

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Somerfords' Walter Powell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	
Dauntsey Road Great Somerford Chippenham Wiltshire SN15 5HS	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Bristol
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	September 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust
Date of inspection	15 June 2017
Date of last inspection	9 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	142292
Executive Principal Head of School	Jill Rowe Lisa Shibley
Inspector's name and number	Patricia Morris 626

School context

Somerfords' Walter Powell is a much smaller than average sized primary school with 51 children on roll, working in three classes each morning and two classes in the afternoon. The school moved to academy status in September 2015. Since January 2016, the school has shared a local governing board with two other small primary schools. All three schools are part of the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average as is the number supported by Pupil Premium. Most children come from Little or Great Somerford but there is a high rate of mobility. Attendance is in-line with the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Somerford's Walter Powell as a Church of England school are good

- Collective worship is based around the teachings of Jesus and firmly underpinned by Christian values, contributing to very good behaviour and strong relationships across the school.
- Very good partnerships with the church and local community provide invaluable contributions to the life of the school.
- High quality teaching experiences in religious education (RE) contribute to children's growing awareness of their own spirituality.
- The challenge and involvement of foundation governors make a significant contribution in continuing to develop the school as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Extend and embed opportunities to develop the outdoor environment to enable children to have high quality experiences for spiritual development.
- Embed the new scheme of work for religious education and the Understanding Christianity materials.
- Arrange opportunities to engage with a range of faiths to enable children to gain first hand experiences of the diversity of different beliefs and religions.

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

The vision of the school is clearly underpinned by five distinctive core Christian values of diligence, kindness, tolerance, honesty and respect. Values are seen as a 'thread' running through the school community and are deeply embedded, generating a caring, nurturing environment. Values are endorsed in the intrinsic way they are linked to school rules and British values. The positive contribution values make to children's daily lives and achievements is evident in all the school does. They are seen in children's very good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Children confirm this by saying, 'values are important to us. They motivate us and help us to accept things we don't always agree with'. They confidently link values to Bible verses and stories and understand that the value of love underpins everything. Children are proud to be awarded a weekly rainbow certificate, or have their name in a 'values book', for values seen in action. There are very good relationships between all members of the school community with staff working together as a team to promote values. Children enjoy their learning and intervention work ensures that most groups are making good progress to attain standards that are in line with national expectations. The Christian character of the school effectively contributes to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children have a clear understanding of spirituality describing it as 'what you can't see'. Opportunities to support children's spiritual development are promoted through an indoor reflection area in the library. Children are enthusiastic about the library 'puzzle tree' where they can write questions that puzzle them such as 'How did God make us?' which are then discussed in lessons. Questions around the tree such as 'How has God helped you today?' encourage children to reflect on His constant presence in their lives. Children speak confidently about signs and symbols around the school and their importance in Christianity. There is some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith with children showing respect for diversity and difference within other faith communities. Religious education (RE) makes a positive contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the Christian character and values of the school through opportunities for discussion and in challenging children to think beyond themselves.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important time for the school community and children recognise it as 'a time to reflect' and 'to feel God is with you'. A variety of leaders contribute to making it engaging for children. Their sense of enjoyment is obvious through their eagerness to participate and in their joyful singing. Children engage in various aspects of worship although they would appreciate more opportunities to plan and lead their own worship. The introduction of a children's worship council is starting to make this happen by involving more children in worship. Evaluation by the worship council has enabled them to make suggestions for improvements in worship such as more drama and learning more animated songs with actions. Planning is thorough and well linked to Bible verses enabling children to make links with their own lives today. For example, children identified how God showed patience to Paul and recognised ways they show patience to each other. Such meaningful interpretations make positive contributions to children's own attitudes and behaviour. Children have a very good understanding of the purpose of prayer. They know that prayer is a way of communicating with God and say 'you can pray anywhere - on the bus or in your bedroom'. One child explained prayer as 'an opportunity to learn to trust in God as He trusts in us'. Children especially value a prayer wall from which they select individually written prayers to share with the rest of the school. Response prayers involving God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit encourage children's developing understanding of the Trinity with children describing it as 'three personalities that make up one God' and saying 'the Holy Spirit lives inside us'. There is a close partnership with the church. The local vicar regularly comes into school to take worship and the church community support 'experience days' which help develop children's understanding of the seasons of the church year and the main Christian festivals, which are also celebrated in the local church. Worship makes a good contribution to children's spiritual and moral development through opportunities to reflect on their own behaviour, have empathy with others and in posing questions about the wider world. The potential of the outdoor areas of the school grounds in contributing to children's spiritual development and providing enriching experiences has not yet been explored. Thorough monitoring and regular evaluation by foundation governors identifies future ways to develop worship in order to move it forward.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education has a high profile within the school and children show a secure knowledge of key aspects of Christianity and the Bible. Evaluation of RE has led to the recent implementation of a new scheme of work and introducing the Understanding Christianity materials. The current RE leader has ensured staff have had training in implementing these changes. Although the impact of this is starting to make a difference to children's learning, it has not yet had time to embed within the school. Staff feel the new resources are giving them deeper subject knowledge that encourages good quality questions, enabling children to extend their thinking about themselves, others and the world beyond. This is invaluable in the contribution of RE to children's spiritual development. Children enjoy RE and

are stimulated by lessons that involve discussion, drama and art. Teaching is at least good, occasionally outstanding, and lessons observed engaged younger children while older children were impressively challenged by skilful questioning that encouraged thoughtful group discussions effecting good opportunities to develop children's growing awareness of their own spirituality. Such experiences contribute to children's good progress across the school. Standards are in line with other core subjects, evidenced through a variety of formal and informal monitoring as well as through end of unit assessments that inform future planning. Children have a developing understanding of Christianity as a world faith. For example, they initiate occasions to fund raise for charities such as Water Aid as well as many local charities because they say 'we want to help people get better faster, live in a nicer world and give others a chance'. Children have some awareness of other faiths and cultures and are interested to learn more. Opportunities to develop first hand experiences are being considered as a way of supporting children's understanding for diversity and difference. Religious education is well supported through the partnership with the local church. For example, it is used to support lessons and the vicar comes into school to discuss specific Anglican traditions.

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

Leaders consistently articulate and promote a vision based on distinctive Christian values. There is a good understanding of the school as a church school and leaders clearly describe the impact of values on children and the school community. Collective worship and RE are informed by Christian values and these make a positive impact on children's attitudes and very good behaviour. Foundation governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school and understand that a vision, reflected through values, underpins the school's Christian distinctiveness. Governors visit the school regularly and ensure that any questions raised through monitoring are addressed and they purposefully look for ways to continually move the school forward as a church school. Partnerships with the church and the local community contribute positively to school life. For example, children value their local church and initiated a sponsored run that successfully raised money for the church roof fund. This example of service to others builds good local links and shows that children have an awareness of their responsibilities to the local community. Other joint events include dancing at the annual fete and contributing to the flower festival. Parents see the church and the school as central to the village community. Relationships with parents are good. They appreciate the good two-way communication and feel they are listened to and that their opinions are valued. They say issues are dealt with promptly and feel children are given the opportunity to develop as individuals within a nurturing environment. Governors value the commitment of staff and ensure that effective use is made of opportunities to develop leadership roles through professional development. This is more effective since the three schools joined together with one local governing board. They work together very well, sharing good practice and training while each school maintains its individuality. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report June 2017 Somerfords' Walter Powell Church of England Primary School Chippenham SN15 5HS

