

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

### St. Issey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Gardeners Way,  
Saint Issey,  
Wadebridge,  
Cornwall.  
PL27 7RN

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Truro</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cornwall
Date of inspection	30 March 2017
Date of last inspection	29 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 112017
Interim Head of School	Mel Wells
Executive Headteacher	Sean Powers
Inspector's name and number	Rev David Hatrey 844

#### School context

Saint Issey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is a much smaller than average school with 27 children on roll. The number of children who are eligible for pupil premium support and those who have English as an additional language are significantly below national expectations. The number of children who have special educational needs is below national expectations. The school has been through a challenging time with the appointment of a new interim head until summer 2017, supported by Venture Multi-Academy Trust. A new governing body guides the school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint Issey as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The new leadership has brought life and vigour to the work of the church school developing the school's Christian distinctiveness and ensuring Religious education (RE) and collective worship have a higher profile.
- Children have a growing understanding of distinctive Christian values and are beginning to appreciate the contribution which these can make to their lives and attainment.
- Planning for collective worship is more detailed and linked to biblical material so that children have a growing understanding of Jesus and His teaching.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed distinctive Christian values into all aspects of school life supporting children to articulate the impact they make to their lives and attainment.
- Embed the school's Christian vision into the life of the school so children understand this and articulate where this is seen in daily life.
- Embed the new enquiry approach to teaching Religious education so children's thinking is challenged and extended so that they recognise the relevance the subject has to their daily lives.

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

The new leadership have now identified core Christian values to underpin the work as a church school, adopting community, wisdom, hope and dignity from their new mission statement. Developing an understanding of Christian values is at the centre of the initiative to develop the school's Christian distinctiveness. The first value, community is being explored, children already have some understanding of this and talk about what this looks like in daily life. Younger children can begin to explain what this means to them and where they see this in school. They think about being a family, recognising the part each has and the contribution they make. Thoughtful links are made to several Bible stories which reflect their distinctive Christian meaning. Although the other values have not been fully explored, children have an initial understanding, sharing their meaning and articulate why they are important. Some children attempt to make links to Bible stories for these and recognise other Christian values in them such as forgiveness. There is a growing understanding that Christian values shape their thinking and actions. Members of staff model the core values in their relationships with children and encourage them to recognise each as an important member of the community, treated with care and respect. This is making a valuable contribution to the quality of behaviour which is of a high standard, there are few instances of any form of bullying. Where these do occur they are swiftly addressed with reference to values, helping children to develop empathy towards the feelings of others. Care and concern is shown for one another, children take responsibility for younger peers and see themselves as their role models, and they are increasingly linking their actions to Christian values. Recently staff have agreed an understanding of spirituality from which all work. There are opportunities for reflection with 'big questions' being set, though at present these are only in RE. Children are beginning to record their thoughts and although at an early stage of development, there are some deeper responses emerging. For example, they are challenged to consider who they would trust to guide them and why. They are wrestling with these ideas and modifying their views in the light of discussions. Children enjoy these times and are confident to share ideas knowing that these will be valued by others in a safe atmosphere. Knowledge of other world faiths is limited, there is little evidence in books as these areas have as yet not been taught as part of the new Religious education planning scheme. However, children do show a good degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own. The school is aware that children have a limited understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith and are supporting children to appreciate the role of the local church.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

The new leadership have already made a number of improvements to worship following guidance and support from the Diocesan adviser and exploring good practice in outstanding church schools. A new Anglican structure is in place which supports clear teaching and messages being explored with opportunities for reflections. There is an emphasis on visual images linked to challenging questions with children sharing ideas with peers as well as how they respond to this in their daily lives. More contemporary worship songs have been introduced by a local minister who gives invaluable support in this area, particularly in the celebration of the main Christian festivals. Feedback from children requested greater participation which has been introduced involving children through drama and action songs, which is raising their interest and engagement. Planning of worship themes are more detailed using the 'Roots and fruits' programme, an aspect of the value is explored in greater depth over the course of the week, with secure links to biblical ideas. This structure and the detail of planning enables other staff to lead worship providing continuity to the themes. Now at the start of each week a challenge is set which directly links to the value, awards are then made in celebration worship at the end of the week for those children who have been identified by staff as using this value in action. They are eager to achieve these awards, the reason why awards are given is clarified so children appreciate how values contribute to thinking and actions in daily life in a variety of ways. A thoughtful atmosphere is thus created for worship. As a result of these developments worship now holds an increasingly high profile in school life. Children recognise that this is a special time to share with God. At present children are not confident to make links between worship and how this influences their actions. There is a growing understanding of some of the main Christian festivals, children talk about Christmas and recognise its importance for them and Christians. They have some understanding of seasons in the church's year such as Lent, but it is apparent that only some festivals have been considered. Whilst all children recognise that prayer is a way of sharing ideas with God and that they can do this in different ways, there is limited evidence of older children developing a maturity and depth of thought. The new leadership is addressing this with prayer spaces and opportunities to write prayers outside of worship being introduced in classes. However, these are at an early stage of development and yet to achieve their potential. Some stories from Jesus' life are known and older children are able to discuss these in reasonable depth. At present children have not had the opportunity to consider what Jesus' teaching might mean for them. Children's understanding of the Trinity is at present limited. New governors are now beginning to monitor worship identifying

some aspects of strength but continuing to make suggestions of where this can be improved, which the school is seeking to implement.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

The new leadership have introduced an enquiry based approach to teaching RE to raise attainment and to make the subject relevant to children's thinking. A question is explored each week which challenges children to consider what this means to them and how they might respond to this in daily life. Children enjoy this, they are growing in confidence to verbalise ideas, listening to others refining and reasoning through what they believe. This brings greater relevance to their learning. Already a new three year rolling programme has been created in consultation with a Diocesan adviser. This ensures that the appropriate time is given to teaching Christianity. The head has undertaken training for the new Understanding Christianity project and led by example by trialling these in her own class for other staff to consider. These modules alongside those of Kernewek, which is the study of Cornwall's rich Christian heritage, develops children's knowledge and awareness of local issues. Children have studied some aspects of other world faiths but there have been limited opportunities to compare this with their own beliefs. Evidence in books demonstrates the quality and depth of work is rising, though in some instances standards are still below national expectations. Activities are now more closely related to children's abilities, whilst children are encouraged to record their ideas in different ways which they enjoy using greater creativity. Children comment that they like RE, they are challenged to think ideas through, finding a relevance of these ideas to daily life. At present opportunities to develop Christian values are not taken in lessons which would deepen pupil understanding. Marking is developing, there is feedback on children's achievements and questions to extend their ideas further, but no indications about how they could raise the quality of their work. The target from the last inspection was to develop the accuracy of assessments in RE; this has recently been tackled with a new system being trialled to track progress. This is identifying gaps in knowledge and beginning to inform planning helping to meet the diverse range of needs. This is at an early stage of development. The head as subject leader, is focused on raising standards. The quality of present teaching is good with a number of strong aspects which include the quality of questioning and how well the work is matched to the different abilities of the children. There is a clear plan for development which is being actioned.

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

The previous leadership of the school was not effective, there was limited evidence of Christian distinctiveness, no sign of Christian values or of a Christian vision for the school. Evidence from children's books showed that work did not match assessments and tasks were not matched to children's abilities. Monitoring by the diocese indicated that children were passive in their learning and not challenged. Numbers at the school fell and parents became disillusioned as the school seemed isolated. The new leadership has brought life and vigour to the work of the church school. The interim head has worked closely with diocesan advisers to develop her expertise in this area. A new vision statement has been adopted, 'Education for wisdom, hope, community and dignity.' Children have some understanding of this, but it is still at an early stage of development. Evidence from children's work indicates that assessments are now accurate. There is good evidence of standards rising quickly towards national expectations. Recent monitoring by the diocese noted that children are more involved in their learning, developing good attitudes. Children now appreciate that making mistakes can be positive by learning from them. The new school council provides them with a voice to share how they would like to see the school developed. There is evidence to indicate these ideas are listened to and actioned. New governors are now beginning to monitor the school's Christian distinctiveness and making plans to develop this. The school's Christian distinctiveness is evident in the quality of relationships between all members of the school family and the care and concern they show for each other. There is a growing sense of community as links with various groups within the village are re-established. The Bloom group is a good example of this with adults working alongside children in developing the school grounds, their contribution is highly valued. Venture Multi Academy Trust has played an integral part in this, releasing the head who has brought their system of robust pupil tracking which effectively monitors progress and identifies gaps which are then addressed. The SENCO from Venture, has brought clear focus to this work so needs are accurately assessed and good provision put in place. This is reflected in the progress made by disadvantaged groups. The Diocese is playing a significant role appointing a new chair of governors and strongly supporting governance through adviser support. Their Christian love and care stands out. A new minister is now supporting the school offering good pastoral support and guidance. Services in church are being re-established. Some 63% of parents spoke to the inspector testifying how the school has been turned around, the quality of teaching meeting children's needs and children now heavily involved in a wide range of local activities. The school now meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. There is good evidence the school is moving forward, establishing its Christian distinctiveness.