

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

### St. Julian's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Wellow, Bath BA2 8QS

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Good**

**Diocese**

**Bath and Wells**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Name federation

Church Valley Federation

Date of inspection

6 June 2017

Date of last inspection

22 May 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled Primary 109210

Executive headteacher

Mrs Jane Gascoigne

Inspector's name and number

Revd David Hatrey 844

#### School context

Saint Julian's Voluntary Controlled Primary is a smaller than average school. The number of children who have English as an additional language or those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding as well as those who have special educational needs are below national averages. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. In September 2012 the school became part of the Church Valley Schools Federation.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint Julian's as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian ethos has created a warm, caring community where all members make good relationships, showing care and concern for each other.
- Engagement with prayer throughout the school enables the older children to demonstrate considerable maturity in their thinking.
- The executive head provides strong leadership which gives clear direction for the work of this church school. It is particularly evident in the importance given to religious education (RE) and collective worship which, through the expertise of the RE and worship coordinator, have a significant impact on children's lives.

#### Areas to improve

- Extend the school's monitoring and evaluation systems to involve governors and children covering all aspects of being a church school in order to inform future improvements.
- Enable children to have regular opportunities to lead worship and monitor and evaluate the impact it has to deepen their understanding of and maximise their participation in worship.
- Enable children to recognise that the values the school teaches and which influence their lives arise from Christianity in order to develop their understanding of the relevance of Christianity today.

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

The leadership has thoughtfully put Christian values in the centre of school life and ensured that they have a high profile. Each year six different values are identified. The use of an acronym enables the youngest children to name these Christian values. The current acronym of FAITH(S) represents; friendship, awe and wonder, inspiration, tolerance, honesty and service. Children have a good understanding of these values, explaining their meaning and give examples of what they look like in daily life and where they have used them. Staff award children who show values in action, with the reason clarified so that children appreciate how these values are used and the difference which they make to the lives of others. Children are increasingly recognising how Christian values influence their lives and choices as well as shaping the caring family of which they feel part. At present children have a general understanding of many of these values because they are not always able to relate them to Bible stories which reflect their distinctive Christian meaning. The quality of behaviour and the depth of relationships which children make is one of the strengths of the school. Staff model the chosen values in their own relationships with children and parents, showing respect and care for each individual which the children recognise and comment upon. The school's Christian character has shaped a warm and caring family community, where children show care for one another in different ways. A good example of this is the way older children naturally support younger children and provide thoughtful role models. As a result, instances of bullying or name calling are very rare and where they occur swiftly dealt with. Older children are beginning to use the values to resolve minor disputes successfully. Children develop good attitudes and strategies for learning, particularly through the 'Growth mind sets' approach which is well established. Staff have high expectations for children to achieve their God given talents. As a result, children make at least good progress across the school and by the time they leave attainment is often above national expectations. Spirituality has a prominent role in the life of the school. Children have been shown different ways in which they can be still and reflect, which they find helps them to be calm and think through issues. They appreciate these times explaining how they help them with their learning and with social issues. The comments recorded show that the ideas of the older children are deepening, where they consider how they can respond to new thoughts and questions, confident to share these in a safe environment where they know these will be valued. There are opportunities for reflection, although not all aspects are appropriately considered. Through the Erasmus project children extend their understanding of other countries and cultures, including the imminent visit to Greece. These enable children to recognise how Christians in other parts of the world celebrate their faith in different ways. Religious education effectively develops children's knowledge of other world faiths, both through visits to places of worship and visitors to school using artefacts which bring learning to life. Children enjoy this and make thoughtful comparisons which help them to extend their own ideas and beliefs. This leads to children showing tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own. There is a growing appreciation that RE can have a relevance for their daily lives as they explore the challenges of big questions and issues which they meet. For example, children consider what happens when you die and challenging moral issues. They share and reason through their thoughts, listening to others and evaluating their opinions. However, opportunities to deepen children's understanding of Christian values in different contexts are not always taken.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

The impact of collective worship is good because children enjoy these occasions through the variety of ways in which they can contribute. The school has a fine reputation for music, with a talented choir who work closely with Bath Abbey, who take a lead, whilst other musicians support this well. Children sing enthusiastically and join in related actions. Drama is popular, children are eager to take part in the Open the Book worship led by members of the local church where children act out stories which enables them to develop a good knowledge of Jesus, his teaching and significance within Christian worship. They are able to recount these stories in some depth and consider how they might respond to the the ideas raised. Children know that worship is a special time for the school family to come together and share time with God. There is a strong visual emphasis in worship which keeps children engaged, as well as allowing them to share and shape ideas with partners. The experienced and creative coordinator has made significant contributions to this area. For example, the main Christian festivals are explored in different ways so that children develop new insights and present these in various ways, taking a leading role. Children talk about these festivals in some depth and explain the meaning of these for Christians as well as seasons in the church's year. Themes for worship are well planned with guidance which enables all staff to lead and take responsibility for this. Aspects of the Christian value for the term are progressively explored so children's understanding is deepened. The coordinator is enthusiastic to introduce new ideas, such as new songs of worship, whilst using values for life to provide more detailed planning. Links with the church have been enriched. The Easter experience she prepared was memorable, where through displays and workshops children explored in greater depth the significance of various parts of the story and what it means for them. Older children led some stations both for other schools and the local community. Children feel that worship does make some difference to their

lives, but they are not confident to give examples and articulate this. The vicar has helped children to gain an understanding of the Trinity which they talk about thoughtfully. Prayer is one of the strengths of the school. The youngest children have opportunities to share their ideas with God and see this as a natural part of their lives. Other types of prayer are introduced so that prayers of older children show a greater depth of maturity and thought, going beyond themselves to consider world wide issues. Prayers written to reflect the termly value are notable where several recognise Jesus as showing the value they are considering. Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken at an informal level. Governors consider worship, but these have not informed future plans. Children can make suggestions via the school council about changes they would like to make to worship, but the impact of this was not evident. At present children have limited opportunities to lead worship.

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

The executive headteacher provides strong leadership and direction to the school through her own example. She is ably assisted by senior teachers who share her commitment and dedication for the life and work of a church school. They have created an enthusiastic team. This is particularly evident in the leadership of both religious education and collective worship, which are given a high priority and expertly managed, going beyond the statutory requirements. In addition, the school provides considerable support for other schools in the federation. Together they articulate a clear and distinct Christian vision for the school, based securely on Christian values. Leaders see their role in nurturing and welcoming children as Jesus did believing they are his hands in today's world. They seek to enable children to experience life as part of God's family, where each is important and valuable to God. They experience for themselves what Christian values feel like in action. This is summarised in their vision statement, 'Nurture to knowledge.' Children explain this as the partnerships they make with teachers in their learning, the support they receive fulfilling their goals in daily life. They are not as clear as to why or how this makes this a Christian vision. The school's Christian distinctiveness is evident in the sense of being a family and their relationships with one another and the love and care they share; children talk thoughtfully about being a family. It is also evident in the support for disadvantaged children and the focused interventions to meet a diverse range of needs, which enable all to access learning and be successful. The monitoring of pupil progress is rigorously undertaken and individuals needs recognised with the necessary actions put in place. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Christian character of the school are completed at a more informal level. There have been no recent reviews of the school's Christian distinctiveness or the impact this has for the children. Governors are not fully aware of strengths or areas to be developed, nor has this led to action. Children as yet do not contribute to this process. Links with the diocese are good, the school draws upon training, such as courses about the new 'Understanding Christianity' resource, whilst the head is actively involved in the head's advisory group. The contribution the church makes to the life of the school is another strength. This is seen in worship and celebrating festivals, but equally in the quality of relationships clergy make with children. The vicar invests considerable time as chair of governors providing appropriate challenges for the school alongside other foundation governors. Parents and carers hold the school in high esteem, valuing the open door approach the school has and the quality of education offered. The school has a central place in the life of the community.

SIAMS report June 2017 St. Julian's CE VC Primary, Wellow, Bath BA2 8QS