

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Market Harborough (VC) CofE Academy

Fairfield Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9QH

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 August 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	Learn Academy Trust
Date/s of inspection	30 June 2017
Date of last inspection	26 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 141151
Headteacher	Emma Tayler
Inspector's name and number	Marie Sandford 834

School context

Market Harborough CE Primary is a larger than average-sized primary school which converted to academy status in August 2014 and joined Learn Academy Trust in September 2016. The headteacher has been in post since September 2016 with the team rector and associate rector also being recent appointments. The proportion of children with special educational needs is in line with national at 13%. The proportion of children receiving pupil premium funding is below national at 13%. The majority of children are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils of Traveller heritage is higher than the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Market Harborough as a Church of England school are good

- Strong leadership shown by the headteacher, leadership team and religious education leader is rooted in Christian values and ensures every child is valued and respected in this large primary school.
- Relationships across the whole school community are strong, reflecting its Christian character and enabling children to thrive in a harmonious, safe environment.
- The pastoral care provided by the school within a Christian context enables all to make progress.
- The partnership between the school and members of the church has a positive impact on the spiritual development and well-being of the children.

Areas to improve

- Develop children's awareness and understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and of other religions in order to develop further respect for diversity and difference.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to encounter worship planned and led by pupils themselves to further enhance the impact of worship on all members of the school community.
- Plan strategically the development of governors as leaders of a church school to benefit the current leadership of the school.

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

Respectful and caring relationships are evident across the school community with children thinking carefully about how their behaviours impact on others. Staff, children, governors and parents were involved in the selection of the core, paired Christian values of helpfulness and relationship, generosity and thankfulness, forgiveness and compassion, hope and trust, courage and perseverance, respect and dignity. These Christian values are linked to the school's relationships policy, are key themes displayed around the school alongside biblical text and are regularly considered in collective worship. Children relate the values to biblical stories, for example linking Noah's ark to 'the road of forgiveness'. Additionally, they are able to describe how the values help them to 'live our lives and get on with each other, even when we disagree'.

Children are justly proud of their charitable fundraising for a range of charities and are passionate about raising money for brain tumour research following the recent bereavement of a well-respected member of the teaching staff team. Displays around school and reflection areas in each classroom promote the school's Christian values and affirm that this is a church school. Prayer is important in the life of the school and children have opportunities to pray in worship and throughout the school day. Children in Year 3 posed the 'thunk' 'Are praying to God and talking to God the same thing?' The children scribed their thoughts with some agreeing that praying is talking to God whilst others felt silent thoughts are prayers. Children spoken to described prayer as being for 'anywhere and at any time'. Children write thoughtful prayers to share in worship and in class.

The Christian character impacts on behaviour and attitudes to learning, with children demonstrating well-developed spiritual, moral and social awareness. Incidents of poor behaviour are corrected through an effective relationships policy in the spirit of forgiveness and compassion. Attendance is below the national average but improving as school leaders and governors work with parents, especially those of Traveller heritage, to continue to improve rates of attendance. Staff and parents attribute the reduction in persistent absenteeism to the compassionate, nurturing nature of the school where all children are valued as God's children and all are welcomed. Barriers to learning and emotional wellbeing are addressed to ensure individual children, including those requiring additional support in their learning, make progress and develop their self-worth. Attainment by the end of key stage two is broadly in line with national figures and progress is higher than the national picture in 2016. Religious education (RE) teaching is given a high priority with an experienced teacher leading on this area of the curriculum. The children are enjoying the new RE curriculum 'Religious literacy for all' and can articulate what they have been learning about recently and what it means to them. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of Christianity as a world faith. In response to an area of development at the last inspection, visiting speakers and opportunities to visit places of worship are beginning to enhance the children's understanding of diversity and difference and the importance of respecting the beliefs of others.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is clearly a very important part of each school day and all members of the school community value the daily acts of worship. Collective worship is explicitly Christian in nature with the gathering ('we gather and light this candle in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'), dismissal ('go in peace to serve the Lord') and the singing of the Lord's Prayer. The headteacher alongside the RE leader plans the themes for collective worship which combine the diocesan themes, the church seasons and the school's core values. Planning incorporates biblical stories with biblical quotes being shared each week to represent the collective worship theme. The quotes are displayed in the class reflection areas to reinforce key messages shared during worship. Parents speak of how the children talk about the Bible stories they have heard, with younger children regularly acting them out.

Local clergy enhance the quality of worship and are popular with the children and staff. During the day of the inspection, the associate rector led a planned 'prayer space' initiative with prayer stations inside the hall and outside in the peace garden. The prayer stations related to the 'Thy Kingdom Come' project and children enjoyed opportunities to benefit spiritually, thinking deeply about each line of the Lord's Prayer. Children described the activities as 'inspirational' and took time to reflect, discuss and lead each other in prayer. St. Dionysius parish church is used to celebrate major Christian festivals and school events which are well supported and appreciated by parents and governors.

The collective worship team of representative children and the RE leader reflect on worship during the week and meet to discuss their reflections and make suggestions for improvement the next week. The team are justifiably proud of their role which they had to apply for according to the specification in the 'job description' and they feel their views are listened to and valued. In addition, children in all classes, parents and visitors to the school have opportunities to comment on worship through reflection diaries, for example, a grandparent wrote 'such an uplifting

experience to witness the Easter message'. The range of comments are taken into consideration by the collective worship team when planning further worship. Governors use monitoring visits to highlight good practice in worship, ask questions and make suggestions for further improvement, for example, the choice of music as children enter for worship. Although children regularly participate in worship including sharing their own prayers to enhance their spiritual journey, they have limited opportunities to lead worship. This is something they would appreciate moving forward as more involvement would deepen their understanding of the Church's year, the Trinity and the school's Christian values.

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

The recently appointed headteacher and clergy are committed to further developing the school's distinctive Christian character and this is reflected in the reviewed mission statement 'in the Christian faith, giving of our best, growing in knowledge and kindness' based on Colossians 1 10-12. The passionate and personal spiritual leadership of the headteacher is contributing significantly to the development of the school as a church school. The support of the school leadership team, other staff and local clergy is ensuring that the school's effectiveness as a church school is continually being evaluated and addressed, with all being involved in the review of the school's vision and values. The relationship between the school, the parish church and all members of the school community is increasingly strong, placing Christian values at the centre of all aspects of school life. Children speak highly of the values and the difference these and belonging to a church school brings to their lives. They speak highly of how their views are valued and acted upon under the current leadership of the school.

Diocesan training undertaken by the headteacher and the RE co-ordinator highlights the importance shown to RE and collective worship and to ensuring the effectiveness of the school as a church school. However governors have not accessed training to strategically plan the development of the school as a church school in order to support the current leadership in securing further improvements. Joining Learn Academy Trust has provided support for the leadership of the school in developing its Christian distinctiveness and the headteacher values the support received from officers of the trust. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school and all previous development points have been addressed. Local clergy have observed a number of acts of collective worship and worked with school leaders to identify further areas for development. Governors are ambitious for the school and enjoy trusting and mutually respectful relationships with leaders. Parents particularly value the fact that the headteacher, the leadership team and other staff are visible, approachable and support their children to be 'the best that they can be' as they value 'all God's children' and enable the children to 'not only encounter faith but to connect with it'. Parents feel welcome in school and appreciate opportunities to attend worship and to listen to the beautiful singing of both traditional and contemporary Christian hymns.

SIAMS report June 2017 Market Harborough CofE Primary Academy Market Harborough LE16 9QH