Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| **Newport Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School** | |
| Avenue Road Newport Shropshire TF10 7EA | |
| **Current SIAMS inspection grade** | **Good** |
| **Diocese** | **Lichfield** |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Telford & Wrekin |
| Date of inspection | 18 May 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | May 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | VC Junior 123489 |
| Headteacher | Nicola Moody |
| Inspector’s name and number | Reverend Alison M. Morris 759 |

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| **School context**  Newport Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School is an average sized junior school. It serves the market town of Newport. There are 301 pupils on roll aged from 7-11 years. A small number of pupils receive support for their special educational needs and/or disability. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has a strong links with the clergy and St. Nicholas’s Church. A substantive headteacher was appointed in January 2017. The recent OFSTED inspection in March 2017 judged the school as ‘good’. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newport as a Church of England school are good**   * Astute spiritual and inspirational leadership by the head teacher, whose new developing vision is impacting successfully on the community the school serves. Together with the leadership team and governors, they are purposefully infusing the distinctive Christian vision into all aspects of school life. * Significant and purposeful relationships throughout the school community reflect how Christian values are being embedded further to foster the Christian distinctiveness. * Independent and self-disciplined pupils whose impressive behaviour reflects the school’s Christian values. |
| **Areas to improve**     * Revisit documentation on the vision, mission statement and governance to highlight, clarify and embed further references to Christian distinctiveness and provide clear reference points for developing this church school in the light of the appointment of a new headteacher. * Through the development of the worship group, engage pupils in the process of planning, monitoring and evaluating worship, with the intention of refining and further developing class room base worship as part of the collective worship schedule. * Implement the new religious education (RE) scheme of work alongside the ‘Understanding Christianity’ resource to make RE more accessible to all pupils and to enhance their spiritual development. |

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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good**  **at meeting the needs of all learners**  This is a good school which is in a period of transition and transformation as it explores how it can express and embody even further its distinctive Christian character. School leaders and governors are on a journey of exploration about what it means to be a church school. The present Christian vision, which is rooted in explicit Christian values, has an impact upon the Christian distinctiveness, character and ethos. This is immediately apparent and is articulated by stakeholders within the school. Core Christian values, such as forgiveness and courage, which are already rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, are successfully embedded into this inclusive school. It also permeates both policy and practice. However, the new headteacher is bringing a fresh approach to the Christian character built on a foundation of God’s love. The vision, ethos and motto are being revisited and discussed for clarity to ensure a firm grounding on Christian values. Specific expressions of distinctiveness are being revitalised to be more child-centred in approach rather than driven by tradition. All pupils are treated with dignity and respected as unique individuals to be nurtured and supported. There is a commitment to meet the holistic needs of all pupils. Effective intervention strategies and nurture provision have an impact on pupils’ learning and particularly those with specific learning challenges. Provision for welfare and personal development is very strong and underpins the school’s approach to personal and academic development. For example, the development of a pupil well-being group promotes resilience and life skills. Staff have high expectations for all pupils so they are supported to achieve their full potential, no matter what their ability or background. The introduction of ‘Achievement for All’ across the school has been successful in doing exactly what it was meant to do and this is seen in the better progress pupils now make. Pupils from all ability groups achieve well, and reach high standards of attainment which are above the national average. Harmonious staff relationships are a strength of the school and provide excellent Christian role models which optimise learning for all pupils. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is nourished and challenged through the Christian values with an emphasis on British values. Religious education (RE) makes a significant contribution to pupils’ development as belief matters in this school. Some pupils understand what it means to be a pupil at a church school and make the link to Christian teaching in the Bible. The Telford & Wrekin Agreed Syllabus for RE provides an effective learning scheme which is making a significant contribution to pupils’ development. It impacts on Christian distinctiveness so that pupils have a developing Christian identity and a deeper respect of Christian values and beliefs. However, the school has identified the need to integrate the ‘Understanding Christianity’ resource so that RE is more accessible for pupils and their spiritual development is enhanced. Pupils are starting to think globally and to be culturally aware of diversity and difference within the world. Self awareness, understanding and knowledge of other faiths and cultures is developed through RE. Other examples of effective practice to foster cultural diversity include an interfaith day, European day of languages and specific work with the multi-cultural service. The school does recognise the need, however, to enhance further pupils’ knowledge and understanding of other world religions to prepare them for life in a multi-faith society. An effective school council allows the pupil voice to contribute to decision making. For example, pupils’ have participated in the evaluation of eating healthy snacks within school. Pupils are encouraged to participate in fundraising for charities, such as Red Nose Day. Pupils feel safe, happy and are proud of their school. Safeguarding is effective. Exemplary standards of behaviour are due to a well-disciplined school which focuses on Christian values. Positive attitudes to learning by pupils are promoted within a caring Christian environment. An inspirational curriculum, which is broad and balanced, together with high quality teaching motivates pupils to attend regularly. Pupils are well mannered and eager to succeed. Classrooms have reflection areas, which, when used, make a significant contribution to pupils’ understanding and spiritual development. Outside reflection areas such as the prayer garden, are undergoing refurbishment to include Christian symbolism. Focussed displays around the school, for example, the ‘Learning Tree’ and artefacts in the foyer visually express the school’s Christian distinctiveness. An orderly atmosphere around the school enhances an environment where pupils’ needs are met, and where progress and achievement can flourish. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**  Worship is distinctively Christian and evokes a sense of gathering and believing. Using a biblical approach, it has a focus on the teaching and person of Jesus Christ with a developing understanding of the Trinity. Worship contributes strongly to school life and impacts on pupils’ spiritual development. Pupils’ beliefs, attitudes and behaviour are influenced by this Christian distinctiveness in worship. Through the moral message, pupils are encouraged to relate their learning to their own behaviour and life, fostering responsibility and respect. This also makes some contribution to pupils’ spiritual development through reinforcing Christian values. Worship is received enthusiastically by pupils who enjoy and are engaged by it. Pupils are keen to sing, praise and pray. One pupil said, ‘We enjoy spending time praising the Lord’. Worship aims to meet the needs of all pupils because it provides some meaningful experiences that are rooted in Christian beliefs. A selection of symbols such as the cross and lighted candle with appropriate liturgical colour are used as a focal point. Other Christian artefacts and Anglican symbols or rituals are being introduced as appropriate. Worship is well planned on a ‘termly’ basis using a cycle of worship themes that embed Christian values and acknowledge the church calendar. This is well supported with materials from Roots & Fruits and Twelve Baskets. However, the school recognises that further development on class room based worship is needed. Pupils have increased their involvement in delivering worship, which reflects progress made on a focus for development from the last inspection. Through the work of the clergy some pupil involvement has evolved such as drama, leading prayer and engaging in some evaluation. The school has introduced a newly formed worship group. This is an on-going development to increase more pupil involvement in planning, leading and evaluation. In addition, the school acknowledges the need to enrich and deepen pupils’ experience of spirituality as an important aspect of worship in a church school. Prayer is an integral part of daily life so pupils speak very well about their faith and prayer life. A new outdoor area to inspire calm and reflection is being created to include Christian imagery to enhance pupils’ prayer and reflection skills. Pupils understand that prayer has a purpose and they value the stillness of prayer and its impact upon their lives. For example, the prayer corners provide enhances pupils’ opportunity to be still and reflect beyond collective worship. They use various prayers including the school prayer and The Lord’s Prayer. Key Christian festivals such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas are celebrated in St. Nicholas’s Church. Many Anglican traditions and practices are embedded in worship. Parents respond positively to invitations to attend and share in worship at special services, such as the Harvest Festival. One parent said, ‘Worship fosters prayer, reflection and silence’. Parents also feel it creates a sacred space where pupils have time to understand God, Jesus and his teaching. They say that they believe it creates a strong sense of a Christian family and belonging to all pupils and staff. Pupils visit the project Inspire at Lichfield Cathedral, which fosters pupils’ understanding of their relationship within the diocese. Evaluating the impact of collective worship on pupils to inform future planning is now in place as a result of work by the foundation governors and clergy. Effective evaluation records of worship from some governor observations, questionnaires and pupils’ interviews provide feedback for development. This is effective. However, they also correctly identify the need for involvement from a wider range of stakeholders to ensure that the quality of worship offered remains substantial, engaging and relevant to pupils’ lives and their personal spiritual growth. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**  The inspirational headteacher is committed to developing an uncompromising and distinctive Christian vision. Her leadership style provides a clear strategic direction which is rooted in her own personal faith. She is strongly supported by a dedicated and engaging deputy headteacher who is contributing significantly to the success of this leadership team. Together, their motivation and vision are taking the school forward. Issues identified in the previous inspection have, and are being, addressed. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher’s leadership. They are very keen to embed further Christian distinctiveness, for example, to improve upon the Christian dimension of the website and other promotional materials. As such, they are contributing purposefully to a clearer and consistent shared Christian vision and strategy which is rooted in Christian values. Staff are keen and motivated to implement the new vision and adopt a child-centred approach to being a church school. New ways of management are being infused slowly and are impacting positively upon the quality of the pupils’ church school experience. For example, pupils have a more informal lunchtime experience with flexible seating arrangements and background music to create an enjoyable social experience. This is an example of how the invitational Christian ethos, that extends into the community is attracting more children for admission to the school. Effective self-evaluation uses tracking systems with a new assessment system which is rigorously used for monitoring and evaluating pupil achievement. Governors accurately evaluate the school’s effectiveness s as a church school, acting as critical friends in school improvement. Together, school leaders and governors plan strategically and have an honest and challenging view of future needs. Insightful succession planning and identified professional development mean staff are given training for middle leadership and beyond. The incumbent and the foundation governor, through their substantial work, have made a distinctive Christian difference to this school. The incumbent is a regular visitor nurturing the close links that exist between the church and school. Statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship are met. Both areas are well-led with enthusiasm. Strong partnerships exist with the diocese, multi-agencies and the wider community, such as the Newport Cluster. Purposeful relationships with parents are based on trust and encouraged through events, such as the E-learning workshop, structured conversations and the work of the Parents Teachers Association. Parents speak highly of the open-door policy and school’s communication with them, and that they now feel more welcomed and valued. They know that the school is a safe and secure environment which enables their child’s academic and personal needs to be met. A parent said that children have a ‘really good education.’ Another said that ‘they know their children are happy in their learning’. This is enhanced through clubs, such as the cooking club and wider educational experiences such as residential visits to Arthog. Parents appreciate and acknowledge the appointment of the new head teacher which has made a substantial difference to how the staff lead and manage learning in school. Parents interviewed on the day of the inspection said, ‘It is like a breath of fresh air’. Inspection evidence supports this. |

SIAMS report May 2017 Newport Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School TF10 7EA