

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Barnack VC C of E Primary School	School Road, Barnack PE9 3DZ
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Peterborough
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Peterborough
Name of multi-academy trust/ federation	None
Date/s of inspection	20 September 2016
Date of last inspection	September 2011
School's unique reference number	110823
Headteacher	Neil Fowkes
Inspector's name and number	Jane Lewis (27)

School context

Barnack is a voluntary controlled C of E primary school for children aged 4-11. The head teacher came into post 3 years ago. It is a smaller than average sized primary school with 179 pupils on roll. The school has experienced a rapid change to its roll in recent years and has expanded twice to move to single age group classes. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with fewer than the national average from ethnic minorities or speaking English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is slightly above the national average.

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

- Integral to the journey this school is on is the dedicated vision and commitment of the headteacher and governors. This is embraced by staff and ensures the Christian character of the school is grounded in Christian values, permeating all aspects of school life.
- Explicitly Christian collective worship enables everyone to engage with Christian faith in a relevant way. This means children and staff alike have opportunity to explore their personal responses to issues of faith and belief.
- Curriculum planning is underpinned by distinctive Christian values that ensure everyone is able to make connections between faith and learning. Therefore developing a holistic approach to teaching and learning across the school.

Areas to improve

- Using the school's exemplary strategic vision and leadership, ensure that its outstanding distinctive practices have a positive impact on practice and outcomes in other church primary schools across the diocese.

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

Barnack School has a distinctive set of Christian values including kindness, fellowship, love, respect and friendship. These are expressed in an explicitly Christian way and are deeply embedded. All members of the school community can speak of the impact they have on their lives. Children talk about fellowship for example as, 'God's way of showing us how we should get on with everyone, not just our friends'. These values have a significant impact on the school's approach to meeting the needs of all learners. Most children achieve well and make good progress across the key stages. Interventions are put in place to meet the more complex needs of disadvantaged children. This reflects the school's aim to develop the potential of every child within the love of God. Learning is aspirational here, not just academic, with a wide range of achievement skills, showing a true love of learning. This is supported through extra-curricular activities. The whole curriculum has evolved over the past year since the introduction of 'What if Learning' so that the Christian values underpin it. The impact of this is seen in the way that teachers plan across the curriculum and the way in which children learn. The 'Christian Classroom' offers a place where the values are expressed through behaviour, curriculum and opportunity for reflection. A central reflection area in each classroom enables children to take time out to reflect and pray if they wish. As one child put it, 'It is good to have those places to be quiet when you want to be and to hold a cross if you need to'. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of children is a priority. They are confident and secure and know that the school is concerned for them as a whole person. There are few incidents of bullying. Any that do occur are dealt with swiftly. Children have confidence that any concerns they have will be listened to with compassion by all staff. They therefore recognise the Christian values being expressed by staff in day to day school life. Visits to places of worship alongside visitors from different cultures have provided children with the opportunity to reflect on difference and diversity in an appropriate way. They speak of enjoying learning about others because, 'we all share the same world'. Religious Education [RE] makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian character. Children enjoy their RE lessons in this school where the subject is valued as a core strand in the curriculum. Creative ways of engaging with RE have also empowered the staff. Good examples include using pieces of religious art to explore the story of The Good Samaritan in a year 4 class and themed days across the school exploring religious topics through costume, food and art. There is a high level of expertise and expectations from the subject leader along with the ambition and vision to lead improvement, exemplified by the school working towards achieving the RE Quality Mark.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Great value is placed on collective worship. It is a central activity in the school day and is planned and resourced thoroughly. Everyone in the school community appreciates its significance and they can talk about the impact it has on them. Children readily articulate stories and prayers they have learnt in worship and express their importance in understanding what it means to be a Christian. One of the Christian values is the lead theme for each half term's worship so allowing a thorough exploration of what that value means. Stories from both the Old and New Testaments are used to give insight into how the value can be talked about and lived out. Themes covered in worship inspire action from the whole school community. The focus on homelessness at the start of the week resulted in gifts being brought for the Harvest Festival to donate to a local homeless charity. The Lord's Prayer is said regularly in worship and children convey a sense of wonder that when they talk to God in this prayer, 'he is like a Father, but he is in heaven'. Anglican liturgy is used in worship. At the start of worship everyone is drawn together by using liturgy often used in the local parish church. This means that children are becoming familiar with the structure of worship which they say includes, 'remembering God is with us and we worship him'. Worship has a strong focus on the Trinity so that children can talk confidently about the aspects of the Trinity. They show understanding of Jesus as a special person, 'who showed God's love' and the Holy Spirit as, 'the part of God going on forever'. The vicar, chair of governors, who is the retired vicar, and a team from the local parish church are very committed to leading and supporting worship. They are all regular visitors to school and they are regarded by everyone as part of the team. Children are involved in the planning and leadership of worship. This ranges from thinking through and acting out scenarios of conflict that might prevent a sense of fellowship to using their own prayers in Friday worship inspired by their reflections on the theme through the week. As one child explained, 'being involved in worship means that I can relate better to God'. Worship is monitored and evaluated by the school Church Group. Pupil voice is used as part of this process and has resulted in the 'Open the Book' team now leading worship for older children as well as for younger ones. The spiritual development of older children is taken seriously by the school so that from time to time they have their worship as a separate worshipping

community. The vicar leads that worship, enabling him to explore stories and themes more deeply, positively impacting on the engagement of those children with the spiritual life of the school.

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

School leaders consistently and confidently articulate their Christian vision for the school to develop the potential of every child within the love of God, enabling children to move forward into the world holding on to distinctively Christian values. These leaders are committed to ensuring that this is possible for every child. They speak of their intention to ensure that all children realise they are loved by God and that it is possible to live with Christian values 'at the heart of what you do'. Policies clearly express the church school distinctiveness. A good example of this is the British values policy that dovetails these values into the school's Christian values and illustrates ways in which they can be lived out. School leaders are committed to the school moving into the future retaining its Christian foundation. One foundation governor put it like this, 'the school is running against the culture of society and we must maintain and develop that'. Strategic planning across the school has been informed by a Christian vision for the whole of the curriculum so that staff have been encouraged to see things anew through the 'What if Learning' project. This has resulted for example in teachers planning their lessons with reference to the distinctive Christian values and finding ways that children can engage with those values through curriculum areas. Foundation governors show great commitment to the school. They are regular visitors to lead or participate in worship or to carry out monitoring activities relating to the Christian distinctiveness. As a result, they know the school well and are able to identify clearly what the school needs to do to move forward. The school improvement plan includes a strand focussing on church school distinctiveness. The focus for development in the previous SIAS report has been fully met resulting in children now having a much greater awareness of and respect for diversity and difference. Governors meetings include prayer and the agenda always has an item relating to the Christian distinctiveness. This means that all governors are well informed about all aspects of the school as a church school. Staff development is a priority. The RE coordinator is given time to access training and support to help her develop staff expertise. Newly appointed members of staff are clear in their understanding of what it means to work in a church school through mentoring by more experienced staff. The school enjoys a good relationship with the diocese and the head teacher values the support they offer, especially the facilitation of a headteachers' meeting which has enabled him to network with church school headteachers across the diocese. Community links are strong, especially with the parish church with members of the local congregation coming in to school as part of the 'Open the Book' team. Evidence from questionnaires reveals that the overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school and many value the opportunities their children are given to explore faith and develop as global citizens. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. Barnack school is well placed to confidently move forward into the future sharing its expertise with other church schools.

SIAMS report September 2016 Barnack VC Primary School, Peterborough PE9 3DZ