

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cradley Church of England (VA) Primary School	
Church Road, Halesowen, B63 2UL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Worcester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Worcestershire
Date of inspection	26 April 2018
Date of last inspection	1 May 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 103846
Headteacher	Marcia Harris
Inspector's name and number	David Crunkhurn 884

School context

Cradley Church of England (VA) Primary School is a popular one form entry primary school. There are currently 212 children on roll. The number of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium funding is lower than the national average at 14%. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is slightly lower than the national average at 13%. The number of children whose first language is not English is much lower than the national average at 4%. The school is part of an informal partnership with two other church schools. The school also runs a well-attended before and after school club.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cradley Church of England (VA) Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The vision and drive of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have embedded strong Christian values and a distinctive Christian ethos throughout the school community.
- The very deep Christian character of the school impacts on high levels of attainment and behaviour.
- Leadership at all levels is highly effective in driving forward improvement. This is due to a relentless drive to engage in monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian vision and ethos.
- Parents, pupils and staff are intensely proud of their school's 'Cradley Family'. This family feel encapsulates the school's core Christian values very well and impacts constructively on the inclusive, caring and supportive relationships evident across the whole school community.
- Religious education (RE) engages pupils effectively with big questions, which challenge thinking and enrich pupils' personal development and spiritual journeys.

Areas to improve

- Continue to involve pupils in regular leading of worship, to develop their leadership in this area.
- Continue to develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of faith in modern Britain, enriching their spiritual and cultural development.
- Embed the newly adopted Worcestershire locally agreed syllabus and system for assessing RE, to ensure maximum progress is achieved by all pupils.

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

Cradley Church of England Primary School is a caring and nurturing Christian community, led by dedicated leaders. Because of the emphasis placed on its Christian ethos, it is a school where everyone is valued and made to feel part of the 'Cradley family'. The school's vision of 'Believe, belong, be happy; every child, every chance, every day' has its foundation in Christ's teaching of giving 'life in all its fulness'. This is lived-out across the whole school community. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are unwavering in their determination to ensure that the school's Christian values provide the best care possible to the pupils. This is shared by a highly dedicated team of teachers, support staff and governors, who ensure that Christian values are at the heart of all decision making. Pupils say that they feel valued and safe at Cradley because 'all the staff care for us'. Through applying the school's values to their teaching and support programmes, pupils, including the most vulnerable, make good progress academically from their starting points.

Relationships between all members of the school community are rooted in a firm belief that each person is a child of God. The mutual respect that pupils have for each other, has created an environment where everyone feels safe to express their opinion and to challenge the opinions of others. This enables pupils to grow in confidence and self-assurance. Christian values of caring, respect and belonging are demonstrated by pupils every day. This is evidenced in the excellent care that older pupils give to younger pupils. Parents are deeply appreciative of the time that staff give to their children. When speaking of the school's Christian values, they commented that 'from the reception years, children are taught values and how to live them'. The impact of this is seen in the outstanding behaviour of pupils.

The school's strong partnership with Gairo B; a school in Morogoro, Tanzania, is instrumental in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils speak with joy of this partnership and the project work that has taken place through it. Reciprocal visits to both school communities enable pupils at Cradley to understand and celebrate the diversity of their different cultures. Pupils say that through the link, they have a better understanding of Christianity as a world religion and how they all belong to the same world, which God has made.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship at Cradley affirms the vision, values and ethos of the school, making a significant contribution to the spiritual development of pupils and adults alike. This is because it is highly effective in promoting the school's Christian values. It is important to the school community because it brings everyone together to worship God and demonstrate their care for each other as the 'Cradley family'.

The headteacher is the co-ordinator for worship. She is highly committed to ensuring that it has a central place in the life of the school community. She works extremely hard to ensure it provides the space for all to come together and be still. Close attention is paid to following Anglican patterns of worship and pupils can identify the different elements of it, such as gathering together, responses, quiet reflection and prayer. They understand their importance in creating a space for all to learn about the biblical root of their school's core Christian values. This makes a significant impression on children's spiritual development.

Pupils are growing in their knowledge of the Trinity. Beautiful and thought-provoking artwork has been created by the school community to support pupils in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a result, pupils talk about the Trinity with understanding and great confidence.

Prayer is an important part of the daily life of the school. Set prayers such as the school prayer, those written by children and prayers on the prayer board are used during acts of worship. Pupils are also provided with the space to pray and reflect during class worship. These times are particularly effective in developing an understanding of Christian values and for reinforcing the biblical stories that have been shared in collective worship. Reflection areas in classrooms are used to good effect. They provide pupils with areas to go to when they want to offer personal prayers. They are also helpful for pupils who just want to have a moment of quiet.

Regular evaluation of worship by the whole school community is instrumental in ensuring that worship continues to be alive and vibrant. For example, following evaluation of pupil engagement in reflection, foundation governors provided staff training in stillness. This resulted in pupils engaging much more in these activities during class worship.

Pupils talk with pride and joy at the times they have led worship and how they have supported their peers in prayer. They enjoy being part of 'The Worship Crew', as this has enabled them to prepare acts of worship themselves.

However, they say they would like to plan and lead worship more frequently, which the school readily acknowledges.

Parents participate in regular worship times and enjoy sharing in times of school celebration. They also appreciate the special acts of worship that take place in church, such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas. These celebrations strengthen links between school, church and community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The passionate RE subject leader has worked tirelessly to continue the excellent developments in this subject since the previous inspection. Her enthusiasm and drive impacts positively on staff. She is extremely well supported by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors. Her commitment to regular monitoring and evaluation of the work in RE ensures that there are always realistic and well-focussed plans for further improvement. These plans have been successfully implemented to improve the quality of provision for pupils. Close partnerships with diocesan advisors, foundation governors and members of the local church, have also provided excellent support to the teaching of RE.

Through high quality training, the RE subject leader has instilled confidence in staff to deliver the 'Understanding Christianity' materials. This has led to highly effective teaching throughout the school. As a result, pupils' progress is never less than good and sometimes outstanding. This is evidenced in pupils' books, class portfolios and during lessons. Discussions with pupils demonstrate their growing understanding of Christian concepts such as salvation.

Teaching is mostly outstanding and never less than good. Reception pupils are sensitively led and provided with many activities that help them make sense of religion and faith. Older pupils are challenged to think deeply about their responses to concepts explored around religious belief and practice. This is through well-planned open, yet probing questions. Teachers skilfully help pupils make links between concepts that are taught and their own beliefs and experiences. Pupils are confident in expressing their ideas and how their newly acquired learning relates to their own lives. Consequently, RE contributes effectively to pupils' growing spirituality.

The pupils' knowledge of Christianity and the impact this has on the Christian character of the school is developing well. Through visits to the church, their understanding of why places of worship are important to Christians is deepened. They are developing their understanding of faith and belief, through a deeper exploration of other religions. The subject has a very high profile in the school's wider curriculum. It provides excellent extensions for learning about the school's core Christian values. Parents say RE is a strength of the school. They feel it delivers challenge, provides deep thinking and encourages respect for other religions and respect for each other.

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

The highly effective leadership team of the school articulates a shared Christian vision, in which every child can thrive. This vision is the foundation of all decision making and strategic planning. Senior leadership and governors ensure staff are well supported in their roles and responsibilities. As a result, staff are developed well as leaders, and make a positive difference to the academic outcomes of all pupils. Innovative approaches to learning, such as the 'Magenta' growth mindset project, are used to maximise pupils' ability to believe in themselves. Consequently, Cradley is a school where the Christian love and support given to every pupil, enables them to reach their full potential.

Monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian character is thorough and regularly undertaken by all members of the school community. These evaluations lead to positive changes that impact on the whole school community. Self-evaluation is accurate, because it is inclusive of comments made by all members of the school community. RE and worship meet statutory requirements.

The school's strong link with St Peter's Church has been instrumental in supporting the school with its Christian character, development of RE and collective worship. Consequently, the church has impacted significantly on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and staff of the school.

Parents are considered important partners with the school. They speak warmly of their involvement in the life of the school. They are deeply appreciative of the lengths that the school leadership will go to, when seeking their views on school life. This was particularly so during the consultation process regarding the selection of the core Christian values of the school. Parents explicitly describe the impact of these values on both the school and local community, and how they support the spiritual development of their families.