

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bentley Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Bentley, Farnham, Surrey GU10 5JP	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Winchester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hampshire
Date of inspection	21 February 2018
Date of last inspection	14 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary VC 116279
Headteacher	Katy Pinchess
Inspector's name and number	Sally Jenkins 913

School context

Bentley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is an average size primary school with pupils attending from within the village as well as from beyond the catchment area. The majority of pupils are from professional and middle class backgrounds. The headteacher has been in post since September 2013. The school had a building project, completed in the summer of 2017, which has created a new reception classroom and a nurture room. The school are now able to offer wraparound care with a breakfast club and after school care. The number of pupils with learning needs and/or disabilities is below average as is the number entitled to receive pupil premium funding. Pupils' attendance is above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bentley CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Strong leadership from the headteacher, together with the staff and governors, ensures that all pupils are cared for as individuals within a Christian environment.
- Pupils support each other and have a strong interest in helping charities both nationally and internationally.
- Most pupils achieve at or above the national average by the time they leave the school, ensuring they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all stakeholders fully understand and can articulate the Christian basis of the school's values and express this within all aspects of worship, clearly linking them to the Bible.
- Further develop pupils' understanding and use of prayer, including a greater awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Ensure spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is made more explicit throughout the curriculum at a pupil level and that its impact is tracked by staff and governors.

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

Bentley Church of England Primary School is a good school where staff, led by a dedicated headteacher, and governors work together, as a Christian community, for the benefit of every pupil. They have worked tirelessly in improving the school's distinctive Christian character whilst maintaining high pupil achievement and a broad and rich curriculum. Since the last inspection three Christian values, faith, love and courage, have been established at the heart of the school and these are clearly expressed by all members of the community. They are displayed within each classroom and around the school. There is some confusion amongst the pupils about the school values and Christian values, with them seeing these as separate. Pupils are able to discuss the values and the impact on their own lives, and those of others, but find it more difficult to link them to Biblical teaching. The vision statement, 'Together we're Aiming High', can be explained by pupils, staff, governors and parents and all are clearly proud of their school and the importance of each person achieving their best in all areas of their lives. A year 2 pupil commented that, "As a whole school we are trying to be the best we can be in every way, together, every day." Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school, where they feel loved, cared for and safe. They say that there is always someone they can talk to and that they are taught to have the courage to make mistakes and to support each other. Attendance is a high priority and the adults in school support pupils and their families when necessary to ensure everyone is able to be at school and learning. Following training there is now a clearer definition of spirituality amongst the staff. There are opportunities within the curriculum for spiritual development although the school realise that this, along with more explicit occasions for developing spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, needs to be considered further. The school are naming this year as International Year and pupils are excited to study the world maps hung around the school and to discuss the differences and similarities of culture and religion of various countries. Pupils are aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural faith. Pupils from as young as year 1 show some understanding that people may follow different religions or no religion at all. By the time pupils reach year 5 they show a good knowledge of many occasions within the life of Jesus as well as knowing many of the stories found within the Bible. The school is welcoming more families who have English as an additional language and they are praised by these families for the way in which the children are supported to settle quickly into school, are nurtured and cared for. Religious Education lessons are engaging for pupils and contribute well to the school's Christian character. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and on the playground is very good. Pupils show a high level of politeness and support for each other. Adults refer to the school's Christian values when dealing with any problems.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is seen as important to all members of the school community. Pupils have an understanding that it is a time for thinking and learning about God, Jesus and the Bible and that it often links to Christian values. They particularly enjoy the times when they come together as a whole school. They speak with enthusiasm about worship led by the vicar and worship which involves whole classes taking the lead. Each class has two worship leaders who help with class worship in the classroom and who also lead the lunchtime prayer. Within worship pupils are engaged and willingly participate. They are able to refer to and reflect upon aspects of worship which helps them in their attitudes and behaviour both at school and at home. Parents comment on their children discussing aspects of worship at home and sometimes praying for people in the community or those from other countries. Each classroom has a prayer/reflection area. Pupils frequently use the three coloured beads that can be found at these areas to help them pray; each colour represents a different type of prayer - praise, help, forgiveness. A prayer tree in the centre of the school is used by pupils to hang short prayers they have written, or relevant pictures they have drawn, for specific times during the Christian year. During collective worship pupils lead the prayers, sometimes writing their own. It is clear that pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of the purpose of prayer. They are also aware of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils learn a range of traditional hymns and worship songs as well as listening to music as they enter and leave collective worship. Pupils are able to discuss the school's core values and links to their own lives but have more difficulty in linking them to Bible stories they have learnt. However, they are able to speak enthusiastically about many stories from the Bible. The collective worship leader plans a programme for the year and supports all teachers in leading worship within their classroom. As well as the senior leadership team and the local vicar leading whole school collective worship, guests, including members of a local Christian group, are occasionally invited into school to lead them. The local church is used on occasions throughout the year and the older pupils are sometimes taken to other local churches to join pupils from other schools. The headteacher, the collective worship leader and governors undertake monitoring of worship, the outcome of which often informs future plans.

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

The senior leadership team and the governors have a thorough understanding of the school's performance and work together to ensure that the pupils are receiving a good education and are making good progress. They are able to articulate the school's vision and are continually developing the school's Christian distinctiveness. During meetings governors clearly hold the school to account and challenge and support the senior leadership team. Governors are active in monitoring and evaluating RE and collective worship as well as holding pupil conferences to establish the impact of these on the lives of the pupils. The leadership and management of the school are continually working to improve the school even further and they are rightly proud of all they have achieved in the last few years. The current headteacher has given a strong lead in strengthening the school's Christian character and is well supported by the leadership team, other staff and governors. The impact of the values, chosen by all stakeholders, can be clearly described by all leaders. It is evident in the behaviour and attitude of pupils who treat all around them with care and respect. Parents speak passionately about the school and the impact it has on the lives of the children and the wider family. They appreciate the school's Christian distinctiveness and the support and care their children receive alongside the academic achievements. Leaders strongly believe that each child should have the opportunity to take part in all school activities and therefore go 'the extra mile' to ensure this happens. Parents support the school by regularly helping out in the classrooms, assisting with visits or seasonal activities or attending school events and school services in church. The vicar leads weekly acts of worship in school as well as welcoming the school to the local church. He has helped out during RE lessons and is clearly an important figure within the school. He successfully links the wider community and the school for the benefit of all. The pupils' school council take their role of deciding which charities to support very seriously. Once decided upon they work hard to ensure that money is raised and that everyone is aware of the reasons why the charity needs their support. Developing future leaders is regularly reviewed by senior leaders and governors. The RE leader is undertaking a leadership course and senior leaders and governors attend diocesan training. Teachers receive training on teaching RE and leading collective worship. RE clearly has a high profile within the school and improvements to the subject during the last few years are clear. The arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report February 2018 Bentley Church of England VC Primary School, Farnham GU10 5JP