

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Oak Hill Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road, Alderton, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8NP

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Gloucester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Date of inspection	20 February 2018
Date of last inspection	1 February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 115670
Headteacher	Tom Holdstock
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Spitzer

School context

Oak Hill is a smaller than average size primary school set in a rural area in the Cotswolds, close to the border with Worcestershire. It is located on two sites in villages several miles apart. There are 88 children on roll in four classes, the Early Years and Key Stage 1 classes at Dumbleton and the two Key Stage 2 classes at Alderton. All children are from white British heritage families. There has been a higher than average number of children joining the older classes recently. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above the national average and the proportion of children for whom the school receives the pupil premium grant is well below the national average. There have been several changes of staff over the last two years including the headteacher who was appointed in April 2016. The vicar took up her appointment in September 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Oak Hill VC Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The outstanding relationships throughout the school community, promoted by the school's Christian values, have a good impact on children's personal development and well-being.
- The commitment and passion of the headteacher and religious education (RE) subject leader have brought about improvements in the distinctive Christian character. This in turn has had a significant impact on its effectiveness as a church school.
- Academic standards are now rising from a low point two years ago. This is attributed to improvements in staff culture and the impact of Christian values on children's learning.

Areas to improve

- Embed the school's motto in a vision that is underpinned by explicit biblical teaching. Monitor and evaluate its impact on all aspects of the life of the school in order that the vision is deepened and more widely understood.
- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality for all staff and children. Explicitly identify and formally plan opportunities and experiences within the curriculum in order that children further develop their own spiritual awareness.
- Develop a programme of visits and visitors from other faiths and cultures in order to increase children's understanding of difference and diversity.

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

Oak Hill Church of England Primary School is a warm and welcoming Christian community, where values rooted in Christian teaching permeate daily life. The school's Christian ethos creates a secure and inclusive environment in which children are nurtured and grow in confidence and self-belief. Although standards of attainment and progress were poor two years ago, steps have now been taken to address this issue. As a result of the action taken, the effectiveness of the school's Christian character has been increased and standards have now improved. The impact of the school's Christian values on children's personal development and well-being is good. 'Project Touchline' led by a lay minister at Dumbleton is embedding Christian values in sport and values such as compassion are recognised by children to be important in their lives. The outstanding relationships, promoted by the values of friendship and respect, reflect the quality of the school's distinctive Christian character. As a result the school is a happy place to work and play and it is widely recognised that it's 'nice to be there'.

Staff have some understanding of spirituality although opportunities within the curriculum are not explicitly identified nor is their impact monitored. However, as a result of regular whole school themed days at Alderton, children learn to interact very well with all ages and respect and understand others better. The school's values support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.

Children have positive attitudes to RE. It contributes very well to their spiritual development, as seen from their good understanding of prayer. Effective teaching in RE is contributing to children's good levels of interest and open attitudes to people of other faiths and diverse communities. However, opportunities to increase the children's understanding of difference and diversity through meeting people of different faiths and cultures, are limited.

A strong feature of the school's Christian character is the profound impact of the annual residential visit of the older children to a Christian outdoor centre in Devon. As a result of the visit, children grow in spiritual awareness and confidence and are well prepared for the next stage in their lives at secondary school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the school day at Oak Hill. Its importance is recognised by the quiet, calm and reverential way that children enter and leave the school hall for worship. Children and staff enjoy this special time of day and find it relevant and meaningful at a personal level. Children value how Christ's teaching provides guidance for living their lives. Worship makes very good use of biblical material drawing on stories and scripture to emphasise Christian messages. Children understand how the values of forgiveness and humility are rooted in Christian teaching. For instance, by identifying the values that can be found in the story of the prodigal son. Children are actively engaged during worship in a variety of ways including mime and drama. They are able to empathise with the feelings of the main characters in the parable and the consequences of their actions on others. For instance, they recognised that the younger son showed humility because he 'realised he had made a mistake'. In this way worship is effectively promoting children's spiritual development. Christian values are linked very effectively to the church year, such as the value of forgiveness with Easter. Children are developing an understanding of the Trinity from the lighting of the three candles at the start of worship. A fourth candle is lit which represents the school. This is developing a sense of the school as a Christian community loved by God, which is raising children's spiritual awareness. The new vicar has introduced a greeting with a response and a coloured cloth on the focus table, symbolising the church season. Key Stage 2 children at Alderton use the church for monthly services led by the vicar. As a result, children are developing a good understanding of Anglican practice. Opportunities to develop children's personal spirituality are good. A prayer station and reflective spaces in classrooms are well used. A prayer tree implicitly linking the school's motto to the school's values and its spiritual life is having a good impact.

The leadership of worship is good. All teaching staff now lead and plan their own acts of worship which is a development since the previous inspection. They have been very well supported by the RE leader/collective worship leader, ensuring that leadership is now widely distributed. The RE leader also works with the children's worship team. They are a very committed and prominent group in school giving up their lunchtime to plan their weekly worship with each class in turn in Key Stage 2. The vicar and a governor now observe worship and speak to children regularly. This is giving them a better understanding of the impact of worship and RE on children's lives. Children's feedback is regularly shared with staff in order to raise the enjoyment and impact of worship.

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

Oak Hill has a strong Christian ethos which is understood and celebrated by the whole school community. Its motto 'Believe and Achieve' is underpinned by seven Christian values that have been introduced recently. However this motto is not explicitly rooted in a vision which proclaims the school's distinctive Christian character and its own context.

The headteacher has demonstrated good leadership in providing direction for the school's distinctive Christian character. Standards, whilst not yet good are rising from a low point. Challenging issues have been addressed with

the support of the local authority and of the diocese and resulted in successful outcomes. He is working collaboratively with the RE subject leader, forming a very effective partnership. Together they have raised expectations and with support have empowered staff to teach RE and lead worship, which had not been the case a year ago. Staff are a caring, supportive and cohesive team who live out the school's values. Parents are very aware of the impact of the school's values on their children's caring behaviour.

The vicar and new RE link governor are now contributing effectively to the school's self-evaluation as a church school. The vicar is taking a pro-active role within the school community. She is promoting the school's Christian character in a variety of ways, including inviting children to join the forthcoming communion course called 'Jesus' special meal'.

The RE leader is passionate about her subject and this, together with her expertise, puts her in a good position to promote excellence. Governors are involved in supporting and challenging the school leadership and are now monitoring and evaluating developments in the subject. Strengths and areas for development in both RE and worship have been identified and very effective steps taken to address them. Professional development has been used very well, resulting in good outcomes for children. The commitment and contribution of the 'Open the Book' team from the local church is an integral part of the worship programme. It is an example of the good partnership which exists between the school and church community. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report February 2018, Oak Hill VC Primary School, Alderton, Gloucestershire, GL20 8NP