

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Old Dalby Church of England Primary School

Longcliff Hill, Old Dalby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE14 3JY

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	September 2013
Date/s of inspection	24 March 2017
Date of last inspection	19 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 140095
Headteacher	Rosie Browne
Inspector's name and number	Wendy Wakefield 867

School context

Old Dalby CE Primary School is a small rural academy situated close to Melton Mowbray. There are 123 children on roll. Most children attend from the surrounding villages. The school currently works in partnership with other church schools from the STEP group. Most pupils are from a white British background with 11% from serving military families which can lead to some mobility. The proportion of children on the SEN register is slightly higher than the national average. Following a period of instability the acting headteacher became substantive in January 2017. There is currently no incumbent in post.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Old Dalby as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher's passion, commitment and drive in developing the Christian character of the school is well supported by the staff and governors which ensures that this aspect of the school's work has high priority.
- A caring and inclusive ethos built around the school's Christian foundation leads to high levels of confidence and self esteem for all pupils and results in high levels of achievement and wellbeing.
- Pupils have a well developed understanding of the place of prayer and reflection in their lives. This makes a major contribution to their spiritual development.
- The act of collective worship is inclusive and plays a central role in school life responding to the needs of the school and community

Areas to improve

- Make explicit reference to the school's Christian ethos and values in all documentation and communication with parents and the wider community in order to raise the profile of its church foundation.
- In order to lead improvement, ensure that more formal systems are put in place for monitoring aspects of church school distinctiveness, including collective worship, which include all stakeholders.
- Develop opportunities for global studies so that learners increase their awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of Holy Trinity in order to further support their understanding of Anglican tradition in worship.

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

Old Dalby is a welcoming, inclusive church school where pupils make good progress and attain well. The needs of pupils are at the forefront and a high level of nurture and care through a strong Christian ethos is provided. This is evident in the positive, caring relationships across the school community and the good behaviour seen around the school. The school motto of 'Together we will..' effectively underpins the life of the school. A display of Christian values is prominent in the entrance hall and these values are clearly evident in action. A member of staff commented: 'It is all about values in action, we hope that by demonstrating these values we are giving children ways to develop inner morality and inner strength.' However, the articulation of these values as explicitly Christian by all stakeholders is not yet secure. The pupils have a natural care for each other which can be seen across school with 'Peace Pals' ensuring that all children are valued and included especially during lunch and play times. There is a strong sense of family, where everyone plays a vital role in ensuring the safety and happiness of the whole school community. The different makeup of families within the community is recognised and celebrated, ensuring an inclusive approach and a knowledge that all are loved by everyone in the school and by God. Parents commented that, 'All the children really look after each other, it's about nurturing, caring and kindness.' They talk with great enthusiasm about the hard work put in by all staff to ensure that they know each individual child and report that 'Children are confident and happy to talk about God and celebrate their faith without worrying about what others might think.' Pupils are passionate about supporting charities and will independently research and organise a range of activities to fund raise. They talk about helping others less fortunate than themselves and following the example set by Jesus, linking this to stories from the Bible. On the day of the inspection the school was focussing on the value of 'generosity' due to supporting Comic Relief, One child commented, 'It's not just about giving money, it's about understanding that someone is in difficulty and showing kindness, care and love.' RE contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural (SMSC) growth and provides opportunities to reflect on values. The pupils have an excellent knowledge of other faiths and a good concept of world religions. However, pupil's knowledge about Christianity across the world is still developing. The beautiful outdoor environment gives many opportunities to explore and reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world, contributing to pupils' spiritual development and understanding.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is of central importance within school and is carefully planned and delivered by the adults. Older pupils occasionally take part in planning and leading worship. Whilst there is some feedback from staff and governors, there are no formal systems in place for monitoring and evaluation which include all members of the school community. Pupils and staff participate and use this opportunity to be together as a whole school, joining in the range of activities within the worship and value this time for personal reflection. The school uses a range of resources to support worship and ensures that it is engaging and gives pupils the time to reflect. Worship is relevant and interactive and all pupils recognise this as a special time in the school day. Members of the school community talk positively about collective worship and the impact upon pupils' lives. Parents say, 'Our children come home and tell us the Bible stories that they have heard and will act them out.' The programme for collective worship is based on current affairs, learners' interest and Bible stories. In the absence of a local incumbent, Rev Peter the area dean skilfully works in partnership with the school to ensure there is a strong and relevant link. A variety of adults lead worship in school to ensure that it is meaningful, engaging and special. One member of support staff reported to feel 'valued and privileged' to be entrusted with this task. The environment for collective worship is calm and a designated area in the hall with a cross, Bible and candles provides a focus for reflection. Pupils are aware of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and can articulate some understanding because of teaching in RE. However, this is not a part of regular worship so pupils do not fully understand the features of Anglican tradition during this special time. There is a clear understanding that the teaching of the Bible is reflected through mutual respect, caring relationships and good behaviour. Pupils talk with ease about their engagement within worship and that sometimes they use the time to think about their own lives or the lives of others, the adults also encourage pupils to share their thoughts either as a group or privately depending on the theme. The pupils clearly value prayer reporting that it is their favourite part of collective worship and even the youngest pupils write their own prayers to share during acts of worship. Prayer within school has been reviewed and all classrooms have a space where pupils can go and pray or have time to reflect. Pupils attend church to celebrate Christmas, Easter, harvest and the end of the school year. They enjoy taking part in 'messy church' where community church members come and support them for special days in school. Services held in church have given children a greater understanding of Christian festivals and the seasons of the church year.

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

The new headteacher has ensured a renewed focus on the school's distinctiveness as a church school which has speeded up the pace of change. Her openness, enthusiasm and passion encourage all staff and ensure a continued focus on meeting the needs of all learners. The school motto 'Together we will..' has been steadfast and continued to nurture all the school community, especially through a period of challenge and change. The school now looks forward to the future and the impact of effective planning, and embedding of good practice is already evident. The safety and well-being of children and staff are of high importance in school and this can be seen by the relationships in the school. A new member of staff commented that she had chosen to apply to the school 'because of the support and strength of relationships' she had witnessed whilst visiting as a student. The vision and values are clearly evident in action, however, the very good practice and importance placed on the Christian foundation is not yet evident in school documentation or on the website. The leadership and management of RE are in the early stages and the very able and enthusiastic coordinator is starting to develop a wider evidence base from which to evaluate standards. The school benefits from support and advice from the diocese particularly with regard to the development of RE and the implementation of diocesan guidelines for RE. Regular staff training and attendance at courses and meetings ensures that staff are aware of the latest developments and receive professional support as future leaders of church schools. The Headteacher has accessed training and mentoring through the diocese to ensure that she is effective and successful in her role. Key issues for development from the previous inspection have been partly addressed; changes and uncertainty in leadership have impacted the pace of improvement in this area. Governors are very supportive of the school and relationships with staff are clearly based on mutual respect. They are involved in the strategic management of the school as a Church of England school and are regularly in school to work with pupils. Whilst some monitoring and evaluation takes place, this is not yet embedded in a formal way as part of the whole school improvement process. Leaders recognise the contribution a strong partnership with parents makes to both pupils' learning and to forming a community based on Christian values. Parents are actively encouraged into the school and a vibrant 'toddler' group is just one of the initiatives set up to achieve this. Parents say that the school allows their children to grow in their understanding of faith in a gentle way which encourages them to ask questions and make connections between the life of Jesus and their own lives. Whilst there is currently no incumbent in post, the school has been well supported by the area dean whose contribution is valued by the whole school community. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. Overall the leadership and management is outward looking and actively seeking a future which protects and enhances its distinctive Christian character and benefits the whole school community.

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