

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Condover Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Condover, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 7AA

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Hereford
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 December 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET)
Date of inspection	5 July 2018
Date of last inspection	12 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy (former VA) 145275
Executive Headteacher	Kerrie Lewis
Inspector's name and number	Angela Daniel 757

School context

Condover Church of England Primary School is a rural school with 140 pupils on role. Pupils are mostly of white British heritage with the number of pupils supported through additional funding significantly below national average. Within the last academic year the school has federated with St. Edward's Church of England Primary and one joint governing body has been established. Both schools have become academies within the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET). Since the last inspection a new rector has been welcomed to the parish. Three new class teachers have been appointed and one of those teachers is leading RE and worship.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Condover as a Church of England school are outstanding

- A strong team of faithful and passionate school leaders, clergy and governors, who work together to put Christian values at the heart of all their decisions, enables children and adults to flourish academically, spiritually, socially and emotionally.
- Everyone is cherished and included as a unique and precious child of God which impacts profoundly on high standards of teaching, learning and is evident in everyone's readiness to live together harmoniously.
- Inspirational collective worship and religious education (RE) stimulate meaningful discussion and understanding about the Christian faith. This ensures that the school's values inspire choices and behaviours which are reflections of the life and teachings of Jesus.
- A powerful appreciation of shared and personal prayer is engendered through a variety of worship and other reflective spiritual opportunities within an environment of hope, trust, peace, friendship and love.
- The opinions and ideas of children are highly valued and, along with the reflective self-evaluation and sincere intent of adults, are key in continuously making this school an authentic, vibrant and courageous Christian school.

Areas to improve

- Embed provision for pupils to meet and learn from those of faiths other than Christian to deepen their religious, social and cultural understanding.
- Invite representatives from a range of Christian traditions to lead worship and contribute to RE, so that pupils gain experience of a variety of worship styles and customs, including Anglican.

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

'Working together to live by our Christian Values of peace, love, trust hope and friendship,' is the vision and values statement which ignites all that is wonderful about Conover Church of England Primary School. Children, parents, staff, governors, the rector and church members work purposefully and effectively together to ensure that these values radiate throughout the school. Every adult is committed to ensuring that each child is cherished and nurtured so that they can flourish socially, emotionally, spiritually and academically. Expectations and standards are high in terms of behaviour and academic achievement because every child is understood and their individual needs are met. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups consistently exceeds national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are welcome into this school family and flourish because they feel loved and cared for. An environment of trust and friendship prevails. Therefore, deep relationships are forged and there is much laughter and joy. Everyone feels secure and free to be themselves which means that they can increasingly take exciting risks in terms of teaching and learning. The children love learning and living life to the full here and attendance is exemplary. Rich experiences of worship and RE provide the children with opportunities to reflect and pray and root the values in stories from the Bible. Consequently, the children can readily articulate the connections that they make between the Christian faith and their choices. The children work respectfully with each other across the school in structured ways, for example as 'buddies'. They also choose to demonstrate their love in action in school, within the community and in supporting international charities. The children's eyes are opened to a wider world with its joys and challenges through worship times based on topical issues. There is a profound depth to the level of dialogue that happens between school leaders and staff as well as within lessons which promotes significant personal development for adults and children. Parents understand and support the school's Christian ethos and share an understanding that every child matters so they are able to work together to nurture the most vulnerable children. Whilst the children and staff would undoubtedly offer friendship, understanding and respect to those of more diverse faith and cultural communities, there is not yet sufficient opportunity to do so. Parents speak of 'unsolicited praise' being given for all good things and every child is celebrated. Therefore, exemplary behaviour is modelled throughout this school community with forgiveness and understanding bringing reconciliation and healing. The bond between the local church is strong and everyone works together to set this local community on fire with the joy, love and peace of God.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Inspirational worship each morning instils a spirit of peace, joy and belonging as everyone is reminded that God is with them. Everyone responds with enthusiastic singing and is affirmed through a sense of belonging and being cared for. The school's Christian values are explored through Bible stories and topical events such as the world cup football. Consequently, values are reinforced, understood from a deeply Christian perspective and become a template for daily living. Children are readily able to make connections between values and bible teaching. For example, a child was able to explain clearly how trust is evident in the story of the man lowered through a roof by his friends to be healed by Jesus. Monthly 'Open the Book' worship times led by the rector and church members make Bible stories especially memorable through drama. Wednesday Worship is led by the children in their classes. They are given freedom and trust to select Bible stories, prayers and by so doing the children's understanding of Christian faith and practice is deepened. Children are given opportunities to reflect and worship on their own throughout the school day and it is evident that this impacts greatly on their spiritual and emotional wellbeing. There is a particularly special inspirational worship space within the sensory garden where children typically describe that they feel at 'one with God'. Because an atmosphere of faith, trust and peace is created throughout school, prayer becomes quite instinctive for many children at home and school. Children and adults are confident to express their own beliefs and to share as well their doubts, questions and fears. Trusting and loving relationships allow people to be vulnerable and feel supported as they make sense of some of life's difficult challenges and disappointments. The rector and key church members contribute whole-heartedly to the children's experience of worship both in school and church. Adults speak of being emotionally and spiritually moved by shared acts of worship led by children such as their interpretation of the Easter story. The worship lead teacher inspires and ensures that worship is of the highest quality. Following recent developments, worship is a shared responsibility: planned for, monitored and developed by children, staff, the rector and church members. Therefore, worship is varied and constantly being tweaked to be relevant and age-appropriate. Collective worship ensures that children are very familiar with aspects of Anglican practice and belief such as the main festivals and saints' days, liturgical colours and liturgy. The children are less aware of the worship in other traditions of the Christian church because they do not experience worship led by those of faith other than Anglican. The children talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit because belief in God as the Trinity is emphasised through symbolism and in liturgy such as the grace.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Teaching in RE makes powerful links between children's own experiences, a profound understanding of the Christian faith and time to reflect on what that means for the way life is lived. As a result, children carefully consider the impact of the choices that they make in terms of helping others in school, in the community and globally. The specialist RE lead teacher selects excellent subject planning material and has introduced the 'Understanding Christianity' resource with great enthusiasm. She encourages staff to discuss, think and plan RE lessons carefully together and her enthusiasm is infectious. As a result staff are 'on fire' about teaching RE and this is evident in the extremely high standards of teaching and learning. The children in turn are enthusiastic about RE and their thinking is truly inspirational. A recent whole-school topic on the Kingdom of God is evidence of this. In class thoughts and feelings are shared in pairs, small groups or with the whole class so that everyone is fully involved and feels that their opinion matters. The embedded Christian values ensure that every opinion is respected and valued. Teachers provide appropriate levels of challenge and support arising from effective assessment. Secure in that knowledge, the children and staff share their personal experiences on a very emotional and spiritual level; they are secure enough to be vulnerable. This makes learning memorable and contributes powerfully to everyone's wellbeing. Staff are skilled in questioning and making powerful connections between ideas from worship and the core Christian values. Older pupils demonstrate an exceptionally broad and deep knowledge of Christian belief and practice and they discuss articulately and thoughtfully. Such philosophical enquiry transfers to high attainment in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to consider how people of faiths other than Christian live out their beliefs in relation to a theme such as charitable giving. A visit from an Islamic leader and Divali days are examples how the school supports the children's understanding of beliefs other than Christian. The children's understanding of other major world faiths is not enhanced by an RE curriculum which embeds visits to contrasting places of worship or by meeting those who follow these faiths in their lives. The lead RE teacher is supported by the governors' RE and collective worship group to monitor, evaluate and celebrate standards of teaching and learning. This ensures that RE is ever-improving, inspirational and highly valued within the school's curriculum.

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

The school's leaders are united in their commitment and devotion to discerning and living out a Christian vision for Condover and the local community. They are 'led by love'. This faith vision drives them to make every decision, from the highest strategic level to the consideration of the education of each child, with wisdom and prayerfully. There is an intent to imagine what Jesus would do in this place. The governing body and headteacher have been led by clear moral purpose to work closely with St Edward's Church of England Primary School. This is impacting positively on the spiritual, academic and social development of all pupils. By working together staff have the opportunity to flourish and a focussed and united governing body has been formed. The established RE and collective worship group of foundation governors, clergy and church members has embraced new members and is a spiritual power house for the school. This group of gifted and articulate Christians work with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the RE and worship lead teacher. They ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness is placed creatively into the school improvement plan and at the heart of all policy and practice. The statutory requirements for collective worship and RE are fully met. The headteacher leads with integrity and is consistent in her desire that every child reaches their God-given potential. There is a great sense of thankfulness for all that has been and an expectancy for all that is to come in terms of deepening and spreading the love, joy, peace, hope and friendship that are evident in the school. Parents and other members of the local community identify that the integrity of all relationships, behaviours and outcomes from pupils stem from its Christian values. Parents speak very highly of the school's concern and care for each child, and they feel welcome and valued. The powerful and trusting partnership between school, families, church and the local community is one in which children are nurtured to be resilient and empathetic individuals. The community in turn is eager to respond to local and global needs through fund-raising and practical care. School leaders are enthusiastic about evaluating and improving the school's worship and RE because they want it to be real and vibrant for the children. They listen and respond to the children's suggestions and ideas. School governors realise the importance of recruitment and staff development. They have built a dynamic staff team which is key to the high standards that are attained academically. The deputy headteacher plays a key role in promoting the Christian distinctiveness of the school which ensures consistency of daily Christian leadership. Staff and governors continue to develop in their capacity to lead a visionary church school through close links and training offered by the diocese. The Bishop Anthony Educational Trust is eager to promote and encourage Condover Church of England Primary School in its determination to let the light of Jesus shine through this school, into the local community, diocese and beyond.