

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

### Wootton-by-Woodstock Church of England Primary School

Church Street  
Wootton-by-Woodstock  
Woodstock  
OX20 1DH

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese / Methodist District** [delete as appropriate]

**Oxford**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Oxfordshire

Date of inspection

17 January 2018

Date of last inspection

06 February 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided Primary 123196

Headteacher

Valerie Lucas

Inspector's name and number

Ian Lewis 629

#### School context

Wootton-by-Woodstock is a smaller than average primary school with 48 children currently on roll in three classes. It serves the village of Wootton-by-Woodstock together with neighbouring Glympton and the surrounding villages. Some children come from outside the catchment area. Most children are White British. Being in the centre of the village the school has developed a very strong partnership with the parish church, its clergy and community. The headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection in 2013. The school is currently in the consultation stages of becoming an academy with the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wootton-by-Woodstock as a Church of England school are outstanding

- This school has an exceptionally strong and vibrant Christian ethos firmly built on clear Christian values. This has created a caring community in which every member is loved as a child of God. The result is that the children at Wootton-by-Woodstock feel strongly valued, so achieve and progress well both academically and socially.
- Inspirational leadership by the headteacher, supported by a dedicated team of staff and governors, enables the school to flourish and continually develop as a distinctly Christian community.
- The extremely strong and mutually beneficial partnership with the parish church of St Mary and in particular its rector has enhanced and further strengthened the school's all-embracing Christian ethos. This has resulted in it being a distinctly supportive and nurturing Christian community and a valued centre of village life.

#### Areas to improve

- Devise and implement strategies to ensure a smooth and seamless transition to academy status so that the school's distinctive Anglican character is maintained and further strengthened.
- In order that all pupils reach their full potential in RE, implement strategies to ensure that all staff are confident and proficient in their subject knowledge and assessment procedures.

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

A tangible and vibrant Christian ethos is deeply embedded at the very heart of the entire life of Wootton-by-Woodstock Primary School. This is firmly founded on distinctly Christian values namely: respect, responsibility and creativity being the key values together with sharing, friendship, courage, love, equality, fellowship, compassion, justice, forgiveness, humility, peace, thankfulness and humility. Each value is firmly linked to Biblical references, being known and intensely embraced by all in the school's community. Pupils demonstrate a high degree of understanding of the Christian nature of the values. They confidently describe how they help everybody in the school in their daily lives. This is very enthusiastically endorsed by parents who say that the values are everywhere throughout the school environment and are taken beyond the gates and avidly practised by their children in their lives outside school. This deeply embedded Christian ethos is clearly visible in the exemplary behaviour and attitudes of the children who demonstrate heartfelt care and support for all around them. The children are passionate in describing how they look after and support each other in all aspects of school life saying: 'If someone is hurt in the playground, other children quickly help.' They also say with great feeling: 'We support each other in the classroom. If someone doesn't understand, one of us will help.' This is a deeply caring and nurturing community in which every pupil is individually valued as a child of God. The children feel completely safe and secure and because of this love being at school, clearly evidenced in the excellent attendance data. The impact of this is their strong desire to learn, as seen both in classroom observation and in records of attainment and progress. The school's love and care for all the children also results in those who are more vulnerable being given carefully targeted support enabling them to increase their self-confidence and make clear progress socially and academically. The deep Christian ethos is very strongly supported and strengthened through teaching and learning in religious education (RE) and through collective worship. This is very evident in observation and in discussion with the children themselves. Their enthusiasm for discovery is clearly evident in RE lessons. This is engendered through good teaching with challenging questioning and discussion leading to the excitement of research and learning. Through the school's cross-curricular approach to RE, this enthusiasm extends to other subjects in which pupils are eager to learn and achieve well. Through the content of RE and collective worship together with visits to differing places of worship, the children are developing a clear understanding of Christianity as a world faith and of the diversity within Christianity itself. Together with this the pupils are also developing a good understanding of other major world faiths. This is evidenced in the course of discussion with them and through their work. As a result, they are also gaining a firm insight into their roles and responsibilities as global citizens. This is clearly evident in their spirited support for local and national charities as and when appropriate. This school has an exceptionally strong sense of spirituality. Parents warmly describe the school as 'opening the door to spirituality.' This is deeply enhanced through the school's very close partnership with the parish church. The children frequently enjoy visits to the church which is situated opposite the school, further deepening their understanding of the school's strong Christian character. Added to this, the rector plays an active role in school life, bringing the spirit of the church and of Jesus Christ into the school buildings through his pastoral care of its whole community.

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

Collective worship is firmly and deeply embedded in the daily life of this school. Through its content it strongly affirms and strengthens the school's core Christian values through its clear focus on Biblical teachings, particularly those of Jesus Christ. The overall impact of this on the school's community is very evident in the exceptionally strong love, care and respect shown by all towards everyone and everything around them. As a result of the moral content of worship together with engaging presentation, all in the community feel deeply and warmly included, whatever their faith or none. The children enthusiastically say how much they are excited by collective worship. This was clearly evident in the class-based act of worship observed. The young children sat with rapt attention whilst listening to the story, joining in eagerly with questions, answers and prayers. Parents very warmly confirm their children's enjoyment saying that they often talk enthusiastically at home about what they have learnt in worship. Observation together with discussions with school leaders, children and parents gives clear evidence that prayer and personal reflection are profoundly central to the school's collective worship, as is the person of Jesus Christ. The children have a deep understanding that prayer is not confined to worship. There are many opportunities for prayer throughout the day such as the reflection corners in classrooms which the children clearly love using. They say, 'Prayer is talking to God. He can help us if we tell Him our worries.' As a result of collective worship the children are becoming very familiar with the concept of the Trinity, particularly through frequent reference to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking an active part in worship. They describe having regular opportunities to write and use their own prayers during worship saying: 'We love writing prayers and thinking about the things we'd like to pray for'. They also join in enthusiastically with responses, questions and answers and singing. Frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to plan and lead acts of worship emanating from their own thoughts and ideas, based on the current core value. An example is a school council led act of worship contrasting bullying with how Jesus wants us to behave. Planning, led by the headteacher as leader for worship, is based firmly on the school's core values, visited in a three-year cycle, together with the church's year and festivals as appropriate. Due to the lack of space within the school and particularly the absence of a central hall, whole school worship is held in the nearby village hall. Also, once a month, the whole school goes to the parish church for community worship led by the rector. For this they are

joined by parents and members of the local community. Through this the children are becoming very aware that they, as members of the school community, play a central role in the spiritual life of the village. Parents say how much they enjoy attending worship whenever possible, particularly when it is held in the church. Because much of the school's worship by necessity takes place in the classrooms, the headteacher ensures that all staff are confident in leading worship through strong support and professional development. The school's leaders and in particular the headteacher rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and the impact of collective worship. Within this the views of stakeholders, particularly the children, are gathered. The resulting evaluations, discussed by leaders, are used to effect further improvement and staff development as necessary. As a result, worship is consistently excellent throughout the school evidenced in discussion with stakeholders and through observation. The children frequently visit the parish church both for worship and curriculum purposes and, in addition, the rector is very closely involved in the life of the school. As a result, the children are developing a good understanding of Anglican tradition and practice. They are also developing a good knowledge of Anglican liturgical colours used during the year through church services and their appropriate use within the school, particularly during classroom worship.

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

Religious education (RE) occupies a place of high importance within the school's curriculum. Through it the children are developing a good understanding of the core values as a result of a clear focus on Biblical teaching together with the life, example and teachings of Our Lord. Discussion with pupils, observation of lessons and scrutiny of their work gives clear evidence that they are also developing a good understanding of a range of world faiths, for example Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. Parents comment warmly on this, saying how much it enhances their children's understanding of people in the wider world. The children are keen to say how much they enjoy RE. They particularly enjoy the variety of approaches employed. This enthusiasm for learning was clearly evident in the two lessons observed in which teaching was at least good and some outstanding. Questioning is used to continually challenge pupils' thinking and interesting activities involve them in deep group discussions and in research using, for example, their tablets. Pupils attain well in RE, pupil tracking showing this being at least in line with national expectations. Planning, very strongly led by the headteacher as subject leader, is based on the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus together with the school's own scheme of work. It is mainly taught in blocks of time with cross-curricular links to other subjects. Through this the children understand that faith matters are not isolated and are part of all that they learn and do. In response to the focus for development in the previous inspection report, the school has implemented assessment strategies ensuring that pupils' progress and achievement is carefully tracked. Together with this, standards of teaching and learning are rigorously monitored and evaluated by the school's leaders, led by the headteacher. However, due to new staff being recently appointed, not all teachers are as yet completely confident in implementing the assessment procedures or in their subject knowledge. For these reasons RE is not yet outstanding. This is clearly recognised by the school's leaders as a result of their rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures. The outcome is clearly targeted staff development to effect further improvement in the teaching and learning of RE.

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

The school's leaders have created and established an exceptionally strong and vibrant Christian ethos which embraces the entire life of the school. Through the underpinning and distinctly Christian values it drives all aspects of the school's life including its ongoing development. The school is currently in the process of becoming an academy with the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust. This decision has been made by the school's leaders with the aim of securing its future to continue to develop and improve as a distinctly Anglican community. The values and the Christian character are well promoted throughout the school and are known and passionately lived by all in its community. The impact of the Christian ethos is evident in the deep love, care and respect which abounds throughout the school. Through this the children thrive and develop both socially and academically, evidenced in the school's monitoring records. The impact of the school's distinctive Christian character on its community is rigorously monitored and evaluated by its leaders. All stakeholders are closely involved in this through questionnaires and personal contact. Pupils are firmly confident that their voice is listened to and acted upon. The school's leaders have a clear view of the future of Wootton-by-Woodstock as an Anglican school. The status is an integral part of staff recruitment and professional development. Potential leadership qualities among staff are recognised and nurtured through appropriate support and development. The result is a forward-looking school keen to effect continual improvement and growth. The impact of this is evident in the strong and clear-sighted leadership of both RE and collective worship resulting in the excellent provision and effective development evident in each. This has been further supported through the school's partnership with the Oxford Diocese and its link adviser. Provision in both RE and collective worship meets current national requirements. Targets from the previous inspection have been met with the school's Christian character being well promoted throughout its environment. A very strong and mutually beneficial partnership has been established with the parish church and its community which further strengthens the school's Anglican distinctiveness and ensures it is central to the life of the village.