

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Loughborough Church of England Primary School

William Street
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3BY

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	June 2014
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	24 January 2018
Date of last inspection	6 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 140911
Headteacher	Wendy Wakefield
Inspector's name and number	Carol Price 869

School context

The school is smaller than average sized with 204 pupils on roll and is situated close to Loughborough town centre. It is served by two churches, All Saints and Emmanuel and is part of the Loughborough Primary Academies Partnership (LPAP). Pupils are mainly from a White British background, although the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is above national. A small number of learners are from Muslim and Hindu families. The percentage of special educational needs (SEN) pupils is higher than national, whilst the percentage of pupils receiving pupil premium funding is below national. The headteacher has been in post since 2010.

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

- The passionate and inspirational leadership of the headteacher, rooted in Christian values, ensures that the Christian ethos of the school has a very high profile.
- The school's Christian vision and values, developed by the whole school community, are clearly understood and the very positive impact they have on daily lives is readily articulated by all.
- The compelling belief that 'every child is special to God' distinguishes the school in its care, compassion and support for the needs of pupils, and this enables children to thrive.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the links between the school's values and biblical teaching, and this has a significant impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- The strong partnership between the school and the two local churches has a very positive effect on the spiritual development and wellbeing of the whole school community.
- Pupils' behaviour, relationships and attitudes, which are strongly influenced by Christian values, are excellent.

Areas to improve

- For pupils to continue to apply their understanding of the school's vision and core values to recognise and challenge global injustice.

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

All members of the school community place a high value on the importance of the school's distinctive Christian character and have an overwhelming commitment to the belief that 'every child is special to God'. This results in a warm, friendly and happy school with a strong family ethos. It is encapsulated by the exceptional pastoral care shown to the children by staff and the understanding of pupils that they are unique and valued. The comment, 'I am proud of the way we mentor and support our children on all levels' epitomises the commitment that staff have towards ensuring all pupils flourish. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and attendance and levels of achievement for all groups, including disadvantaged and EAL pupils, are above national. A whole school review, to refine and explore the theological basis of the school's core Christian values, was completed in the autumn term prior to the inspection. It resulted in a reduction of the school's existing values from twelve to six and strengthened the understanding of the Christian nature of the school's values, particularly for parents and pupils. As a result, the school's core Christian values of forgiveness, respect, perseverance, peace, compassion and justice are explicitly promoted and deeply understood and have a significant impact on learners. Pupils impressively relate the core values to both the Bible and their own lives. For example, one pupil explained how the story of the Prodigal Son helped them to understand that they 'shouldn't hold a grudge' and enabled them to forgive a friend after a falling out. Christian values inform the school's approach to behaviour management and there is an unequivocal understanding of respect for others and 'doing to others as you would have them do to you'. This results in exemplary behaviour and positive relationships and learning attitudes that demonstrate a secure and practical application of the school's Christian values. The rich curriculum, international links with Tobago and China and wide range of visitors, including the Bishop of Kilimanjaro, provide pupils with an excellent understanding of different faiths and a deep awareness that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. Consequently, respect for diversity and difference is a strength throughout the school and pupils and staff of other faiths and cultures feel included and valued. Involvement in projects such as Christian Aid's Global Neighbours accreditation scheme demonstrate the importance that the school places on developing the pupils understanding of global citizenship. This work is gaining in strength and pupils are beginning to apply their understanding of the school's core values to recognise injustice in the world. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is extensive and pupils confidently express their thoughts and views through the use of creative arts, visits and social actions. This is exemplified by the quality of art work on display in the Year 6 classroom depicting the pupils' interpretation of the Garden of Eden. Religious education (RE) teaching is given a very high priority and supports the Christian character of the school. Learners speak confidently about how RE challenges them to 'do the right thing', helps them to understand other points of view and encourages them to take care of the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

High quality collective worship, which enriches the lives of both adults and children, is clearly at the heart of this school community. All members of the school put great value on the time together. Staff describe worship as 'uplifting' and a time for personal reflection. Parents of all faiths feel included, they welcome the open invitation to collective worship at any time and groups attend regularly. They talk about how their children bring the 'message' and the Christian values they have learnt about in worship back into the home, encouraging siblings to be compassionate and kind. Pupils explain how worship helps them to 'walk in the footsteps of Jesus' and consider 'what kind of world Jesus would want'. Consequently, pupils have a strong desire to make the world a kinder place. They make clear links between the Christian nature of service to others and their responsibility to raise funds for those in need, commenting that 'Jesus would want us to help everyone'. An agreed structure of five key elements: opening, thinking, listening, reflecting and praying supports the spiritual development of learners. It enables all children to be fully engaged and familiar with what is happening. Worship always begins with a liturgical welcome where the Trinitarian nature of God is addressed through the pupils presenting a Bible, a cross and a candle to the worship table. This, along with focussed teaching in RE, provides learners with a secure understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They talk about the Holy Spirit being 'everywhere' and show an understanding of the support that this can give to Christians. The school follows the diocesan themes for worship or focuses on one of their half-termly Christian values with regular use being made of biblical material and stories from the life of Jesus. Frequent visitors, including the vicars from All Saints and Emmanuel, enable the children to have rich, varied experiences, which enhance worship. As a result, pupils have an impressive knowledge of key Christian beliefs and traditions and have an extensive knowledge of Bible stories. Children participate enthusiastically in worship, they are keen to join in and particularly enjoy singing and role play activities. Opportunities for learners to plan and lead worship are included in the weekly timetable and pupils do so with confidence. The provision of a Christian talk group enables pupils to gain a greater understanding of themes discussed in collective worship. The value of prayer and reflection is shown in the regular prayer meetings that take place for adults and children and participants find these a meaningful support. School prayer books help pupils to understand that prayer can guide them and make them feel better and can also be used 'to say thank you to God'. Staff, pupils, parents and governors are actively

involved in evaluating collective worship and this is securing improvement. For example, the development of an outdoor reflection area, established with the aid of learners, is a valued place to talk about problems and be quiet.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile and its value is recognised across the school community. Pupils show a deep understanding of its importance. For example, they talk about how RE helps them ask 'What would Jesus do?' when faced with a dilemma, and how it helps them understand and develop respect for people with other faiths and beliefs. Learners demonstrate a clear enjoyment in the subject because they are inspired by high quality, creative teaching that utilises a variety of media, including art, music, role play and ICT. During the inspection this was captured in the Early Years area with the excitement of building a large Noah's Ark with the construction toys and wooden blocks, enabling the children to re-tell the story in great detail. Consequently, pupils learn exceptionally well and this is reflected in the standards in books which are very well presented and showcase the pupils' strong ability to apply a range of skills to deepen their learning. It is clear from the wide range of 'big questions' on displays and in RE books that pupils have many opportunities to share their personal reflections. Indeed, children say that being able to express their own opinions and ideas in the knowledge that they will be respected by all, is one of their favourite things about RE. The school's rich RE curriculum has been well planned to meet the needs of all the learners in school and it makes a valuable contribution to the school's Christian character and pupils' SMSC development. For example, the use of materials from 'Understanding Christianity' and 'Harmony and Diversity' is impacting positively on pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian concepts and their understanding of the beliefs and values of different faiths. Teaching activities are designed to make strong links with the school's Christian values. The impact of this is highly evident in the confident way pupils can articulate and make links between Bible stories and the school's Christian values. For example, during the inspection a group of Year 1 pupils identified links between the school's values of compassion and respect in the story of Jesus healing the blind man, giving thoughtful explanations of their views. As a result of high quality teaching, standards of attainment in RE, including those for EAL pupils, are at least in line or above national expectations. In addition, SEN pupils make very good progress. Assessment of RE is thorough, it clearly identifies how well pupils are doing and informs both planning and teaching. The commitment of the RE subject leader to the development of religious education at the school is evident in her secure subject knowledge and meticulous approach to insightful monitoring and evaluation. She is well respected by colleagues for the encouragement and support she provides and has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in RE. As a result, RE teaching and learning is continually improving and the school has a creative and an ambitious approach towards religious education.

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

The inspired leadership of the headteacher promotes a clear Christian vision for the school, rooted in the context of Isaiah 40:31, as a place where children are given 'the roots to grow and the wings to fly'. The compassionate, nurturing and inclusive ethos guides the whole community and is at the heart of decision-making and strategic planning. The impact of this is evident across the whole life of the school, including the wellbeing, behaviour and achievement of learners. It ensures that leaders are rigorous in their desire to improve outcomes for pupils and drives the way the curriculum and teaching strategies are carefully shaped to meet the needs of all learners, enabling them to thrive. As a result, children who are vulnerable are given exceptional care and achieve well both socially and academically. Whole school development work to review and promote the school's Christian values is ensuring that all members of the community can recognise the importance of these. Consequently, staff, governors and parents are readily able to talk about the positive impact the school's core values have on the SMSC development of learners. Monitoring and evaluation is robust. It captures the views of parents and pupils and provides leaders with an accurate picture of the school's performance. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and an Ethos Committee provides support and challenge to school leaders. Evaluations are reported back to the full governing body and agreed areas for improvement are addressed through the school development plan and action plans for RE and collective worship. This ensures that improvements, such as ensuring that all school policies reflect the distinctively Christian nature of the school, are made. Partnerships are important and the school has mutually beneficial relationships with parents, the Diocese, the Loughborough Primary Academies Partnership (LPAP) and the church communities of All Saints and Emmanuel. The whole school community speak enthusiastically about the significant contribution the two incumbents make to the school and the spiritual development of learners. Parents place great worth on the benefits of their children attending a church school and value the strong sense of community and family which encourages their children to look out for each other and help others in need. The school has a strong commitment to professional development for staff, leaders and governors with the leadership of RE and collective worship being given high priority. This leads to highly effective practice and ensures that the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met. All the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and the school is well placed to continue to thrive as a church school.