

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sir Robert Geffery's Church of England Primary Academy

School Road, Landrake, Saltash, Cornwall. PL12 5EA

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Truro
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	August 2011
Date of inspection	25 September 2017
Date of last inspection	13 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 137257
Headteacher	Julie Curtis
Inspector's name and number	Revd David Hatrey 844

School context

Sir Robert Geffery's is an average-sized primary school with 221 children. It became an academy in 2011. The majority of children are of a White British heritage. The number of children who are entitled to pupil premium support is below national averages whilst the number of children who have special educational needs is at least in-line with national averages. The school was formed by the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers in 1704 and they are responsible for appointing foundation governors.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sir Robert Geffery's Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Distinctive Christian values permeate the life of the school and are particularly evident in the way children live these out in daily life and articulate the significant difference they make to their lives and achievements.
- An exciting and innovative approach to the teaching of religious education (RE) is well established across the school. This is highly effective in engaging children and enables them to make excellent progress.
- The vision of the headteacher is passionate and drives the development of a church school maintaining rich relationships with parents and the community and listening attentively to children's views.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the new assessment system in RE is swiftly made available for all teachers to use so that their assessment of pupils' achievement can be even more precise.
- Strengthen the current systems for governors' monitoring of the school's Christian character by ensuring that each visit is sharply focussed upon a particular aspect of the school improvement plan.

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

The Christian values of Sir Robert Geffery's school are: love, peace, service, thankfulness, creation, forgiveness, friendship, trust and hope. The way Christian values permeate life of the school is outstanding. Children not only know these values but live them. This is particularly seen in the remarkable way children support one another. Staff provide excellent role models in the rich relationships they create both with children and their families. The leadership proclaims that each child is special to God and they go beyond expectations to meet their needs. Children develop excellent relationships with one another. Trust is a theme children talk about, they work collaboratively, valuing the opinions of others and share in each other's celebrations. Christian values are closely linked to building learning power strategies which promote good attitudes to learning. Children talk confidently about how they use values in their learning acknowledging their contribution. For example, children say they experience friendship where they collaborate and learn from one another, which creates a rich environment for learning. The school's focus on excellent teaching has ensured that standards across the school are at least in line with national averages and frequently better, with a number of strengths evident. The provision for disadvantaged children is clearly effective enabling them to achieve similar progress to their peers. Children develop a positive image of themselves as learners through the number of rewards they receive which celebrate their efforts and achievements; this is another strength of the school. Pupils and staff identify children spontaneously demonstrating Christian values for an award, which reinforces the importance of values and how they contribute to daily life. Children have a deep distinctive understanding of Christian values and relate these to the ten special Bible stories which underpin the school's life. They talk confidently about their meaning and share numerous examples of where they have used them and the difference this makes. This is further reinforced by teaching in RE which provides opportunities to explore these in greater depth. Rich and thoughtful links are established between spirituality and other areas of school life. Children regularly complete a reflection on their learning recognising what they have learned. There are planned opportunities for spirituality, such as in the school farm, where children experience first hand the new birth of lambs or chickens. These wonder moments prompt deeper questions and reflections, such as on the beauty and pattern of creation. Dedicated time on residential and visits of various types, including to places of worship, provides some high quality experiences, whereby children are able to make connections in their thinking and ideas. Regular visits from leaders of other faiths offer more experiences of other world faiths and promote deeper questions. Interactive displays keep these ideas fresh, enabling children to make comparisons with their own beliefs, helping them to explain them. Children show a high degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own. Hillside school in Uganda is the school's link with another Christian community. Visiting staff show how cultures vary as well as how children show their faith in different ways, so children are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural faith. Many children take a keen interest in this which leads to fund-raising activities.

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

Collective worship is outstanding because of the high level of engagement children have and the clear messages shared based upon the school's ten key Bible stories which underpin the Christian vision. A real strength is the way children plan and lead worship, through lively action songs and drama. Quality visual resources ensure that messages are related to everyday life so that children perceive their relevance. The skilful use of visual resources enable children to develop a detailed understanding of Bible stories. Children are confident to explain how these stories help them to understand the school's Christian values and how they challenge and inform their actions and choices. They talk about how Jesus models these values in His own life, recognising that it is not always easy to do. The school regularly engages with children to determine their opinions of collective worship and how this can be further developed. This has led to a number of initiatives. One of the most significant is the introduction of pupil worship leaders; feedback from other children indicates that they readily recall these acts of worship and their significance, which is linked to the theme of the week. They are coordinating many of the festivals considering what messages to develop. New resources and worship songs have been introduced, recommended by the children. Acting on children's suggestions, leaders have introduced opportunities to pray spontaneously at the end of worship in response to the message developed. In these prayer times children are confident to share ideas using language and ideas which show a depth of feeling and concern for others. Prayer is well taught across the school and there are opportunities to use the chapel and outside spaces. Children use different types of prayer to reflect their needs, often in response to national incidents, as well as appreciating that they can use these for themselves. Planning for worship has been refined so that different aspects of each Christian value are developed, which extends children's understanding. Children have requested more visitors who bring a range of different approaches which are highly valued. 'Open the Book' has been introduced with significant numbers of children joining the lunch time drama rehearsal before leading this the next day. Governors are frequent visitors to worship and evaluate the impact

through discussions with children with their suggestions leading to further actions, such as introducing 'Open the Book' worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education is outstanding because of the exciting and innovative approach it continues to develop which engages children in their learning. This is having an outstanding impact, seen in the progress and standards achieved in addition to the quality of teaching and learning. The school's approach has received national recognition, when in 2014 it won the Times Educational Supplement award for innovative teaching in RE and the difference it makes to learning. Data and a scrutiny of work show that by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is at least in line or above national expectations, whilst by the time children leave attainment is frequently above expectations, with significant numbers achieving the higher levels. This compares very well with other core subjects. The school's approach encourages children to explore different religions through four 'lenses'. For example; children were asked to put themselves into Joshua's shoes as he took Jericho, considering what this event meant for him, how he responded and what we learn from him. Children are actively engaged in learning through drama, collaborating with others and recording ideas in different ways. This enables children to make effective links with their Christian values exploring these in relation to biblical contexts. It is evident from discussions with children that they make connections between these ideas, perceiving the relevance of the subject for their daily lives. A number of children highlighted the quality of debates, and the questions this generated, where higher order thinking skills are used. Children consider big questions of life and meaning which shape their beliefs and opinions. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent, delivered enthusiastically by staff who effectively pass on their enthusiasm. Effective lesson observations are undertaken by the headteacher, who is the subject leader, who shares good practice enabling staff to continue to refine their ideas. These and a work scrutiny accurately inform the development plan. The headteacher and coordinator have ensured that RE has a high profile. Marking is a strong feature where staff pose additional questions to each child's ideas requiring them to think more deeply when responding in writing. At present the school is trialling a new assessment strategy to go alongside this approach. This approach in RE is equally being successfully applied to other subject areas with equal success promoting children's thinking. The school is at the centre of the RE hub for the area and is supporting other schools in implementing this approach for themselves.

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

The head teacher provides visionary and vibrant focused direction to the work of being a church school. She is passionate in her vision that church schools should not only provide the very best education but enable children to experience what it means to be part of a caring Christian family. Her vision, well articulated by the leadership team is: 'God is our strength'. Children understand and explain this vision and how this works with Christian values, that 'we can live these out through God's strength and guidance'. The head leads by example; she has established the school as a teaching base for developing new staff. In addition, she has provided essential support to two other local schools acting as an executive head and developing good practice. Moreover, she has been called upon to work with the schools who need guidance on raising standards, as well as contributing to the work of the diocese where her expertise is well known. She has provided outstanding support to staff, enabling many to move on to leadership roles in other church schools. The school has successfully applied for grants to continue to explore creative approaches to RE. A number of case studies give examples of where the provision has been influential and the difference this has made to children's lives enabling them to achieve their potential. Monitoring and evaluation by school leaders is robustly undertaken through weekly forums with children, gaining their insights into all aspects of school life, which informs development plans. Governors are frequent visitors to the school and are committed to their role, contributing well to half-termly pupil performance meetings. At present the school does not agree a specific focus regarding the school's Christian distinctiveness for governors' monitoring visits, considering a number of issues rather than being more specific. Coaching is another strength at the school, led expertly by the leadership team. This is influential in ensuring high quality teaching and learning, developing middle leaders and a creative cohesive staff team, which includes experienced teaching assistants. The school has established excellent relations with the community. Christian festivals held in local churches are significant occasions, which bring the community together. The church provides 'Open the Book' worship and operates a Monday Christianity club, with the retired vicar making fine contributions to worship and governance. Parents are enthusiastic about school life and the way it encourages them to explore faith in an open and thoughtful way and what it means to them. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.