

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

### Trull Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road, Trull, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 7JZ

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Bath and Wells</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of inspection	16 November 2017
Date of last inspection	20 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 123850
Headteacher	Karen Wedlake
Inspector's name and number	Rupert Kaye (906)

#### School context

Trull is a smaller than average semi-rural primary school with 261 pupils on roll. The school serves both families living in local rural communities and families in nearby towns. The majority of children are of White British heritage and most come from favourable socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average as is the number for whom the school receives pupil premium funding. There has been low staff turnover and the headteacher has been in post since September 2015.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Trull C of E Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are deeply embedded and lived out with joy and enthusiasm by school leaders, governors and the chaplain, impacting positively on the school's provision and outcomes for children.
- A theology of human flourishing flows out from collective worship and permeates every aspect of school life, so that behaviour is exemplary and high quality relationships make this a happy and caring community.
- Prayer is a well-developed and important part of the rhythms and routines of school life. This brings purpose and meaning to the lives of children and adults in the school community and makes a significant contribution to their spiritual development.
- The school's distinctive Christian character has been strengthened by leaders' awareness of, and willingness to use, guidance documents published by the Church of England.

### **Areas to improve**

- Enrich children's experience by extending the range of opportunities to celebrate and cherish social, cultural and religious diversity within the Christian church and other faith communities.
- Extend opportunities for children's spiritual growth through the development of outdoor worship and spiritual areas that provide time and space for awe and wonder as well as prayer and quiet reflection.
- Develop assessment of religious education (RE) so that regular tracking of children's progress identifies areas for improvement that contribute to raising standards.

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

The school's core Christian values are well understood and lived out with enthusiasm by school leaders, staff and children. The impact of these values, and the extent to which children use them in their everyday lives, is what makes the school's Christian character outstanding. Impressively, many children understand that the school's values are rooted in Christian teaching and tradition. Key Stage 2 children are able to link each of the school's values to more than one Bible story to exemplify its importance and meaning to themselves and the wider school community. Children of all ages can explain how specific values have impacted on their own attitudes, behaviour and choices. Governors attribute children's outstanding behaviour to the school's commitment to helping children to reflect on what the school's core Christian values look like in action. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding as a result of a focused Christian ethos and a highly developed understanding of spirituality that is shared across the school community. One governor commented: 'The children are very good at standing up for what is right because they feel motivated by a sense of social justice.' Children talk about 'doing the right things, not just the easy things' in terms of both speaking out against unfairness when they see it or forgiving other children. One child explained: 'We know that being like Jesus and doing what he would do is what is important. Jesus forgave people who hurt him. That's why we forgive people who hurt us.' The love and care evident throughout the school has resulted in the increased self-confidence of the children. Children experience school as a safe and happy place, and parents value the standard of pastoral care. Bullying is extremely rare and children and parents are confident that any incident is promptly dealt with. As a result, Trull is a happy, nurturing, respectful school in which all strive to give of their best. Academic attainment in 2016 and 2017 was above the national average in headline figures. School leaders attribute this to the school's distinctive Christian ethos, which creates a learning environment in which all children feel secure and able to try new things and take risks. Progress data, tracked from children's entry to the school, is very strong and children of all abilities feel well supported. Children take pride in their work and talk with confidence about what they are doing well and what they need to improve upon. Children appreciate how their efforts and achievements are acknowledged and celebrated by adults. Consequently, they want to be in school and their attendance is above the national average. Governors work with school leaders and the school chaplain to ensure that Trull is a just and inclusive learning community characterised by the four basic elements of the Church of England's *Vision for Education*: wisdom, community, dignity and hope. For example, the school's foundation governors understand and are committed to the equality principles outlined in the Church of England's *Valuing All God's Children* document. Relationships between all parts of the school community, and between school and parish church, are respectful and mutually supportive. Parish church links have helped children understand their roles and responsibilities in the wider community. Charity fundraising and visiting speakers to school have also helped children to understand, and respond to, the needs of others through giving, service and prayer. The chaplain leads three lunchtime Christian clubs in school each week. She also organises Christian holiday clubs and a monthly Messy Church. These chaplain-led activities are attended by Trull children and their families, who would not otherwise experience Christian worship and teaching outside of the school day. In recent years, Key Stage 2 children have visited a mosque and cathedral in Exeter. This experience enabled them to relate British values such as mutual respect and tolerance to their own deepening awareness that beyond their immediate locality the UK is a multi-faith, multi-cultural society. Children have some understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith but less about the diversity of Christian worship.

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

Collective worship is lively and engaging, strongly promoting the school's Christian character and deepening children's awareness, knowledge and understanding of Christian values. The weekly pattern of worship is varied, but with well-established routines. Well-planned themes, based on the church year and the school values, provide a strong basis for children to engage with Bible stories and learn about the Anglican tradition. Children talk confidently about major Christian festivals and the different services held to celebrate them. Worship times have a strong focus on Jesus as a person and God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Consequently, children have age-appropriate understandings of the Trinity. The chaplain regularly leads school collective worship and talks about the importance of worship as a time for children to 'meet with one another and with God' in a way that helps them relate individual Christian values to their own

lives and live in community. As such, collective worship is also a time when children's musical gifts are encouraged and celebrated. For example, on the day of the inspection, a violin solo welcomed children into the hall for worship and then played them out again at the end. As one pupil worship leader put it: 'Worship is not just singing hymns or saying prayers, it is about living life and sharing our talents with others.' This theology of human flourishing flows out from collective worship and permeates every aspect of school life. Bible stories chosen for collective worship often challenge children to reflect on their own attitudes, behaviours and choices. As a result, the impact of collective worship often extends beyond the act itself and prompts social action and charitable giving. For example, one worship time that focused on homelessness challenged children's preconceptions on the issue and prompted one family to buy food for a man who was sleeping rough in Taunton. Collective worship has improved over time because of the chaplain's energy, hard work and willingness to listen to children's voices and involve them in evaluating, planning and leading worship. Children concur with this view, stating that their feedback and preferences have been taken on board by adults. One child involved in the monitoring and feedback process said she had asked for worship to 'be more interactive, fun and interesting'. Another child commented: 'Now children have more chances to act out Bible stories' and, because of this, 'everyone remembers the meaning.' Prayer is a well-developed and important part of the rhythms and routines of school life and makes a significant contribution to spiritual development. Class reflection areas and prayer trees ensure that prayers are visible and accessible to children throughout the day. Children of all ages talk openly and enthusiastically about writing and saying prayers at home as well as at school. Each class has a prayer bag, which contains both a published book of prayers and a class prayer book, which is a scrap book containing the children's own prayers. Children enjoy taking the prayer bag home for the night so they can read the prayers with their family and then add a new prayer of their own to the class prayer book. This home-school prayer bag gives children a sense of ownership as well as creating opportunities for families to talk about faith and belief. Parents and governors appreciate the chance to attend and participate in worship at the school and at the church. Attractive displays around the school buildings are designed to prompt reflection and deepen children's spirituality and theological understanding. However, school leaders recognise that more could be done to develop outdoor worship and spiritual areas within the school grounds to offer everyday opportunities for children to pause in awe and wonder as well as in prayer and quiet reflection.

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

Religious education is a core subject at Trull and has a suitably high profile within the curriculum. The subject is well led, resourced and taught. Religious education lessons clearly help children to develop their understanding of the school's chosen Christian values and this in turn has a great impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children. The quality of teaching and learning is very closely monitored and evaluated by the RE subject leader resulting in outstanding provision. Monitoring of the subject has identified the subject's strengths and areas to improve. The teaching of RE over time is a particular strength of the school. Learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny and conversations with children provide evidence that teaching is often outstanding and never less than consistently good. The RE subject leader has identified assessment and tracking as areas for improvement. The benefits of establishing consistency in marking and moderating teachers' assessment based on a shared understanding of what age-related and greater depth RE looks like is well understood. The RE subject leader has attended all the relevant training for implementing Understanding Christianity. Teachers have used these materials to encourage higher-order study skills amongst children. Early indications are that this has stimulated deeper questioning and theological reasoning, but a meaningful evaluation of the impact of Understanding Christianity on learning outcomes has not yet been carried out. The majority of children talk enthusiastically about their RE learning, saying that they enjoy 'learning about Jesus' and 'finding out about what Christians really believe'. This enjoyment was clearly evidenced in the RE lessons observed. Children are able to accurately recall prior learning and apply this to the current lesson. They take part confidently and show a high level of knowledge, which they are keen to share. For example, children talk enthusiastically about their visit to a mosque and a cathedral in Exeter. Likewise, children greatly value visits to the school by Hindu and Muslim parents, who have talked about their religious beliefs and practices. As a result, Key Stage 2 children talk knowledgeably and respectfully about a variety of beliefs and practices and are able to compare and contrast Christianity to other major faiths they have learned about.

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

Trull is a Christian learning community that is characterised by wisdom, hope, community and dignity. The headteacher and governors continually articulate, promote and model a clear Christian vision, ensuring that the school's values are clearly understood, modelled and lived out by all. This vision underpins the whole curriculum and contributes to children's excellent behaviour and attitudes as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Because of this, Trull is distinctively Christian yet extremely welcoming of adults and children of all beliefs and none. Relationships with parents and the parish church are strong. Parents praise the school's open door policy. They feel that whenever they have raised concerns these have been quickly and effectively handled. Parents believe that the levels of respect shown between members of the wider school community are a natural outworking of the school's core Christian values, collective worship and RE. Governors regularly survey the views of children and parents, and listen to and take account of the views of staff. Governors also attend collective worship, carry out learning walks and scrutinise RE. As a result, they know the school well and are well placed to effectively challenge and support the headteacher. Governors regularly monitor and evaluate the school as a church school, benchmarking activity and outcomes against the school's Christian mission and core values. As a result, planning at a strategic level is consistent with the school's Christian foundation and is in alignment with the Church of England's *Vision for Education*. Governors are aware of the importance of safeguarding and the school's commitment to the well-being and flourishing of every child. Governors are also committed to providing an environment characterised by Christian love and social justice, and are, for example, aware of the latest guidance from the Church of England on challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. Since the previous inspection, the necessary steps have been taken to act on the key areas for development and these issues have been successfully addressed. Training for and by school leaders has strengthened the distinctive Christian character of the school and has led to sustained school improvement. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. In fact, both RE and collective worship leadership are strengths of the school.

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