



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

<b>Fairford Voluntary Controlled Primary</b>	The Park Fairford GL7 4JQ
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Satisfactory
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Date of inspection	13 October 2016
Date of last inspection	12 October 2011
School's unique reference number	115622
Headteacher	Julie Fellows
Inspector's name and number	Margaret James 698

### School context

Fairford Church of England School is smaller than the average primary school, with 234 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average as is the number of children known to be eligible to receive free school meals. The headteacher took up post soon after the 2011 section 48 inspection, as did the previous deputy head who left to take up her own headship in July 2015. The headteacher leads religious education (RE) and worship in school. The school has close links with the diocesan education team, the Bishop's Visitor and with local churches.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Fairford VC as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Strong spiritual leadership and Christian vision begin with the headteacher and extend throughout the school community, focusing on the transformation and flourishing of every individual as a child of God.
- A cohesive and effective staff team share the vision of the headteacher and enable it to be a reality on a daily basis for all children and their families.
- Spirituality and creativity expressed in a wide range of innovative ways enable the school community to be both reflective and curious in their attitude to life's big questions and mysteries.

### Areas to improve

- Ensure that the Christian vision, values, deep spirituality and sense of loving family are retained as the school makes strategic decisions about and takes steps into its future.
- Extend the already effective relationship between school and church to enable the development of joint projects designed to serve the community and broaden children's experience of worship and church life.
- Adopt and embed a theologically-based resource for the teaching of Christianity into all classes in order to deepen children's knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of the Christian faith.

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

Fairford VC is a school community driven by the belief that 'each individual is valued by God and should therefore be valued by us'. As a result, a comprehensive set of distinctively Christian values, rooted in the teaching of the Bible and owned, understood and lived out consistently by all stakeholders, shapes daily life and practice. These Christian values, described by parents as being 'absorbed into the structure of the school', are an intrinsic part of class teachers' planning for all subjects and contribute to an exciting and stimulating curriculum. Because teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of the school's Christian values, they are able to make reference to them with ease and an impressive depth of meaning during learning in a range of academic subjects. This, along with a thoughtful and well-considered understanding of spirituality within the school community, means that opportunities to enable children to develop spiritually are creative, relevant and effective. As a result, children of all ages have the ability and freedom to think for themselves and to express an opinion on some of life's big questions. They discuss and reflect on issues such as prayer, creation and forgiveness with an impressive degree of maturity and a respectful willingness to understand, disagree with and learn from others. Along with this effective focus on children's spiritual development, their moral, social and cultural development also sits at the heart of the education offered in this school. All are regarded as leaders and are given opportunities to take risks, try new experiences and grow in confidence. The focus on outdoor learning and 'God's creation', and the investment in developing this aspect of school life makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Members of the school community speak of 'sharing a sense of being part of something which embraces us and offers us God's love, protection and freedom to think for ourselves and to act for the good of others'. In this way, they are aware of and demonstrate a deeply Christian approach to education. The well-embedded Christian values also inform ways in which trusting relationships are developed and sustained within the school community. Consequently, relationships are strong, supportive and loving and are viewed as being a way of each person sharing God's love with others. Children and their families feel welcomed and accepted and know that they are free in this school to develop as unique individuals. Such freedom comes as a result of an uncompromising commitment to acknowledging and celebrating each person's individual gifts and talents and to a culture within which all are valued as children of God. An example of this is the way in which children are encouraged and enabled to do their best in their academic learning. They make good progress and this is monitored closely by teachers and school leaders as a way of ensuring that high standards are maintained so that all may flourish in their potential as children of God. Standards of teaching and learning in religious education (RE) are impressive. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are encouraged to adopt creative teaching strategies. Consequently, children learn well and are excited by the subject with even the youngest children having an excellent knowledge of Bible teaching and stories as well as of some of the teachings of other faiths, such as Judaism and Islam. The RE leader, along with all class teachers, has a commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning in RE still further and is undertaking diocesan-led training in a new resource in order to bring this improvement to reality.

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

Collective worship can be described as the lifeblood of Fairford school. Inspirational acts of worship, both whole school and class-based, are times for the community to come together to reflect, to learn, to praise God and to think deeply. As a result, these are times that are enjoyed by all and during which lessons for life are shared and learned. Acts of worship are rooted in the teaching of the Bible and learning about the person of Jesus Christ. All who attend, both adults and children, are encouraged to explore how the teaching might be relevant to them as individuals and to reflect on how they might live out this teaching for the benefit of others. The school culture of developing all as leaders is mirrored in approaches to the leadership of worship. Children from all classes regularly plan and lead acts of worship as do the adults within the school community. Feedback is routinely gathered with the sole purpose of being able to reflect on and improve the school's worship life. The opinions of all are valued and they lead directly to changes being made. Consequently, all share a sense of being involved and having something of value to contribute. This sense of togetherness through worship results in a vibrancy and

energy as well as meaningful times of quiet and reflection which combine to create deeply spiritual experiences. One outcome of the focus on Christian teaching which encourages an awareness of the needs of others is that children share a generous attitude towards both giving to and learning from others. They regard opportunities to raise funds for charities as an outworking of their Christian values and talk with sensitivity about the lessons they learn from being involved in a range of such activities. The whole-school commitment to prayer is also highly significant in the depth of worship which is characteristic of this school. Without forcing a point of view on individuals, all are encouraged to learn, to explore and to consider what prayer means to people of faith. The spiritual depth evident in children and adults is one result of this approach. Those involved in the leadership and development of this aspect of school life have demonstrated considerable wisdom in the pace and range of activities introduced. All such initiatives have been designed to develop the spiritual and worship life of the individuals who make up the school community. An example of the outstanding impact which an excellent understanding of faith and spirituality has had on children at Fairford is the manner in which they discuss the Christian teaching of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They share their views with a mixture of confidence in their own opinions and an ease with the sense of mystery which surrounds such ideas.

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

One of the most notable strengths of this outstanding church school is to be found in the clarity of vision and purpose of the headteacher. Her relentless focus on the ultimate worth of each child as loved and valued by God shapes and drives all decisions made and all actions taken. This vision is understood, shared and lived out by governors and staff, all of whom are themselves valued as unique individuals. As a result, the school is led by a committed team, each member of which looks to the needs of others and accepts responsibility for enabling these varied needs to be met. In this way, all are leaders and all are enabled to flourish in a context of openness, honesty and integrity. Senior leaders and governors know their school very well and work together as a team to make decisions designed to bring out the best in each person. Parents are aware of this commitment and describe how members of staff 'go the extra mile' out of love for the children. Decisions regarding the future of the school are discussed and thought through by leaders with wisdom. There is also a shared commitment to encouraging development and growth whilst retaining the school's sense of family and its individual Christian distinctiveness. Governors are acutely aware of their responsibilities in this regard. Their well-embedded systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of initiatives, for example, the Christian values, have been put in place by governors because of their belief that 'all are valued and therefore deserve the best'. They describe how they 'use the school's inner strength to focus on looking outward' thereby creating and sharing a truly Christian education. Relationships with a range of partners, for example, local churches, families, the Diocese of Gloucester and the Bishop's Visitor, are cherished and nurtured. Such partnerships contribute to the school's commitment to its own community but also are beginning to look outward to enable others to grow and learn. Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate, reflective and insightful and has the purpose of helping the school to keep on growing and improving. As a result, this is a school which, through its clear Christian vision and strong leadership, knows itself very well and understands how best to serve its community.

SIAMS report October 2016 Fairford VC Primary, GL7 4JQ