

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cradley Church of England (VA) Primary School

Cradley, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 5NG	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Hereford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Herefordshire
Name of multi-academy trust / federation [delete as appropriate]	NA
Date of inspection	22 November 2016
Date of last inspection	21 February 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 116874
Headteacher	Adam Greaves
Inspector's name and number	Andrew Teale 770

School context

Cradley Primary School, housed in relatively new buildings with spacious grounds, 128 pupils in 5 mixed age classes. The number on role has risen sharply in recent years and the school has added a classroom this year. The school serves the villages of Cradley, Storridge and Mathon on the east Herefordshire border. The headteacher has been in post since 2011. A school-run nursery has opened on the school site since the last inspection. The most recent OfSTED was in 2011. St James' church is a short walk from the school. The incumbent has just returned from a three month sabbatical.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cradley Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school is very closely connected with and has vibrant links to the local community, especially the church.
- The school clearly cares deeply for children and families, therefore parents and children cherish and appreciate their school.
- Collective worship is inspirational and inclusive, with children being engaged by a rich variety of spiritual opportunity in a variety of settings.
- The school's physical environment inspires children's spiritual growth and confidence in expressing their deeply held views in a rich variety of ways.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that religious education(RE) is consistently outstanding and that it fully contributes to the development of spirituality across the school.
- Increase the rigour and frequency of monitoring in religious education in order to lead rapidly to improved learning outcomes.

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

At the heart of the school's character is the regular reflection on, discussion around and promotion of the school's values, such as courage, compassion and respect. One child reported, 'Christianity is at the core of our values'. Behaviour is excellent because children understand these values and strive to live their lives by them. The school has a clear and rigorous approach to tracking the academic progress of every child and uses data effectively to inform planning and develop strategies to ensure every child meets their full potential. Children clearly enjoy the creative learning opportunities offered at Cradley and this has contributed to high levels of attendance for all groups of children. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection. Children learn well because they feel safe and cared for. The school earned a gold sportsmark in 2016 celebrating its inclusive and varied curriculum, which ensures every pupil is active and enjoys taking part in the rich variety of healthy activities on offer. Relationships between different members of the community are enhanced through the supportive and nurturing ethos, which dominates the school. One parent talked about the sensitive, patient support provided when her daughter became very anxious about coming to school. This enabled a successful, vitally important transition to high school. A deeply compassionate Christian ethos and very close partnership with the church helps the school to deliver effective pastoral care which is helping children to succeed. Children and families who have suffered recent and sudden bereavement received much-needed support at an acutely painful time. Similarly, following the recent death of a long-standing governor, staff and children considered how they could best remember her contribution to the life of this school. They commissioned a bench that the children could sit on to 'have a natter' - just as the governor herself loved to do. Parents and children report that though problems are rare within the school, those that do occur are dealt with quickly and sensitively by staff. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is a great strength in almost all areas. For example work on school gardens recently earned a discretionary award at the Heart of England in Bloom awards, as their 'school of the year'. Their report said, 'Social awareness, self-confidence, creativity, communication and community responsibility are all encouraged through the Malvern show garden.' After-school and lunchtime clubs such as 'Little Fishes' further add to the vibrancy of a school ethos which is underpinned by its Christian faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship at Cradley is inspirational and inclusive. It engages all learners and its impact can be clearly discerned in all aspects of school life. The whole school community is included in a worship cycle, which centres on its close partnership with St James' Church. Parents are welcomed for the traditional festival services and their popularity ensures that these take place within a full church. The recent Remembrance service led by Year 6 pupils, and attended by members of the village community, clearly had an impact on all who attended. One girl reported that it helped her to better appreciate the sacrifice made by her great grandfather. A wide range of adults and children are given opportunities to plan and lead worship and this has been an established pattern for many years. Children take an active role in organising the assembly hall for worship each day. Children also experience worship delivered by members of the wider community through the 'Open the Book' programme. The incumbent clearly has a major impact on the rich opportunities to worship in school and offers a regular 'Breaking Bread' service to which parents are invited. These services are designed to model the form of worship families experience in church on a Sunday. Music chosen for worship inspires spiritual reflection and they sing worship songs with enthusiasm as, for example, in their energetic performance of 'Jesus put this song into our hearts'. Children choose Bible verses which link with values themes and these are displayed on the website and used prominently in worship. For example: 'The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?'

Collective worship clearly nourishes the prayer life of the community. Children are comfortable when joining in with prayers during and outside of collective worship, such as at lunchtime or in personal moments of reflection in class. The use of spiritual reflection and prayer in classrooms is very well established across the school. The school is creative in the use of different spaces for worship. Outdoor spaces at school and on educational visits are sometimes used to inspire worship because of their spirituality and beauty. The leadership team, especially the worship coordinator, with valued support from the incumbent, maintains an effective coordination and strategic overview of worship. School worship provides a strong framework for children's understanding of Anglican practice within a broader context of Christian traditions. Discussions with children, staff, parents and governors illustrate how the life of the school and the behaviour of members of the community is shaped and influenced by the strong worship opportunities. For example, children show and can talk confidently about their understanding of God as the Holy Trinity, 'God is Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit'. The monitoring, evaluation and strategic planning for worship is effective and involves pupils, staff and governors.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is recognised by staff, governors and children as an important subject within the curriculum. The school provides creative learning opportunities in RE which help to develop children's understanding of important themes. Younger children demonstrate factual knowledge and some deep learning about the symbolism and ceremony of a Shabbat meal. Children drew comparisons with the special candles lit for worship and those on the Shabbat table. Standards of attainment for the majority of learners are in line with national expectations and sometimes much higher. Work in RE is supported by some engaging displays around the school. Examples include a whole series of displays dedicated to inspirational Christian figures such as Mother Teresa. These are most effective where children have made contributions through their own work and where the display encourages interaction either independently or at the direction of the teacher. When describing the symbolism in his own artwork on display in class, one boy in year 6 explained, 'The bird represents humanity. The darkness is evil. The golden necklace on the bird is there because God is chained to humanity.' RE clearly has impact on the lives of children and staff. Children respond positively to opportunities to learn about other world faiths and visit different places of worship including a mosque, gurdwara and synagogue, throughout their years in school. RE learning activities meet the needs of different groups of learners in ways which help all children to make progress. Children benefit from wide ranging opportunities to discuss and ask questions in RE in order to develop their skills of inquiry and reflection. Children considered the definition of love from Corinthians, for example, as an introduction to a lesson on the themes of marriage in different faiths. Technology is used effectively to support learning in RE. Children's personal reflections on the meaning of 'love' were immediately shared and developed with the class using a tablet application linked to the interactive whiteboard. Children have a good understanding of the diversity of world faiths because valuable cultural and creative curricular experiences are provided. The professional development work with the diocese has clearly been helpful in developing good practice. RE teaching clearly makes significant contribution to the development of learners but the recent work to increase the spiritual quality of RE teaching has, as yet, had insufficient time to develop fully. RE is not yet outstanding because the monitoring and assessment of RE lacks the further development and increased frequency needed. This, so that leaders can make clear evaluations of teaching and learning which inform the next stages of subject development. RE is creative and carefully planned in order to meet the needs of all learners. Governors, including the incumbent, understand and support development of this work, highlighting the links with Christian teaching.

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

Leadership at Cradley is shared effectively between a strong team of senior leaders, church representatives and school governors. Parents, the local church, the diocese and the wider community contribute to school life so that there is mutual and substantial benefit for all pupils including those in the new school-run nursery. The headteacher and all leaders articulate, and promote through example, a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian values and 'enriches lives'. Respect, encouragement, and love are themes which the children have chosen and are at the centre of the caring ethos. These choices were made by children and families as part of a decision to redesign the cycle of values to ensure that all were firmly rooted in Christian teaching. Leadership within the school is evidently sharply focused on meeting the needs of each child by immersing them in a creative curriculum and paying careful attention to their academic and emotional needs. One child commented, 'Jesus sacrificed himself and watches over our world'. The governing body is very actively supportive in developing the school's Christian foundation. Governors attend residential visits so that they have the best possible understanding of the needs of children and the school community. There is a vibrant partnership with the local church. The incumbent is an active member of the governing body and a very regular presence in school, supporting religious education and playing a key role in worship in school. The school is careful during staff appointments to ensure that successful applicants recognise the importance of the school's distinctive church school character to the wider community and are committed to the development of an effective church school environment. The school engages in detailed and thoughtful self-evaluation of its distinctive character with consideration of pupil views as part of this process. As a result, the school has strong development plans for pupil achievement, worship and religious education, which aim to deliver outstanding provision in all areas. Leaders provide a concerted approach to the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school. The school develops staff and governors as church school leaders very well by providing relevant and valuable training opportunities. The headteacher and RE coordinator have attended diocesan training in recent months and this has led to improvements in RE through an increased focus on spirituality.

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