



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cossington Church of England (VC) Primary School	Main Street Cossington Leicestershire LE7 4UU
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Satisfactory.
Local authority/date of academy conversion	Leicestershire
Name of multi-academy trust/ federation	n/a
Date/s of inspection	7 October 2016
Date of last inspection	13 November 2013
School's unique reference number	120124
Headteacher	Matthew Yandell
Inspector's name and number	Kathryn Allsopp (836)

School context

Cossington is a small village school with 104 pupils. This is an oversubscribed school, the large majority of pupils live outside the catchment in the village of Sileby. Currently only fourteen pupils live within the catchment area. The school is not in an area of high deprivation but the numbers of pupils receiving pupil premium funding is greater than would be expected at 11.7%. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs is below national average but not spread evenly across this small school. The head teacher was appointed in September 2015. During a period of interregnum the school is working with the local clergy.

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

- Senior leaders share a clear vision rooted in Christian values and this has brought about rapid progress.
- The achievement of all groups of children in all core subjects is good as a result of the strong Christian ethos that promotes an understanding and commitment to each unique child.
- Relationships within the whole school community are strong, reflecting the schools Christian character
- Church and school links are strong and benefit the children, their families and the wider community.
- New leaders have brought about improvement in worship which is recognised and valued by all stakeholders.

Areas to improve

- Further develop the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school to include all leaders including members of the governing body.
- Implement the school's decision to adopt the new 'Understanding Christianity' scheme to develop staff confidence and children's understanding of key Christian concepts.
- Embed the work to improve collective worship by involving pupils in the planning and delivery.

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

Cossington provides an excellent learning environment for pupils, which is built upon its Christian character. Pupils state 'people are kind, we have friendship and friends'. One pupil said 'it's so different to my other school, we didn't learn about Jesus'. Since the last inspection senior leaders have worked hard to develop a new mission statement, based upon six Christian values: koinonia, hope, wisdom, fairness, forgiveness and thankfulness. These values inform the work of the school. The head teacher clearly states 'everything comes from our Christian values, policies and action' and governors endorse this. The school is a warm and friendly school where all stakeholders are 'known and valued as individuals'. Children take responsibility for each other with Year 6 pupils mentoring pupils in the Foundation stage. Standards are high and all children make good progress from their starting points. Parents state this is an 'inclusive school' and 'staff know my child well and are doing everything to help her'. This ethos leads to vulnerable children being identified quickly and individual programmes put into place. Behaviour is good; children are polite and treat each other with respect and care. They understand the rules for behaviour and enjoy nominating each other for awards for demonstrating Christian values. However they are not always able to link their own behaviour to biblical stories or Christian values as this work is in its infancy. Attendance is very good, which senior leaders state is because 'children love coming to school'. It is also because of the supportive approach shown towards individuals and their families based upon a clear understanding of each child's unique needs. Learners benefit from a rich curriculum including visits, visitors, the arts, sporting activities and charitable work. Collective worship and the teaching of RE are well structured and planned. They include Christian teaching and visits to places of worship and knowledge of diversity. Children recognise Christianity as a world faith stating 'you find Christians all over the world'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils describe collective worship as a time when 'everyone comes together' and they have 'time to think about God'. Worship is Christian in nature and based upon the school's Christian values together with special events from the Christian calendar. Each year a welcome assembly is held to mark the beginning of the school year and this is valued by staff and pupils. The newly appointed senior leaders, together with local clergy have worked to improve the provision for worship and this has included changing the timing and ensuring that worship includes a welcome, prayer, scripture, singing and reflections. As a result all stakeholders speak positively about worship. School staff and local clergy plan and lead worship but as yet pupils have not been involved. They ensure that pupils are actively involved throughout worship and as a result they listen attentively and participate fully. On the day of the inspection, pupils were invited to reflect on things they were 'thankful for' throughout the school day and to bring written ideas to make a hall display. This resulted in a 'thankfulness caterpillar' with over thirty suggestions. Learners are able to describe the main Christian festivals. They understand the importance of worship and are able to describe some aspects of Jesus' life and understand his importance to Christians saying 'people called him a king'. They are not familiar with the term 'Trinity' but older pupils are able to describe God as our Father, Jesus as 'God coming down to earth' and the 'Spirit, which surrounds us everywhere'. They can talk about Christian values and link them to different biblical and moral stories. However they are not yet able to describe how they affect their own lives. They demonstrate concern for others and explained that they will be collecting food for the residents at Dudley Court at their harvest service and have also helped Water Aid. Pupils understand how they can use prayer in their own lives 'to thank God, talk to him when there's a problem or to ask for knowledge'. Prayers are used in worship including the singing of the Lord's Prayer and the new school prayer, written by pupils, is used at the start and the end of the school week. Pupils write prayers and they know that they can use the prayer corners in their classrooms or say prayers 'anywhere'. During worship children's contributions were used to create a prayer of thankfulness and they contributed readily. Parents say they enjoy joining pupils at special services at the church and at school and that services are always well-attended. Governors attend collective worship in school occasionally. Staff and clergy carry out monitoring of worship formally and informally through observation and by talking to pupils and parents. The monitoring is used to inform future planning and to ensure that the provision is improved. An example of this is the extremely thorough planning document and the clearly expressed document describing expectations for worship. However they recognise the need to increase formal monitoring and have included monitoring by all stakeholders including governors in the development plan.

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

Leaders share a clear Christian vision for the school and this is recognised and valued by all stakeholders. During the inspection governors gave examples of how decisions were guided by the desire to implement the school vision. The newly appointed headteacher has benefitted from mentoring by an experienced head teacher from a neighbouring church school. He has worked with all stakeholders to establish a mission statement based upon Christian values, which 'nurtures aspiration in its widest sense not just academic but the whole child'. He provides strong leadership and has evaluated the school's Christian distinctiveness accurately with staff and governors. He ensures that all staff are good teachers committed to the development of each child. The head teacher is the co-ordinator for collective worship and ensures that provision is relevant to the learners. The newly appointed RE co-ordinator has benefited from professional development with the Diocese. She has also worked with local clergy and R.E co-ordinators from other church schools sharing good practice. As a result she has a clear understanding of the strengths, the areas for improvement and how the teaching of RE is helping pupils to see themselves 'as important in the community, the wider world and the Christian world'. Collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. They are both contributing to learners' growing understanding of Christian values and key Christian concepts. The school is oversubscribed with many pupils coming from outside the village. Staff work hard to build strong supportive relationships with parents and pupils and 'know all the children well'. Parents and governors describe the school as a 'living Christian community'. They appreciate the way in which the school reaches out into the community especially the villages outside its normal catchment area. Parents say their children enjoy school and feel the school is providing them with 'a framework on which to live by'. They value the church services and assemblies they are invited to and state the school's 'Christian distinctiveness is much more explicit' than previously. There are strong links between the school and the parish churches of Sileby, Cossington and Seagrave with clergy working with senior leaders, governors and learners to develop all aspects of its Christian distinctiveness. Good examples of this are the use of the school premises for the church playgroup and for family services, which are held each month.

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