

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

### Eastnor Parochial Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Eastnor, Ledbury, Herefordshire. HR8 IRA

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| <b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>      | <b>Outstanding</b>          |
| <b>Diocese</b>                             | <b>Hereford</b>             |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade            | Outstanding                 |
| Local authority                            | Herefordshire               |
| Date of inspection                         | 20 March 2018               |
| Date of last inspection                    | 21 March 2013               |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Controlled 116805 |
| Headteacher                                | Nicola Driscoll             |
| Inspector's name and number                | Colin Howard 517            |

#### School context

Eastnor Parochial Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average, rural primary school. There are 92 pupils on roll. It serves its immediate rural catchment of the Eastnor Estate whilst drawing in pupils from the market town of Ledbury. Almost all pupils are of white British background. It has below average numbers of children eligible for free school meals and for pupil premium funding. It has a below average number of pupils on the special educational needs register. The school is currently in the process of converting to an academy within the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET).

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

- The shared Christian vision of the headteacher, governors and staff which promotes and secures high standards of education and an outstanding Christian character.
- An inclusive learning environment where all pupils are valued and their successes celebrated.
- The strong links between the local clergy and the school which serve to enrich the Christian mission of Eastnor Primary.
- The excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural education which is promoted throughout the life of the school and has a positive impact upon relationships and pupil's wellbeing.
- The warm, caring relationships between staff and pupils which lead to a truly inclusive teaching and learning environment.
- Well led Religious Education (RE) which makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and children's understanding of faith.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure governors are more fully involved in evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness in order to better support school improvement.
- Provide means by which evaluated school developments are shared with the entire school community to more fully celebrate the strong Christian character of the school.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to further understand Christian practice within other Christian denominations and cultures.

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

The school's character places Christian values at the very heart of Eastnor primary school's development. The school's website provides a clear indication of the strong Christian values promoted within this rural setting. Eastnor school wishes to value 'Ourselves, each other, the world and God'. This vision has a substantial and significant impact upon the personal, social, moral, cultural and academic development of its pupils. Pupils have excellent relationships between themselves and adults. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils show consideration, respect and courtesy to one another and adults and this leads to high levels of achievement and emotional wellbeing. Christian values pervade the life of the school and they are used successfully to underpin pupil achievement whatever a child's ability. Eastnor is an extremely inclusive and special place where pupils flourish in a nurturing environment underpinned by a strong sense of the Christian faith. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere where all children feel safe. All staff know and care for every child as an individual and this leads to the feeling of a real sense of family. Pupils clearly enjoy school and this leads to high levels of attendance. Vibrant displays around the school such as 'How did God show us which path to follow' allow pupils to reflect upon their developing faith. Display is used effectively to develop an awareness of the school's overtly Christian message. Planned visits to different places of worship allow pupils to talk knowledgeably about other faiths and cultures. There are, however, limited opportunities for children to explore the way Christianity is practised in other denominations and cultures. The school makes very effective use of their proximity to the Eastnor estate. Such a wonderful resource is used to enhance aspects of children's spiritual development. This work provides for a real sense of place and self. Eastnor has worked hard to secure its development in promoting spirituality. It now has a shared understanding of this concept and places spirituality as being the 'heartbeat' of the school. Spirituality promotes a real sense of awe and wonder amongst Eastnor's children. This means pupils speak about the wonder of 'God's creation'. RE makes a significant contribution to learners' moral, social and cultural development. The school's planned use of 'Understanding Christianity' and the Gloucester Agreed Syllabus allows children to develop an excellent subject knowledge and a depth of reflective understanding toward Christianity. RE is enhanced by the use of 'Big Questions and Philosophy for Children (P4C)'. The teaching resource of the 'Big Frieze' provides a powerful means by which pupils can make links to biblical study. This resource allows pupils to make connections to Christian themes such as creation, the fall, people of God, incarnation, gospel, salvation and the Kingdom of God. Teaching observed was of an outstanding nature and lessons were taught in a creative, engaging and fun way. This included learning about why the Torah is so important to Jewish people. Teaching allows pupils to become enthusiastic learners who are active recipients and participants in lessons. Partnerships within the school are strong and the use of 'Home School Values' allows for a continuity in the school's drive to promote a strength of Christian character in its pupils. Eastnor uses weekly newsletters and their 'community book' to help celebrate school successes with its stakeholders. The school has not developed sufficient means by which their evaluated school developments can be shared across the school community. This limits the successful celebration of such successes. Parents speak of the value they place on the strong links between the local church and the community and the significant role that the clergy plays in the life of the school. One parent spoke of the school's 'genuine love'. The school's use of the local church for their 'church club' provides pupils with a further means by which they are able to develop Christian distinctiveness.

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

All pupils and adults recognise collective worship as a vital part of the distinctive Christian character of the school. It forms an integral part of daily life at Eastnor Primary. The close proximity of St John the Baptist Church enables daily worship to take place in this historic setting. It also provides a setting for the celebration of the major Christian festivals. These regular visits to church signal the high priority and value that is placed on worship. Behaviour in services is exemplary. The use of a 'reflection stone' on the walk to church provides for a personalised means by which children can be prepared for this inclusive and reflective act of worship. The daily use of the church, as one parent mentioned, provides for 'community and continuity'. Visitors and community groups such as 'Open the Book' provide for a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and stories from the Bible. In responding to an 'Open the Book' assembly children appreciated and eagerly joined in with the story of John's gospel recounting of the Easter story. Children and adults were actively involved in this biblical re-enactment. Children sing confidently to hymns whilst complementary actions, carried out by pupils, fully engage all ages in acts of worship. Worship is inclusive and welcoming to all members of the school community. Services such as the 'Family Fridays' provide for a shared celebration which serves to recognise the achievements of all children at Eastnor. The school's regular planned acts of worship are based on Christian values and are underpinned by biblical teaching about Jesus.

Anglican traditions, such as saying the grace, are used with purpose to enhance the spiritual experience of pupils. The role of the clergy is greatly valued by the school community for the support and guidance they offer. The school places great importance on daily prayer with pupils valuing the opportunity that the 'prayer box' affords them to contribute to school worship. Prayers punctuate the school day with acts of reflection taking place at lunchtime. Both collective worship and RE have a strong focus on the Christian belief in the Trinitarian view of God and this allows pupils to talk about this aspect of faith with confidence and understanding. Reflection areas are used throughout the school to provide for a peaceful, calm and contemplative atmosphere. The collective worship policy is regularly reviewed. By allowing pupils in the school choir to attend large services, such as St Michael's Church, Ledbury, the pupils are provided with the experience of worshipping as part of a larger church congregation. Pupils are responsible for preparing acts of collective worship, these being planned and led by the 'Voice of Values' Council. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship involves members of the school community, governors and the 'Voice of Values' Council. This allows the school to reflect effectively upon its progress and areas for development as a church school.

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

The headteacher provides excellent leadership for this church school. This coupled with extremely knowledgeable and hardworking governors and staff provides for the highest standard of academic and personal success. Leaders' vision is rooted in distinctively Christian values and this leads to outstanding levels of achievement in all aspects of school life. The headteacher, staff and governors have a cohesive and clear understanding of what it means to be a church school. The areas to improve from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. School policies are regularly reviewed and are up to date. These may be accessed via the school website alongside other national policy and guidance, for example the 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'. This document provides a means by which the school community engages with the Christian message of love, joy and humanity towards all individuals. The proactive, effective and strong links between the local clergy and school serve to strengthen its Christian life and mission. Leaders are committed to ensuring all pupils have the opportunity to worship and reflect on their developing sense of faith. The school has detailed planning, monitoring and review procedures. Curriculum subjects, including RE, are extremely well co-ordinated and their evaluation is informed by formalised monitoring and tracking. This includes comparisons with similar work from neighbouring schools. Co-ordinators provide valuable feedback to governors regarding the status of their subjects by attending governor meetings. The school makes excellent provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. For example, a display helps pupils to consider how when people come together as part of community they can 'make great things happen'. Parents speak of a school where pupils are happy together and where positive relationships help all children to thrive. One parent suggested the school was a 'huge enabler' where confidence and respect abound. Parent's views are regularly sought and they talk of a school where 'parents feel included' and of the school's 'open door' policy. The governors of the school have an extremely good mix of skill sets to ensure the headteacher is challenged and supported. Neither leaders nor staff are complacent and this leads to a culture of innovation and improvement. This may be exemplified by the current focus on improving RE and their wish to convert to an academy within the BAET. This will allow the school to strengthen its ties with the diocese. Governors are regularly involved in the life of the school and this provides them with extremely good first-hand experience and knowledge which provides support and challenge to the headteacher. Currently, governors are not fully involved in the systems of evaluating the school's distinctive Christian character. The headteacher, staff and governors have had relevant diocesan training and they have accessed support to drive forward school improvement, such as through their recent Understanding Christianity training. The leadership of RE and worship are given a high priority in school life. This is evident in the quality of written work achieved by pupils and through the teaching of RE. Strong partnerships with the parish church and local community promote a shared Christian mission. Pupil involvement in organisations such as 'Voice of Values' and school council plays an active role in supporting the leadership of the school in its drive for excellence. The 'Voice of Values' Council are seen as 'ambassadors for the school's Christian values'. Pupils readily speak of their involvement in school life such as visiting Bircham Grange Home. Such work provides meaningful opportunities where the school children can support the school's Christian mission. The children, by supporting 'The Bana Besu Feeding Project', are provided with opportunities to affirm the school's vision of supporting the teaching of the gospel wherever it may be needed in the world. The appointment of the current headteacher is testament to governors' drive to develop future leaders who are committed to promoting overtly Christian values. All statutory requirements as a church school are met.