

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great Kimble Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Church Lane, Great Kimble, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP17 9TH

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Oxford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Date of inspection	24 November 2016
Date of last inspection	September 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Infant 110430
Headteacher	Mala Cozadinos
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Great Kimble Infant School serves surrounding villages and includes the traveller community based at Marsh. Currently there are 67 pupils on roll, who are mainly from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding or who have special educational needs or disabilities is below average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2016. She has a class teaching commitment for 40% of her time and she is also the religious education [RE] subject leader.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Kimble as a Church of England school are outstanding

- This warm and welcoming Christian family community is firmly based on biblical teaching and the Christian values of thankfulness, respect, forgiveness and endurance. Consequently, Great Kimble's young pupils daily live out these Christian values at home and school.
- Strong leadership and good governance at all levels ensures the school's Christian character embeds all school policy and practice. The new headteacher has a clear direction for the future of the school.
- The mutual and substantial partnership between the school and church, whose rector is instrumental in enriching the worshipping life of the whole community.
- Exemplary relationships and high expectations in this respectful Christian environment ensure these young pupils grow in confidence and achieve highly.

Areas to improve

- Extend the monitoring of RE by the governors more frequently so that they are all aware of this important aspect of Christian distinctiveness.
- Enrich the worshipping life of pupils by enabling them to plan, lead and evaluate worship more frequently.
- Enable pupils to deepen their understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith to nurture their spiritual and cultural development.

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

Great Kimble's young pupils confidently and consistently live out their chosen Christian values of thankfulness, respect, forgiveness and endurance. This nurturing Christian environment enables the whole community to 'live, love and learn' together. As a result, pupils' behaviour and approach to learning is excellent. Relationships are exemplary because, as a Christian community, everyone is committed to being 'caring, respectful, individual, special,

thankful, independent, all embracing and nurturing'. Consequently, all children are valued and given the tools to reach their potential. Moreover, 'Kimble children have a sense of belonging to something special'. Within a rich learning experience, intrinsic Christian values underpin the school's high expectations of attitude and behaviour which are constantly reinforced. Consequently, this fosters a caring environment which is respectful of others and their feelings. In addition, the use of Growth Mind-set positively encourages independence and employing endurance at difficult times. Attendance is good. This extends to the positive support and very good relationships the school has with its traveller community. Relationships with parents are the key to success, alongside one to one support for vulnerable pupils. As a result, perseverance is positively encouraged, so all parents can see the work their children do in school and can support progress in reading at home. Key Stage 1 data is very good, indicating achievement is above local and national for reading, writing and mathematics. The school is always talking to the children about making the right decisions, right behaviour and their emotions and feelings as well as their contributing to charity work from a position of thankfulness. They are reminded of those less fortunate than themselves and this inspires their fundraising for Samaritan's Purse, Water Aid and Christian Aid. Such activities support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The inspirational and vibrant environment, both inside and outside the school makes a very rich contribution to the learning environment. Excellent examples include a banner which celebrates the fruits of the spirit and prayer spaces for encouragement and blessings every day. In addition, the pupils have great ideas to extend and enrich the current outdoor prayer and reflection area where the school's values are boldly displayed on fish symbols. Smokey Row, the nearby eco classroom is also well used and enjoyed. Pupils are growing in their awareness of different communities and diverse cultures. This is enabled through visits to a Sikh temple, a mosque in Year 1 and 2 and to a synagogue in Reception. Indeed, the visit to the synagogue in Oxford inspired the legacy of the leavers' tree banner. The school and St Nicholas Church help the children in starting to explore how they fit in to their immediate community as well as the worldwide Christian community. As a result, pupils comment, 'there are lots of Christians around the world and lots of Jewish people around the world'. However, the school acknowledges the need to enable pupils to deepen this understanding to enrich their spiritual and cultural development. The school recognises these young children want to know more and have a thirst for knowledge. Consequently, they provide all children with a good academic grounding so that they can live as good citizens and to educate them about other cultures. This includes those in Asia, Africa and South America. Philosophy is already studied in Year 2. Pupils certainly are excited and challenged by RE, where 'we have to work independently'. RE makes a very good contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils say, 'we learn about leaders we should follow, such as The Queen, Jesus and Brown Owl'. They speak about Moses' leadership and how he 'showed respect to God and followed what God wanted. He held up his stick and the river split in half like a zip'. They know that baptism is 'when people choose to follow Christ'. Pupils go on to relate more of the Christian story, including the events following Jesus' death and resurrection in their own words saying 'angels came and carried him to heaven'. Pupil faith is very strong because they know God is looking out for them as well as the adults.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Undoubtedly, the strong partnership between school and church, whose rector is instrumental in maintaining and enriching the worshipping life of the whole community. This is because church and school come together exceptionally well and this is valued by everyone. The rector is a welcome and regular visitor to school. One of the hallmarks of worship at Great Kimble is the monthly Wednesday worship when pupils share their learning with the church congregation. This is the result of planning with their class teacher and is much looked forward to by pupils and adults alike. Consequently, these young pupils feel comfortable in church and are increasingly taking responsibility for leading worship and writing and reading their own prayers. Some pupils have recently become worship leaders, leading everyone in a call and response at the start of worship. This is a new venture since September. The school has already identified the need for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship more frequently. Staff are looking forward to visiting worship in other schools in the diocese to extend their knowledge of how worship works in different contexts. Pupils enjoy worship in church or school and know their views are taken seriously. For example, as a direct result of pupil voice, daily worship now takes place earlier in the school day so 'we have more time to reflect'. Pupils value this, commenting, 'praying helps me to be kind and reflect to God'. The very successful Easter prayer spaces, manned with the help of members of the congregation, at St Nicholas Church also helped pupils to pray creatively. Pupils are growing in their age-appropriate understanding of God as trinity in worship. They know that in lighting the candle 'we welcome the Holy Spirit'. They speak of 'God at the top of the cross and Jesus in the middle. God loves everyone. Jesus died on the cross to save our lives. God is made of three different things, God, Jesus and Holy Spirit.' In addition, they recognise the symbol of the dove to represent the Holy Spirit in the outdoor art work which celebrates Great Kimble as a church school. They are also familiar with a blessing at the end of Wednesday worship. Another strong feature of Great Kimble worship is the focus on the weekly Bible reading. This is chosen as part of the half termly meeting the rector has with the headteacher, indicating how worship is always evolving and creative, meeting the needs of the whole community. Consequently,

pupils refer to Bible stories, naming the reference they have heard in worship, saying, for example, how they learn about 'saying sorry and the importance of forgiveness in the one from Matthew'.

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

Great Kimble staff count it as a privilege to work as part of this dedicated and caring team in such a friendly school. This is because the close link with the church is well known in the village and much appreciated. It is also their collective mission to offer a nurturing and caring environment where children can thrive and every person, young or old, is valued. This is underpinned by the Christian values of forgiveness, respect, thankfulness and endurance which are interwoven throughout everything and are articulated and lived out by all. Indeed, staff comment, 'when you are welcomed into the Great Kimble family, you become part of a team of people who care deeply about developing the school community and its social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.' Moreover, some staff say they have gained 'spiritual fortitude' from this nurturing Christian community. As such, this has had an impact on the newest members of staff causing one to add how much they had been welcomed into 'this wonderful little school with a big personality. The school has the feel of a close knit and embracing Christian community where the children are clearly happy and the staff fulfilled'. Parents testify to the fact that they 'love Great Kimble School and are happy to embrace it'. They too feel the warmth and have been welcomed into the very heart of the school. For them this is indeed a 'heart filled with sincerity, and a genuine care for the children who attend and also their families'. Governors see evaluation as an important aspect of their work. They have addressed all areas from the previous inspection and ensure that Christian values underpin their strategic work. They attribute the academic and personal development of the pupils to this robust and rigorous practice. Supporting leaders at all levels and the wellbeing of pupils and adults is an important facet of their work. The school community has greatly benefitted from the support from the diocese, not least in the support for their new headteacher. She has a considerable class teaching commitment and also leads RE. Governors recognise the importance of extending the monitoring of RE so all governors are aware of the importance of this key aspect of Christian distinctiveness. To this end, RE has its own action plan, with a clear direction for each term ahead. Consequently, RE and worship are well led and managed and meet statutory requirements. Community links are strong with church, school and village coming together. Excellent examples include the wreath laying at Remembrance, inspired by the poppies at The Tower of London, as well as the flower festival and Harvest Festival, to which many grandparents travelled to attend. The school is always on the church's agenda.

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