

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Claverley Church of England Primary School	
Aston Lane, Claverley, Wolverhampton WV5 7DX	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Hereford
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Shropshire
Date of inspection	31 March 2017
Date of last inspection	20 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 123539
Headteacher	Joanne Derrer
Inspector's name and number	John Chapman 006

School context

Claverley is a smaller than average primary school with 119 pupils in 4 mixed age classes for most lessons. It serves a swathe of rural east Shropshire centred on the village of Claverley. Over a third of pupils come from outside the designated catchment area and some year groups exceed the planned admission number. The headteacher has been in post since July 2013. The school was rated as good in the most recent (2015) Ofsted inspection. The school is currently a stand-alone establishment within Shropshire local authority though the governing body is beginning to explore the possibility of academy status.

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

- The shared vision of school leaders and governors, under the inspiring leadership of the headteacher, is closely centred on Christian values.
- A warm, joyful and caring family atmosphere based on the Christian values of love, trust and respect fosters good learning and excellent pupil behaviour and attitudes.
- High quality collective worship and religious education (RE) are at the heart of school life and support pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- A hardworking and capable governing body is fully committed to the Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school.

Areas to improve

- Develop a tracking system for RE, matching that in other core subjects, to ensure judgements on pupil progress are regular and accurate.
- Provide more systematic opportunities for pupils to evaluate collective worship in order to assist leaders with the planning and delivery of worship.
- Give pupils the occasional opportunity to visit places of worship, whether Christian or of other faiths, in order to extend their knowledge and understanding of diverse communities.

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

Christian values are at the heart of school life at Claverley. They are thought about and put into practice by all members of the school community on a daily basis. At the beginning of the year pupils, staff and governors agree together which values will provide the Christian focus for the year, one for each half term. This year they chose respect, truthfulness, humility, generosity, wisdom and perseverance. These values are firmly anchored in the life and teaching of Jesus. The values are explained in worship, reinforced in RE and other lessons and contribute to a Christian ethos and atmosphere in the school which is readily apparent to parents and visitors. The school's avowed aim to offer 'a challenging education within a Christian framework' is well met. Imaginative home-school value sheets enable parents and children together to read and discuss the biblical origins of the value for each half term. All pupils are known and nurtured equally. Staff have high expectations of pupils and academic progress and attainment of all pupils, irrespective of ability or special needs, is usually excellent. A 'listening ear' and individual mentoring are available where a child can share any concerns with an adult and this helps to remove barriers to learning. The behaviour policy speaks of 'creating a happy, and stimulating learning environment supported by Christian values'. As a result pupils are at ease with themselves and others. They conduct themselves with maturity and are always looking for ways to help others. Older pupils hold the hands of younger ones when they go to the local church. A pupil put it this way 'Our values are not just written on the wall, they are how we live here in school'. They are clear the school's values are their values. Relationships with teachers combine warmth with respect. 'They are our teachers but they are our friends as well' commented one pupil. All staff have received training in spiritual education. The resulting school policy emphasises developing a pupil's sense of worth of themselves and others and awareness of inner feelings, beliefs and experiences. Claverley provides many opportunities for this and pupils show the ability to reflect on their ideas and beliefs which helps them to consider those of others. Through collective worship, the teaching of different faiths in RE and some links with the wider world, pupils are developing an understanding and respect for those of different traditions and cultures. Visitors from different backgrounds are valued by pupils but they do not have much opportunity to experience places of worship of other faiths. The school's Christian character and the centrality of its values is apparent from bright and plentiful displays in classrooms, corridor and the entrance area. It is also apparent from the joy and sense of purpose that can be seen and felt as staff and pupils go about their business. Unsurprisingly attendance is of a high order because, as a pupil said, 'Everyone is so happy here'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

School worship occupies a pivotal place in school life and is central to the promotion of Christian values and teaching. These values are thoroughly explored and pupils come to make them their own. Pupils value worship highly and what takes place finds echoes throughout the day in the classroom, the playground and at home. Worship makes a strong contribution to the happy atmosphere and sense of wellbeing that pervades this community. The carefully considered worship policy makes it clear that everyone in the school should play an active part. It is a real strength that all adults join in the worship each day. There is considerable variety in worship with the headteacher, other staff, the vicar and pupils themselves taking leadership roles. Pupils value highly the visits from the Open The Book team on Mondays when they can both listen to Bible stories and then enjoy acting them out. Planning worship is an action point in this year's school development plan. Pupils are very involved in worship. They come into the hall quietly to music and sit and reflect until everyone is present until the candle is lit. They sing with great enjoyment, and listen and respond attentively. This demonstrates their engagement and enjoyment of worship as a special time of day. They help lead the Friday celebration assembly when pupils show warm appreciation for those gaining awards that week. Pupils help select the songs and write and read prayers. The content is based on how Christian values arise from the teaching of the Bible and the traditions of the church. The Lord's Prayer is said together several times a week. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some acts of worship reflect and value aspects of other religions represented in the school and the wider world. Festival services marking the church's year are held in the church. Parents are invited and pupils select the hymns and write some of the prayers. A small worship group of older pupils has been formed recently to assist with the preparation, smooth running and evaluation of worship. This is another fruit of the current development plan. What takes place is recorded, though there are not opportunities for pupils generally to evaluate what takes place. The vicar, as worship link governor, does monitor worship and report back to the governing body. Prayer is a significant feature of school life and to pupils it seems natural rather than forced. They write prayers and put them in the classroom prayer box and many are taken out and shared with the class. There are opportunities for class prayers at lunchtime and the end of the day 'when we can give thanks for all we have' as one put it. Pupils say they value the space provided in many classrooms and outdoors for their own quiet reflection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

High quality RE contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual and moral development. As well as imparting information, the subject is helping them to explore their own ideas and beliefs relating to themselves, to religious belief and to world issues. There is continuity between the values explored in worship and teaching in RE. All staff share in teaching RE and lessons are always good or outstanding. This is achieved through careful planning, the use of a wide variety of resources and teaching styles, and imaginative delivery. Lessons are interactive and delivered at a good pace keeping pupils' attention continuously. Pupils impressively use their creativity and originality to apply what they have learnt to their own personal reflections and understanding of world issues. They enjoy RE, 'It is my favourite lesson, we learn such interesting things' said one. They can see how what they learn in RE is consistent with worship, other lessons and with the Christian values which are the lifeblood of the school. Teachers have the same high expectations of pupils in RE that they do in other core subjects and they apply the same rigour in assessing work and progress. Tracking individual progress in the same way as in other core subjects is not in place. Written work is of high quality. RE exercise books showed considerable understanding of the Christian faith, world faiths and how to live well. Pupils clearly take pride in their work which is carefully marked. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus which provides a good grounding in Christianity by giving pupils considerable knowledge and understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and biblical stories. The syllabus also provides an introduction to the main tenets and practices of other world faiths. A parent commented she had learnt more about Islam from her child than from listening to the news. Older pupils can discern what is common to different faiths. RE is well-led, and given appropriate time and resources. It is monitored and pupils have the opportunity to discuss the impact of RE with the subject co-ordinator, (the headteacher) and the vicar as RE link governor.

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

Claverley is a school with a clear vision grounded in distinctively Christian values. This owes much to the inspirational and compassionate leadership of the headteacher and the wholehearted support of staff and governors. Pupils too have a sense of ownership of the school's values. The way the school's distinctive Christian character and objectives are explained on the website is outstanding and leaves parents and others in no doubt as to the core purposes of the school. These developments arose from recommendations from the previous inspection which have been impressively implemented. Staff have a good understanding of the school's academic performance and high levels of attainment are recognised as an integral part of the school's Christian mission. They can identify where extra help is needed to maximise achievement. The action plan for the year indicates that the school continues to look for improvement and shows the capacity for further development as a church school. Good use is made of training opportunities provided by the diocese which makes a contribution to future leadership in church schools. Parents and pupils recognise that all teachers are exemplars of Christian values and make a contribution to the school's Christian character. Governors make a strong contribution to the effectiveness of the school and provide the right balance of challenge and support. Their meetings begin with prayer for wisdom and discernment and a concern for the school's Christian character underlies all their activity. They are well informed about RE and collective worship particularly by the link governor, and the head's regular report always includes reference to the vision and values of the school. Governors have been involved in the self-evaluation process of the church school. The two way link with the local church has many positive features. The vicar is an effective presence in the school and on the governing body. The church supports the school by providing the Open The Book team, mentoring services for children who need them and providing foundation governors. The school makes good use of the church for services and as a resource for RE. The weekday 'Messy Church' after school provides a good opportunity for pupils – up to thirty or forty of them – to engage in church activity at an appropriate level. Pupils' pride in the school finds expression in the work of the school council which makes suggestions relating to various activities. This, along with the work of the worship group, makes a further contribution to reinforcing the school's Christian values. Parents have very positive views about the school, and sense the happy atmosphere whenever they visit. They praise the care and experiences their children receive, speaking highly of the headteacher and staff. They notice how the Christian values taught translate into action in their children's lives. Two way communication is excellent and both attendance at the services in church, and the home-school value sheets, help parents to understand and share in the Christian purposes of the school. The demand for places in recent years, often from outside the catchment area, is evidence of outstanding leadership and management.