

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

### Church Langton C of E (Aided) Primary School

Stonton Road, Church Langton, Market Harborough, Leicestershire. LE16 7SZ

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Leicester</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	17 November 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	Learn Academies Trust
Date of inspection	29 November 2017
Date of last inspection	6 May 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	120207
Headteacher	Stephen Roddy
Inspector's name and number	Hilary Painter 817

#### School context

Church Langton school is smaller than average, with 200 pupils on roll from 4 to 11. It is in a rural setting serving five villages however, over 50% of the intake are from out of catchment. Pupils are predominantly from a relatively affluent White/British background. The number of pupils for whom the school receives extra pupil premium funding is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. The school has recently become an academy within the Learn Academies Trust. It belongs to a local collaborative partnership, a teaching school alliance and is a lead school in partnership with Leicester University offering teacher training.

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

- The school's Christian character and values underpin relationships throughout the school, which have a significant impact on pupils' development.
- The leadership team has a strong vision for the school as a church school, living by Christian values, which are firmly embedded and inform practice at all levels.
- The governing body has a wide area of expertise and their role as critical friends is highly effective in driving progress.
- RE has a high profile in the school due to inspirational leadership and strong management support.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop the opportunities for pupils to lead, monitor and evaluate worship, to increase their involvement and sense of ownership.
- Continue to develop pupil awareness of diversity, both within Christianity and amongst those of other faiths.

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

The school's mission statement states that: 'Our Christian ethos is integral to our daily practices and we interweave our seven Christian values throughout all of our activities.' These are not just words. The Christian ethos is immediately apparent when walking around the school. Christian symbols and values are displayed prominently and pupils are eager to explain their significance. Pupils make use of reflective prayer areas in each classroom and also the main one near the entrance hall. All stakeholders speak with confidence about the school's values and the major impact on behaviour, progress and attendance, all of which are very good. It also underpins the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils of all faiths and none.

In line with the school's Christian values, there is a sense of nurturing throughout the school, which is reflected in the behaviour and anti-bullying policies. One pupil said, 'There's no bullying here but we do fall out sometimes.' Pupils clearly know how to cope with this and where to turn to for help. Nurturing is also particularly evident in the care of those with special needs. In practice, it is noticeable in the playground where all ages play together and an effective buddy system operates. A wide range of extra-curricular activities also ensures the nurture of the 'whole' child. Pupils are encouraged to notice others putting Christian values into practice and these are celebrated during worship each Friday, alongside the more traditional progress and achievements. The school is also actively developing ways to improve the resilience of pupils, particularly amongst those preparing to move to secondary school.

The local area dean has been the school's chaplain for some years, creating an on-going link between school and church. Pupils and staff speak highly of her involvement in developing understanding of the school's ethos and values. Parents too value her input, mentioning the sensitive way in which she helped pupils, class by class, come to terms with the death of a former student. She leads monthly Eucharist services and has organised worship workshops, children's retreats at Launde Abbey and confirmation groups. These encourage the spiritual development of pupils and increase their knowledge of Anglican practices.

Parents speak highly of the school's Christian ethos and mention the positive impact it has on their children's behaviour. Positive comments were also made about the effect it has in increasing children's depth of understanding. One parent expressed her delight that pupils were encouraged to discuss the meanings of hymns and prayers that used more adult vocabulary. This is extending both language and spiritual understanding.

Pupils learn about diversity in faith and opportunity in many ways. These include religious education, visits and visitors, collective worship and membership of the Global Learning programme, which is embedded into the wider curriculum. Through these, pupils begin to make sense of the world in which they live and to understand their role within a global society.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Great value is placed on collective worship, which is the focal point of each day. It is distinctly Christian in character and is structured around themes, linked to Christian values and the church year. All but the youngest pupils know the Lord's Prayer and respond powerfully to traditional lines from the liturgy. Worship songs are sung well and with great enthusiasm. Pupils speak positively about worship and can clearly relate the content to Jesus' teachings, Christian values and to their own lives. They also show development in understanding of the Trinity and the place of the Eucharist. Those of other faiths or no faith feel comfortable during collective worship and older ones say that the school's values are still relevant to them. Parents comment positively that their children talk about faith and worship at home and welcome the depth of thought and understanding shown.

Collective worship takes a variety of forms. It is firmly centred on the teaching of Jesus and Christian values. There are a variety of leaders and pupils take an active role in worship. They speak confidently of the ways in which worship encourages them to think about faith, values and their behaviour. The chaplain has created a team of clergy from the villages in the catchment area to support worship, worship workshop and confirmation groups. Sadly, these are in abeyance at the moment due to interregnums in two parishes.

Parents and members of the church welcome the opportunity to join in Friday worship and services in church. Staff and governors regularly undertake effective monitoring and evaluation. This has led to improvements that benefit the pupils' experience of Christian life; for example, the development over the past three years of an annual prayer week. The prayer activities take place in a wide range of places and bring together the school and the wider community to engage in prayer in a variety of ways.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Religious education (RE) is taught using a combination of the Diocesan syllabus and the recent *Understanding Christianity* materials. Pupils and staff speak of the increased interest and understanding the new materials have fostered. RE has a high priority throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning is of a high standard using a variety of methods to ensure it is accessible to all and that good progress is made. There is thorough monitoring through planning, lesson observations, class books and pupil tracking, with support given where necessary. Throughout, the focus is on awareness and understanding. There is generous provision for professional development and the RE leader has led training and discussion sessions on the *Understanding Christianity* materials, which has not only raised the profile but also increased the enthusiasm and confidence of staff in teaching RE. There is strong emphasis on questioning, evaluation, reflection and interpreting information, which is deepening understanding. During one lesson observed, the pupils, having discussed the Ten Commandments, were engaged in writing their own. The level of thoughtfulness, discussion and awareness was impressive. Teachers comment that discussions give the opportunity for them to admit to not being sure about some things. This, in turn, helps pupils to realise that uncertainty and questioning is acceptable. Teachers also note that critical thinking skills developed in RE are being seen across the curriculum. This is evident in a recording of a Global Learning debate between five local schools that took place at County Hall.

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

A strength of the school is that the leadership and management are strongly committed to the school's Christian values and articulate them with clarity. Foundation governors explain their role as being to hold the school to account, ensuring that the Christian character is upheld as the norm. The mission statement is regularly revisited to discern progress and direction, building on heritage. Prayers before each meeting help to focus on key decisions and how they will improve the pupils' wellbeing.

In November 2017, the school completed conversion to academy status as part of the Learn Academies Trust (Learn-AT). The trust consists of six Church of England and two community primary academies. The leadership feel this offers them security and peace of mind combined with a growth in opportunities and provision. The core value of the trust is 'fellowship'. The collaborative culture is one with which the school identifies and the trust actively supports and values the Christian ethos of its church schools.

Christian values are clearly embedded in the ethos of the school and lived out in daily practice. Within this ethos, pupils are nurtured and progress is carefully monitored. The result is above average progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by the wider curriculum including extra-curricular clubs and activities, involvement in the school council and a range of day and residential visits. Active membership of the Global Partnership is also enhancing this area of the wider curriculum. Activities, such as the annual debating competition, organised by Church Langton for local members of the partnership, enrich the pupils' awareness and understanding of the world beyond The Langtons. The school's Christian vision is apparent in each policy and evidence shows policy being put into practice, an example being special needs provision. The governing body takes effective steps to monitor the school as a church school to develop its effectiveness. This is reflected in the school development plan.

As well as Learn-AT, the head is a member of several development groups, which provide mutual support. The school values training and support from the diocese and staff and governors have attended courses organised by the diocese and the local authority. This increases their knowledge and skills, thus improving the learning experience for pupils. The school is also a lead school for School Direct, in partnership with the University of Leicester. This gives staff the chance to develop leadership skills in a wider context.

Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met for RE and collective worship and that RE is effectively led. They support the on going professional development, which is contributing to high quality teaching and increasing the impact of RE on the spiritual development of pupils.