

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

<b>Ewelme Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	
Burrows Hill, Ewelme, Oxfordshire, OX10 6HU	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Oxfordshire</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Oxford
Date/s of inspection	26 September 2017
Date of last inspection	21 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	123197 Voluntary Aided Primary
Headteacher	Margery Slatter
Inspector's name and number	Olwyn Davison-Oakley NS822

### School context

Ewelme CE Primary School is a small rural school based in unique fifteenth and nineteenth century buildings including some of the alms-houses. It serves the local community and its surrounding area. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average but the number of pupils with special educational needs is higher. Pupils are mainly White British. The school has over 20% mobility because of the proximity to RAF Benson. The school enjoys a unique relationship with the clergy of the parish church.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ewelme as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- All members of the school community articulate and model Christian values that positively contribute to pupil's well-being and their academic and personal development.
- Collective worship and its Biblical content, recognised as an important part of school life and valued by all, has a significant impact on the behaviour of pupils and relationships in the school.
- The planned links between Religious Education (RE) and collective worship reinforce Christian values and lead to a shared awareness of the distinctive Christian character of the school and develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- The partnership with the St Mary's Church and the Priest-in-Charge ensures that the Distinctive Christian character of the school is promoted and that pupils, families and staff are supported pastorally.

### Areas to improve

- Ensure that all leaders in the school, especially the governors and local clergy challenge the headteacher through involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian character, collective worship and RE, leading directly to effective strategies for improvement.
- Develop pupils' appreciation of, and respect for, diversity and difference within the church and other faiths through a greater understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Improve pupils' personal spirituality through the provision of an area for personal reflection and prayer and arrange additional opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship.

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

Ewelme School is a welcoming community with a strong Christian ethos firmly at its heart. The commitment to living Christian values in all aspects of school life directly contributes to an environment where every pupil is encouraged to develop in terms of academic achievement and personal well-being. All members of the school are nurtured regardless of ability or faith. Pupils, staff and governors uphold and articulate the distinctive Christian character of the school and recognise the significant impact that this has on the daily lives and achievements of learners. Parents affirm this, readily quoting Christian values embraced by the school. Staff work hard to develop pupils academically, spiritually, socially and culturally within a Christian framework, placing inclusion as a high priority. Pupils behave impeccably and respectful relationships are clearly evident in the school as an unequivocal consequence of deeply rooted Christian principles. Pupils talk about the importance of Christian values and plainly link the messages from the Bible to the shaping of their relationships and behaviour in the school. One pupil stated that 'Christian values make the world a better place'. They talked with enjoyment about being part of Ewelme and participating in all of the activities on offer to them. They like learning and speak eloquently and with obvious interest about what they have learned in RE and collective worship. The RE curriculum, teacher knowledge and the big questions asked in many RE lessons enhance the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of learners and enrich the distinctive Christian character of the school. This is supported wherever possible with planned visits and visitors to the school. Pupils talk with confidence about other faiths, and demonstrate respect for the beliefs of others. School visits and visitors improve pupils' understanding of diversity, but the school is very aware that additional experiences of other faiths would improve their perception further. Pupils talk with understanding about the help that some pupils need and have confidence that staff can help them resolve any problems that they encounter. As a result, pupils like attending Ewelme and academic results and attendance figures are high. Pupils are very aware of the special relationship that exists with St Mary's Church but are less conversant about other churches or that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. They are proud that they are able to help others less fortunate than themselves and spoke about their fundraising for many charities, showing their delight in service to others. Evidence of SMSC development is throughout the school. Pupils are excited that their work is celebrated and that their success in school, both academic and in terms of upholding the Christian values, is recognised in celebration assemblies. The school curriculum has been developed to provide opportunities for pupils to explore spirituality through discussion of 'big questions' Pupils speak with excitement when explaining that discussion in RE encourages them to think about the opinions of others and how this makes a difference to their own opinions. Pupils would like to create an area where they could go for personal reflection in order to further develop their own spiritual journey.

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

Collective worship in Ewelme is inclusive and contributes unquestionably to the distinctive Christian ethos of the school through a well-defined programme of Bible stories which relate to life today. One pupil declared that 'collective worship makes Ewelme' and this was echoed consistently by others. Messages from worship link directly to work in lessons, outstanding behaviour and respectful relationships within the school. It nurtures and develops pupils' knowledge, well-being, and spiritual growth. Everyone in the school community confirms the importance placed on collective worship and its contribution to pupils' understanding of how to live Christian values. Pupils talk with confidence about this and know that their own lives are shaped by this, explaining how Bible stories illustrate ways in which Christians should behave. The school and church occupy the same buildings and this leads to a unique relationship with Reverend Jonathan Meyer and St Mary's Church which ensures that worship is firmly embedded in Anglican tradition and pupils are eloquent in their explanation of the importance of Jesus Christ to Christians. They describe with confidence the importance of foci such as the cross and the candle in worship and are able to discuss impressively the meaning of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, explaining that 'He is three in one'. They refer to the use of a candle as a representation of Jesus, the light of the world and that we 'should keep a candle burning in our hearts'. Pupils participate in collective worship with enjoyment and reverence, and respond appropriately in discussion, reflection, prayers and singing. In weekly worship at the church their enthusiastic contribution to worship is through planned and spontaneous prayers and the lighting of candles at the beginning and end of worship. In class worship and at major church festivals they also contribute through drama and singing. This makes a significant contribution to the spirituality in worship. Opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship themselves would further enhance the impact on pupils' spirituality. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and reflection in worship and are beginning to realise the importance of this in their own personal spiritual

journey. They are familiar with the Lord's Prayer and Anglican liturgy and traditional responses. In discussion pupils spoke of their desire to have an area in school where they can be quiet and reflect on their own experiences. Worship is planned collaboratively and the local Priest-in Charge provides guidance in this, ensuring that the pupils experience rich, and thought provoking experiences every day from a range of leaders. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is undertaken through observation and questionnaires but is sporadic and not yet formalised into an agreed cycle of practice. Parents recognise the strength of the relationship with the local church and Priest-in Charge, valuing the noteworthy benefit that this brings to the lives of their children and to the school's standing in the local community. Services at Christian festivals are well attended by parents of the school and members of the local community.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

RE is a high priority in the school and is undoubtedly enjoyed by pupils, particularly when they are involved in activities which require discussion. The rich curriculum, in which all pupils are supported and challenged appropriately, is taken from the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus and supplemented with additional resources. It is planned collaboratively by the staff. The curriculum and effective teaching contributes well to pupils' SMSC development and to the understanding of Christian distinctiveness and values that are prevalent in the school. Organised opportunities for discussion and reflection are closely linked to the teaching in collective worship. This leads to all pupils attaining good standards and progress in RE, developing an understanding of Christianity and a broad range of religious beliefs. This is evidenced in pupils' work in books where pupil/teacher dialogue is beginning to have a greater impact on pupils' learning. In RE lessons pupils are encouraged to develop their skills of enquiry; they regard it as a time in which they experience a 'getting together of ideas' and the chance to explore their own thoughts. Pupils participate well in RE, respectfully listening to others and recognising that everyone has different opinions. Teaching in RE provides a solid understanding of a broad range of faiths. This underpins a respect for everyone's views and beliefs. Visits to a range of places of worship reinforce this. Displays to support and celebrate children's learning are evident in all areas of the school. Monitoring and evaluation of this subject is in its infancy and needs to be firmly embedded within the school's routine in order to ensure that RE maintains and builds on its current standing in the school, identifying areas of strength and those that require further development. The profile of RE is very high and pupils' progress in this subject is excellent.

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

All leaders in Ewelme consistently articulate the importance of Christian distinctiveness and can confidently explain how it forms the foundation for life in the school. The promotion of this now needs to be extended formally into documentation from the school, especially from meetings where the distinctive Christian character of the school is discussed. Pupils are nurtured in order to allow them to develop into confident and responsible individuals who are well-prepared for their future lives through the underlying school vision in which they aim to develop 'happy, caring, confident, enquiring individuals who are excited by learning and well-prepared for the future'. All governors and pupils have been involved in the development of the Christian vision and review it regularly, however the headteacher is aware that parents have not been involved recently in this process. The headteacher is totally committed to promoting Christian values and enhancing the well-being and achievement of everyone in the school community, and the importance of this is accepted by all, as evidenced by the school's dedication to its Christian vision. Staff and governors unfailingly attribute the outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning of pupils to this adherence to Christian values. The governors have undertaken relevant training to help them to appreciate the importance of promoting the distinctive Christian ethos of the school. They understand that the SMSC of learners is enhanced by a curriculum that is informed by a distinctive Christian vision and is conscious of the strength of the distinctive Christian character of the school as well as the priority placed on collective worship and RE. However, they are also fully aware of their need to be more involved in the monitoring and evaluation through challenge of the headteacher, in order to maintain or improve the impact derived from these areas. Despite budgetary constraints, the RE and collective worship co-ordinator has been given resources and training in order to bring about improvements, and information from training in Understanding Christianity is shared with all staff resulting in good or outstanding practice. Governors

recognise the importance of developing school leaders. The headteacher gives careful and valuable induction to new members of staff who quickly feel welcome and part of Ewelme's family. Staff readily affirm the importance of upholding the school's Christian ethos so that positive relationships in the school are developed and how quickly they feel able to contribute to this. They are confident that their input is valued. Parents feel proud that their children attend Ewelme. They feel privileged that their children are part of a Christian community that has such a long history attached to it and which nurtures their children so carefully. They speak with pride about their children's involvement in activities in the church and the village and are pleased with the positive impact that the school's values have on their children. They talk about the kindness that is consistently evident in the school and how their children talk about Christian stories and beliefs at home. Parents feel that they have value in the school and are pleased to be able to contribute. They are happy that they are able to approach the headteacher and staff easily, certain that they will be listened to and supported. A mutually supportive relationship with the Priest-in-Charge of St Mary's Church has a visible impact on the Christian character of the school. It enhances the pupils' knowledge of the church at a local level, although development of pupils' knowledge of the church at a national and global level needs further consideration. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.

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