaluable contributions to children's spiritual development by providing challenging questions to extend children's thinking and discussions to 'dig deeper' into their thoughts and opinions. It consistently promotes Christian values and makes a significant contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Leaders strongly believe that children need to be literate about religion so work hard to develop children's understanding that Christianity is global. This is extremely well supported through established links with a Christian run orphanage school in Northern Tanzania, which involves regular contact through letters and an annual visit from the leader of the school. There is a high degree of respect for other cultures and beliefs, which is promoted in many excellent ways including meeting visitors from other faiths and visiting different places of worship. This is further enriched through well-established links with a multi-cultural school in Bristol. Annual visits are mutually beneficial as they allow children from both schools to experience the culture and surroundings of different communities. The impact of both partnerships is invaluable in supporting children's understanding of the wider world in which they live.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship has a very high priority and plays an important role in the life of the school. Worship is strongly underpinned by Christian values, their links to Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus, and their relevance to children's lives today. For example, after exploring the current value of generosity in Bible stories, children further developed the idea of having 'generosity trees' in classrooms to show ways they illustrate the value. Planning of worship is extremely thorough and well organised with the support of 'Roots and Fruits' materials. Children are further engaged by the creative use of puppets, drama and music. The school's belief that 'participation is the key' ensures a positive impact on all members of the school community with children regularly planning and leading worship. The children's ethos group are particularly pro-active to initiate worship in response to national disasters. Prayer and reflection time are an important part of worship. Children have an excellent understanding of the purpose of prayer as 'a time to open up and talk to God'. A prayer box encourages children to write their own prayers to be shared throughout the day. Prayer spaces in classrooms are highly valued and well used. The ethos group continually consider ways to improve these areas and are currently planning to provide a screen to enable prayer to be more private, in response to children's requests. The partnership with the local church is very strong. The church is used on numerous occasions for special festivals, art and craft activities, family services and to support RE lessons. Children are proud of their connections with the church and see it as an extension of school. A variety of leaders gives children rich experiences of worship and supports their understanding of a range of Anglican traditions and the liturgical colours of the church year. Such opportunities give children a very good perception of Christian festivals. There is an impressive worship programme, across year groups, with ideas to support children's growing understanding of the Trinity. The impact of this is seen in children's maturing interpretations ranging from, 'God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit' to 'God is our Father who looks after us, He sent His Son into the world and now the Holy Spirit is inside and around us' and 'These are three aspects of one God.' Monitoring and evaluation of worship takes place in a variety of ways, by all stakeholders, providing a comprehensive insight into the positive influence of worship across the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education has a very high profile within the life of the school. The curriculum is rich and varied, providing children with opportunities to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. The introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' resources has rapidly developed and improved teaching and learning of Christianity and is making an impressive impact. An outstanding display based on the 'Big Frieze' is one example of how the whole school worked together to portray the 'big story' of the Bible through art, as a result of many discussions. Children are proud of the contribution from each year group and are motivated when talking about what it means to them. This was completed during an annual 'focus week' when the whole school community is involved in adding an extra dimension to support quality RE. The RE leader is extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the subject. As the Primary Lead for the LTLRE (Learn, Teach, Lead RE), her expertise is effectively shared with members of staff, ensuring that teaching is outstanding and creative. Use of drama, dance and music engage children so they want to learn more. High quality teaching brings RE alive for children, inspiring them to talk enthusiastically about what they learn and how they enjoy the challenge of questions that encourage them to extend their thinking. The use of 'Building Learning Powers' strongly underpins teaching, encouraging children to develop more depth in their learning. Children make very good links between Christianity and other faiths. This is reinforced by visits to a mosque, synagogue and cathedral. One lesson observed involved a visit from a Muslim. Questions were thoughtful, showing respect, and children were genuinely interested in the explanations. There is a comprehensive programme of monitoring and assessment of RE with each child's progress being carefully tracked. Observations incorporate cross-curricular links ensuring children understand the relevance of RE in the world today. Standards of attainment in RE are at least in line with national expectations and often higher, with both RE and collective worship meeting statutory requirements.

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

The dedication and drive of the headteacher is instrumental in providing exceptionally effective leadership. She is extremely well supported by a committed team of staff and governors. The strong leadership and united ethos ensure that everyone works together to promote a vision firmly rooted in Christian values. Leaders confidently articulate the positive impact of values on children's lives. There is an excellent understanding of the school's distinctiveness with accurate self-evaluation by all leaders. The very active governing body, admirably led by the capable chair of governors, are fully informed and knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development of the school. This is further secured through regular visits, challenging questions, and robust monitoring to ensure the impact of initiatives is evidenced. Governors are committed to continual and sustained school improvement and use their skills effectively. Leadership in RE is outstanding and leads to highly effective practice. Strong links with the diocese ensure that continual professional development of staff is particularly beneficial in supporting future leaders of church schools. There are excellent links with the local church. The associate priest fully supports the school and promotes joint activities that strengthen the partnership with the church. There are very strong connections between the school and local community, which are mutually beneficial. For example, the school joined in leading the village Remembrance Service and make regular contributions to the independent community magazine to inform people about what is happening in their local school. Children have a good awareness of others who are not as fortunate as them and raise funds to support charities such as a local food bank, as well as national charities such as 'Samaritan's Purse'. They are particularly enthusiastic about their fundraising for 'Hospiscare', inspired by a visit from a disabled person who achieved their ambition of climbing one of the world's mountains. Children found this inspirational and say they were encouraged to adopt a 'positive, can do attitude, when we face challenges'. Parents speak positively about such experiences that support children to develop a 'culture of care, embodying values'. Questionnaires show that all parents have a positive view of the school and that parental engagement has increased since the creation of a new website. Parents say 'the school provides a very nurturing environment and children's confidence grows on a daily basis'. They feel Christian values are intrinsic to the family feel of the school and impact on 'the good start in preparing children for the future'. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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