

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Arnesby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mill Hill Road
Arnesby
Leicester
LE8 3WG

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Leicestershire
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	15 November 2016
Date of last inspection	28 March 2014
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 120109
Headteacher	Chris Dorian-Hurst
Inspector's name and number	Carol Price 869

School context

This is a much smaller than average school set in a rural village location. There are currently 64 pupils on roll. 69% of families are from out of catchment. The vast majority of pupils are White British heritage. However, 3% of pupils are from an ethnic minority background. The percentage of pupils with special education needs or who receive pupil premium funding is lower than the national average. The current head has been in post for five years and the school now has a stable staffing structure after a period of instability.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Arnesby as a Church of England school are good

- Very good relationships between all members of the school community, underpinned by distinctively Christian values, provide a nurturing and inclusive ethos for the well-being of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes, shaped by Christian values are a strength.
- Collective worship is a central part of school life and is instrumental in growing the Christian character of the school.
- The various partnerships the school has forged, especially with local clergy and church members, are highly productive and mutually beneficial.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the school's Christian values are made explicit so that they can be clearly articulated by all pupils.
- Make the school's Christian values explicit in written documents and on the school's website in order to communicate more clearly with the wider community.
- Strengthen the role of governors in the self-evaluation process so that they have a direct impact on strategic planning and the improvement of Arnesby as a church school.

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

From the cross design within the fence at the main gate to the many Christian symbols around the school it is clear to see that Arnesby is a church school. Love and care shine through at this warm, welcoming school where pastoral care is excellent and the needs of children are put first. Pupils and adults report that they feel valued and supported by the strong family ethos of the school. Parents say that they 'feel lucky to have found the school' and talk about how staff support and nurture their children as individuals. This level of care and support ensures that there is good provision for learners of all abilities and backgrounds. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their starting points, standards are consistently good and attendance is well above average. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to increase the understanding of Christian values across the school community and these now shape the work of the school. The school uses 'Roots and Shoots', a two year rolling programme, to develop 12 Christian values. However, in addition to this the school also develop attributes found within St. Paul's 'Fruits of the Spirit'. These are all represented in a beautiful stained glass window which pupils helped to design. Christian values are also displayed around school and clear links are made to daily life. For example, a display celebrating a chess tournament involving children of different cultural backgrounds makes an explicit link to the Christian value of respect. As a result, pupils, staff and parents know about the importance of Christian values within school and most pupils recognise that these are Christian in nature because they 'come from the Bible'. Learners are also able to describe the way that Christian values affect their decisions, particularly in building and maintaining relationships and showing respect to others. For instance, pupils talk about how the story of the Widow's Mite encourages them to be generous to others. As a consequence, learners behave very well, they demonstrate a high level of care and support for each other and are keen to help others less fortunate. However, the extensive range of values being developed in school is confusing to some pupils who are unsure if there is a difference between the school's Christian values and the Fruits of the Spirit. Although Christian values play a significant role in the life of the school this is not reflected in the school's documentation or on the website. Pupils benefit from opportunities to explore spirituality both within and beyond the curriculum and pupils value their time to use the Peace Garden or indoor class reflection areas. Learners enjoy and are interested in religious education (RE); they see it as important because 'it's learning how to live your life'. As a result, RE supports children very effectively to explore spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) issues. Children's cultural awareness and understanding is developing well and children readily respect the diversity and difference within other faith communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship takes place in the village hall and it is a central part of the school day. All members of the school community recognise the importance of worship. Staff and pupils talk about opportunities for spiritual development and a time to think, and describe how special services such as the one commemorating the 150th anniversary of the school give them a 'warm glow'. Pupils speak positively about opportunities for them to learn about 'things that help us get along with each other' and they recognise how learning about Bible stories in worship 'teaches us to be honest and truthful'. As a result, collective worship has an impact on the positive attitudes and relationships that can be seen throughout the school. Worship is planned using resources from 'Roots and Fruits' and consequently it has a strong focus on Christianity. Themes provide time for pupils to explore the Christian basis of the school's values and are linked to biblical materials, major festivals and seasons of the church year. Hence, pupils are acquiring a good knowledge of a range of Bible stories and are developing their understanding of different Christian traditions. Learners can also make some links between the teachings of Jesus and the school's values and their own lives, for example, they are able to explain how the story of the Good Samaritan helps them to be friendly to everyone whatever their background or ability. Worship is led by a range of leaders including staff, pupils, local clergy and volunteers from the local church's Open the Book team. Pupils talk about how they enjoy worship because they are actively engaged by interesting activities and questions that relate to their own lives. The children say that they particularly enjoy worship led by the Baptist Minister, 'he's fun, interesting and makes us laugh'. Acting with the Open the Book team is also highly popular and these activities help to develop the children's understanding of Jesus Christ. Pupils are now taking an increasing role in organising worship and they regularly take on the responsibility to deliver themes from 'Roots and Fruits', presenting plays is a firm favourite. Parents report that worship often stimulates discussions and questions at home. The children are becoming aware of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the lighting of three candles at the start of worship and some, particularly the oldest pupils, are able to talk with some understanding about the Trinitarian nature of God. All but the very youngest pupils can recite the Lord's Prayer and all pupils value the daily prayers said in school. Learners appreciate the time to reflect and pray and talk enthusiastically about writing prayers to hang in the outside den. Reflection spaces in each classroom are designed to allow children to pause, reflect and think about 'big questions' and pupils report that they help them at difficult times in their lives. Collective worship is monitored both formally and informally by staff and governors. However, monitoring and evaluation is not yet rigorously measuring the impact of worship on staff and pupils, nor is it using the evaluation schedule to identify where further improvements could be made.

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

The headteacher demonstrates a clear Christian vision and solid commitment to the school's church status. This is shared by staff who work closely with the head in this small school. The simple Christian vision of 'Where every child shines' is written on a cross formed by a sun motif and it provides a clear and uncompromising direction for the school. It determines the shape of the curriculum and the depth of pastoral care, both of which are firmly focused on the very specific needs of individual learners. Leaders are aware of the importance of the Christian values of a church school and can clearly describe the impact they make on the achievement and the excellent behaviour of the children. The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness and as a result leaders have successfully improved the Christian character of Arnesby as a church school. This can be clearly seen in the improvement of the school environment and the creative provision and variety of opportunities for reflection and spiritual development. Consequently, all areas identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. Professional development opportunities are offered to staff to develop their roles as leaders in a church school. Good partnership exists between the school and other local church schools and this is beneficial in sharing training and resources. The RE leader is well informed on current developments, she is fully supported in school and staff value her guidance. She has a clear vision and plan for the development of RE and is successfully implementing the use of technology to record work. Collective worship is well led by the headteacher and statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. There are strong links with parents, the church and the local community which have a clear benefit to pupils. Parents are proud of the school and its impact on the attitudes and values of the pupils. They feel welcomed and hold the school and staff in high regard, valuing the fact that staff are approachable and always willing to help. Partnerships with the churches of St Peter's and St Mary Magdalene, as well as Arnesby Baptist Chapel, provide a strong link with the community and strengthen the school's distinctive Christian character. The incumbent and local Baptist minister make a significant contribution to the life of the school, helping to plan and lead worship and providing spiritual support to staff. Governors visit regularly and know the school well. Since the previous inspection the governors have developed systems to monitor and evaluate the school both formally and informally. However, although this has supported the improvements made by the school over the last two years, it is not yet directly influencing the strategic planning and further development of Arnesby as a church school.