

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Clipston Endowed Voluntary Controlled Primary School

High Street, Clipston, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9RU	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Peterborough
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Name of federation	Clipston Endowed (VC) Primary and Great Creaton Primary School Federation
Date of inspection	28 February 2017
Date of last inspection	March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 122013
Executive Headteacher	Emma Mercer
Inspector's name and number	Janet Northing 792

School context

Clipston is smaller than the average sized primary school, serving a rural area. The percentage of children eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average, as is the number of pupils with a special educational need or disability. Currently there are no children in school requiring a statement or educational health care plan. There are no children attending the school with English as an additional language. The school federated with a maintained primary school in April 2013 with whom it shares an executive headteacher and federated board of governors. The executive headteacher had previously been head of Clipston since 2007.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Clipston Endowed Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher consistently promotes a Christian vision for the school that impacts positively on the lives of the whole school community.
- The school's Christian virtues underpin policy and practice affirming the school's Christian heritage and identity.
- The school's motto: 'Do to others as you would have them do to you,' is practically expressed through its charitable support for others.
- Regular experiences for prayer and reflection support pupils' spiritual development.
- Religious education (RE) makes a positive contribution to the Christian character and values of the school and to learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Areas to improve

- Put in place a formal system of monitoring that effectively evaluates the impact of the school's distinctive Christian character, collective worship and RE to ensure its on-going development. This should involve a range of stakeholders including governors, the incumbent from All Saints Church, and members of the school and local community.
- Extend the role of the children's worship team to include pupils in regular planning, leadership and evaluation to increase their understanding and appreciation of Christian worship.
- Deepen children's understanding and awareness that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith by identifying relevant experiences in the curriculum as a whole and RE in particular.

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

The school has in place a set of seven Christian virtues that are referenced by biblical verses. These lie at the heart of the school's guiding principle that every child matters to God. In choosing to use the parable of the prodigal son to exemplify the virtue of forgiveness a Year 6 child stated that: 'The younger son behaves in a silly way but his father forgives him and welcomes him back.' The children's general consensus is that: 'The school's Christian virtues help us to be better people.' The Christian ethos contributes to the creation of a safe learning environment, supporting children on their journey towards becoming responsible members of society. The school is committed to the development of the whole child and clearly recognises their value as unique individuals made in the image of God. The school's Christian character impacts positively on standards of academic achievement, which are above or in line with the national average in writing, mathematics and reading at the end of Key Stage 2. This is also true for vulnerable pupils. The attendance policy is explicit in reflecting the school's Christian character. In seeking to promote good attendance the school offers pastoral support to families and as a consequence attendance in 2016 was slightly above the national average. As a response to the Christian ethos of the school, learners readily take responsibility for their own behaviour. Class codes of conduct are underpinned by the teaching of Jesus: 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.' The positive influence of RE on children's behaviour and SMSC development is evident in the choices they make and in their care for others. The virtues are expressed in the nurturing and responsible attitude the older children display towards the younger pupils. Staff are aware of their responsibility to act as positive role models for the children in the way they live out and promote the school's Christian virtues. The school community's long-standing support for Karisalpatti Children's Home in India is another way in which the children experience putting their Christian virtues into action. This, along with a range of visits to places of worship and visitors from a range of faiths means that children have a good understanding of diversity and difference in local, national and global faith communities. This demonstrates good progress on a focus for development from the previous inspection to extend and broaden pupil's knowledge of faiths and cultures. However, pupils' awareness that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith is not similarly well developed and currently their appreciation of diversity within the Church is limited.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils articulate the centrality of collective worship in the daily life of the school. In particular they appreciate time to reflect on Bible stories about God and Jesus that exemplify the school virtues in their Christian context. 'Worship is a time to be with God and to learn about him,' explained a Year 4 child. Children understand the significance of the lighted candle as a symbol of Jesus's presence with them as the Light of the World. As well as exploring the Christian virtues, themes for collective worship focus on following the Christian calendar in celebrating major festivals. In response children are generous in their support for others who are less fortunate than they are by fundraising for a range of local, national and global charities. Staff and a range of visitors, including the rector from All Saints Church, lead worship in school on a regular basis. In addition, pupils experience worship in church to celebrate the major Christian festivals and to mark key events in the life of the school including the Leavers' Service. This helps the children to appreciate that life is a spiritual as well as a physical journey. Parents also speak of feeling spiritually uplifted when attending church to share in worship with their children. The school's worship provision impacts positively on children's SMSC development and their appreciation of the purpose and place of worship in their lives. However, the impact of collective worship on staff is less well articulated. Pupils experience God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through celebrating the Christian festivals and the responsorial dismissal at the end of the worship. The children's awareness of the significance of the Trinitarian nature of God is expressed at an age appropriate level of development. Anglican tradition is reflected in a variety of ways so enhancing children's theological awareness and spiritual perception. For example, coloured cloths reflect the Seasons of the Church's year and a range of prayers support children's understanding of the part prayer can play in their lives. Prayer is a prominent feature of school life. In describing the purpose of prayer a Year 4 child stated that, 'It is how you can create a bond with God.' Children regularly write prayers for use in worship both in school and church. Small areas for prayer and reflection are available in each classroom and the library. A Peace Garden provides a sacred space in the outdoor environment for quiet reflection. These areas are used regularly by the children and serve to impact positively on children's spiritual awareness. In addition, some children use prayer at home as part of their own spiritual journey. Worship is planned by the executive headteacher in her role as collective worship leader. Monitoring of collective worship does take place but it lacks the rigour and focus required to identify clearly where improvement is needed. In response to a focus for development from the last inspection the school has put in place a children's worship team. However, whilst children are more actively involved in worship, the potential for their engagement in regular formal monitoring remains largely unrealised. In addition, they do not have enough experience of planning and leading collective worship in school to deepen their understanding and appreciation of worship still further.

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

The executive headteacher clearly expresses a Christian vision for the school that impacts positively on the lives of the children and their families. 'The school's Christian virtues instil in the children a sense of pride and support their development as functional members of society.' Staff and governors support her in this. The school's Christian heritage recognises the uniqueness and value of every child before God. This impacts positively on academic standards across the school that are in line with or slightly above the national average. In addition, it successfully underpins a focus on each child's personal development and wellbeing, which is supported through a good range of extra-curricular experiences. The executive headteacher's report to governors includes an informative section on the distinctive Christian school. Leaders invest in continuing development for staff and governors through accessing training offered by the Diocese of Peterborough. In addition, a delegated leadership style both in school and across the federation prepares those with potential for future leadership across church schools. Links with All Saints Church and the rector's involvement in collective worship contribute to the children's understanding of the role of the church in the local community. Through the work of the School Association parents are actively involved in the life of the school with substantial benefits for learners. Good leadership of RE and collective worship by the executive headteacher is instrumental in ensuring that they make a valuable contribution to the school's Christian ethos. The statutory requirements for collective worship and RE are met. Governors are aware of the need to be more pro-active in their monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE. This academic year the school is involved in a bespoke project with Peterborough Diocese focusing on developing effective governor monitoring. However, sustained monitoring and evaluation over time has lacked the rigour and focus necessary to sufficiently improve the school's practice.

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