

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Stanion Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Cardigan Road, Stanion, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 1BY	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Peterborough
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Date of inspection	2 February 2017
Date of last inspection	30 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary voluntary aided 122112
Headteacher	Wayne Jones
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598

School context

Stanion CE (VA) Primary is a popular small school with 105 pupils. Over 70% of pupils come from the nearby town of Corby. This is a significant change since the last inspection when the majority of pupils were local. Most pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils attracting government funding for disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average. The headteacher took up post in January 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stanion CE (A) Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The highly effective, deeply considerate leadership of the headteacher secures a Christian community based upon love and respect as well as mutual care and responsibility.
- The commitment of the headteacher, staff and governing body in developing the church school dimension is resulting in an ever improving school where Christian values influence positively.
- Each pupil is considered as a unique child of God resulting in a school where the wellbeing, health and the all-round development of all pupils is paramount. As a consequence, they flourish.

Areas to improve

- Ensure all staff and governors are trained to use the SIAMS school improvement framework and consider evaluations against the SIAMS framework at each full governors' meeting so that the framework is used rigorously as a self-evaluation and school improvement tool.
- Develop a clear definition of spirituality that enables the progressive spiritual development of pupils. This should demonstrate a Stanion approach to education that includes the school's Christian aims, values and mindful learning behaviours.
- Deepen pupils' learning in religious education (RE), for example, by using the Understanding Christianity resource and applying similar rigour to the other faith traditions studied.

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

Stanion CE (VA) Primary is an effective self-improving church school. At the heart of its success is its clear assertion that each pupil is a child of God. Further, it believes that as a Christian community the whole school is called to love the Lord God with heart, mind and soul. These statements of purpose along with the school's Christian values are the foundation for the school's emerging theological way of working. Stanion CE (VA) Primary is increasingly effective as a Christian community because it is based upon a wide range of Christian values, in particular love and respect. These values shape the positive relationships at the school. They influence the school's stated drive to develop the whole child. The headteacher models these Christian values both with passion and humility. This results in a Christian community that is caring and positive and where children and staff are able to flourish. Behaviour and relationships at the school are generally strong. Some pupils are starting to make the connection between their behaviour choices and the Christian values and tradition. For example, one child said, 'We can still care for a person even if we don't like them too much if we follow Jesus' example'. A further illustration of the impact of the Christian values upon pupils' behaviour is their clear respect for and keenness to learn more about diverse faiths. Respect, love and empathy are promoted through charitable endeavours such as support for the Corby foodbank. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good due to the school's ethos, its wide curricular and extra-curricular activities, for example, Spanish and musical provision, through RE and through collective worship. However, despite much effective provision, the school has not yet developed a clear understanding of spiritual development. Further, it does not have a progressive framework to develop pupils spiritually or to prosper Christian spirituality and mindful learning behaviours through its values in a joined up way. Sometimes the broadness of the provision limits clarity and depth. These are key reasons the school is not yet outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive character. Standards at the school continue to be maintained because teaching is good. Arising from the school's Christian care and commitment to developing each child's God-given talents, standards since the last inspection have been at least in line with national expectations by the end of key stage 2. However, some more able pupils have not always achieved their targets. RE contributes well to the distinctiveness of this church school through developing respect and an awareness of multicultural issues, for example by participating in the Bedford multi-faith day and links with a school in the Gambia. Through its Christian approach to attendance and exclusion, attendance is above the national average. This shows also that pupils enjoy their school and are rightly proud of it. The school demonstrates that it is proud of its Christian ethos through celebrating this clearly in the environment, documentation and the school website.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils and staff value collective worship as a time to reflect and pause and to be together in the presence of God. One child said joyfully, 'We always celebrate Jesus in collective worship.' These positive experiences support pupils' growing biblical knowledge and awareness of Jesus and the Trinity, for example, in the story of the wise man building his house upon a rock and the accounts of Pentecost. However, there is little focus on God as creator or the environmental implications of this image of God. Pupils have increasing opportunity to lead collective worship which is developing their appreciation of its purpose. However, the range and creativity of these opportunities is not as broad as it might be. Until recently the leader for collective worship was the headteacher who now supports the new lead effectively. They ensure planning is effective and engage others in the process including the church council of children. Planning develops a range of Christian values through the carefully chosen themes such as Epiphany in which trust was explored. The collective worship leader and governors monitor provision and ensure collective worship continues to improve. The headteacher has an accurate picture of the impact of collective worship. However, the use of the school improvement framework (SIAMS) to make objective evaluations against a standard by staff and governors is at an early stage. This means development is insufficiently focussed against expectations. This is a key reason why collective worship is not yet outstanding. Prayer has been a developmental focus over the last year and is progressing well. As a result, the profile of prayer has been raised significantly and is valued by the children. The prayer stones in the library prayer space are particularly valued by the children because they have opportunity to engage with prayer physically and for their own intentions. For example, children's prayers include one for a grandfather who was ill and another for the children suffering in Aleppo. Pupils and adults value prayer as a spiritual encounter. They are supported and encouraged by classroom prayer stations and the external prayer flags. Children have some awareness of the diversity of Christianity but this is not well developed in provision. Pupils are developing a wider appreciation of worship as a human response to God through the school's links with the local Methodist community and local Sikh representatives, for example. Anglican practice is developing through positive links with St Peter's parish church and its priest and reader. However, some of the local Anglican forms and practices are not utilised fully. The school is pro-active in the use of the church for celebrating key Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Candlemas. This is enabling pupils, parents and staff to gain a sense of the seasons of the Christian year. Collective worship is seen as central to the school's focus on developing the whole child as a child of God. Through these positive experiences in collective worship, children and staff of all faiths and none are able to grow spirituality.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

The effectiveness of RE is good. This is because children have positive attitudes towards RE arising from good teaching that inspires interest. Pupils develop skills in RE effectively as well as gain multicultural awareness through the topics studied. Examples include Year 3/4 comparing and contrasting humanist and Christian perspectives and Year 5/6 evaluating the impact of faith communities on the localities of Stanion and Corby. Children have a broad awareness of Christianity and other faiths such as Judaism and Sikhism. The school utilises the Northamptonshire RE syllabus to develop its RE programme and define expected standards and progress. In combination with the whole school assessment system, this guidance shows that pupils make expected progress from their starting points and attain good standards. The syllabus enables teachers to nuance lessons to differing pupil needs and to develop pupils' skills in RE. However, RE is not yet outstanding because pupils do not develop sufficient depth in their understanding of faith traditions. This is because opportunities to deepen their learning through creative learning tasks that challenges them to extend their religious knowledge are too few. RE has a high profile in the school and is part of the non-negotiable expectations for display in each class. This demonstrates to all the centrality of RE within the church school ethos. RE is effective in promoting the Christian values of the school through application to the topic. Examples of this include the Year 2 study of Yom Kippur resulting in a consideration of forgiveness and the foundation stage work on the pearl of great price story culminating in an exploration of care and love and what makes things precious. RE is monitored by conscientious governors giving them a first-hand view of RE. However, the use of the SIAMS framework to benchmark their evaluations is not yet established. This means governors miss opportunities to develop RE strategically. The enthusiastic RE subject leader is new in role and communicates her commitment and vision well to all staff inspiring them further.

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

The strong, caring and humble leadership of the headteacher ensures that the school is making continuous progress. He leads and develops its distinctive Christian character through articulating its Christian values in the day-to-day life of the school. His drive and compassionate commitment are commendable and result in positive relations at many levels despite significant changes. Leadership and management are good because the headteacher is successful in leading the whole school community in creating a Christian ethos that has meaning and purpose for everyone. School leaders and governors secure the wellbeing of all school members. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because developments are not yet fully embedded or joined up as a Stanion approach. Furthermore, the school's understanding of spiritual development is not sufficiently articulated in a progressive framework of entitlement that prospers its Christian values and its mindful learning behaviours approach. At the heart of school improvement is the school's understanding of each child as a child of God. This always informs decision making and gives the whole school a passion to ever-improve for the sake of the children, for example, in developing robust interventions to stretch higher attainers during this academic year. The leadership is focussed on driving up standards of learning which are generally good, with the vast majority of pupils progressing well. The headteacher, deputy and chair of governors ensure self-evaluation is accurate. However, other staff and governors are not yet sufficiently trained in utilising the SIAMS school improvement framework to challenge the school to improve still further. Leaders have responded appropriately to the development points of the last inspection. The school ensures that the new leader for RE and collective worship is well supported for example through diocesan training on the Understanding Christianity resource. Leaders ensure that statutory requirements are met for RE and collective worship. The school works hard to develop its staff as leaders and thereby contributes effectively to succession planning for this church school as well as the wider family of church schools. The headteacher and school are very open and transparent in approach leading to effective relations with parents, locality, St Peter's Church, the diocese and other church schools. This secures a lot of good will and commitment towards this church school helping it to be an effective part of the mission of the Diocese of Peterborough.

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