

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Tadpole Farm Church of England Primary Academy

Greene Street
Tadpole Garden Village
Swindon
SN25 2QS

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Bristol
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Not previously inspected
Date of academy conversion	1 September 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust
Date of inspection	29 March 2017
Date of last inspection	Not previously inspected
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 140420
Headteacher	Jane Leo
Inspector's name and number	Rev David Hatrey 844

School context

Tadpole Church of England Primary Academy opened in September 2014 as a new school and moved to its current site in September 2015. It currently has children up to Year 2, but will expand further next year. It is part of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust. The number of children who are eligible for pupil premium funding and those who have English as an additional language are below national averages. The number of children who have special educational needs is broadly in line with national averages.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tadpole Farm Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are good

- Children have a good understanding of Christian values and are increasingly able to articulate their impact on their lives and attainment.
- Teaching in religious education (RE) is consistently good and better in a number of instances.
- Leadership is strong and gives clear direction to the ongoing development of the school as a church school.
- Children's behaviour is of a high standard, they make good relationships which they attribute to the school's Christian character.

Areas to improve

- Involve children in monitoring the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness as well as evaluating, planning and leading worship.
- Create a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating of all aspects of a church school which involves children and leads to ongoing improvements.
- Embed current assessment of RE to provide children with strategies to improve their work and which informs planning.

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

The school identified a core set of Christian values prior to its opening and twelve were agreed: courage, perseverance, forgiveness, compassion, friendship, generosity, justice, respect, service, thankfulness, trust and truthfulness. Children have a growing understanding of these values and recognise their symbols. They talk about what they look like in daily life and give examples of where they have used them. Even the youngest children talk about values. One child commented that 'they help us do nice things for God'. Older children talk about how values teach them to make good choices and tell them what to do in 'tricky' situations. Others add that values show us what Jesus would do. Each week staff nominate children for a 'values certificate' which recognises where they have seen them in action. The award helps children appreciate how values influence thinking and actions in a variety of ways which deepens understanding. Children have a growing understanding of the distinctive Christian nature of values and are increasingly relating them to Bible stories to reflect their meaning. For example, they talk about the courage of David fighting Goliath and service offered in the parable of the good Samaritan. Christian values are strongly woven into teaching and learning. Staff share with children how values support them to learn and children give examples of this. One child's comment was that 'perseverance helped me to make my writing better'. Children know that values make their community special and a good place where they treat everyone as Jesus did. Children see staff model values in daily interactions. The behaviour of children is of a high standard. There are very few instances of children being unkind and, if there are, they are swiftly addressed using the restorative justice approach. Children are beginning to solve issues by using values. The school's Christian character influences the approach to raising attendance by supporting families in practical ways as a demonstration of God's love. Staff and governors share an agreed understanding of spirituality which they all use. Opportunities for spiritual development are identified in planning that indicates which of four aspects is to be explored: myself, others, the world or God. Challenging questions are raised to which children respond. Children's comments show ideas are developing although there are limited instances where children use these in creative ways. The school encourages children of all faiths to share their beliefs and how they celebrate them which help all children to recognise their importance. Children show a high degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own. The school recognises that children's understanding of the role of the local church is at an early stage of development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a high profile in the life of the school. Children recognise it as a time for the whole school family to come together and share with God. As children join worship, they sing enthusiastically using actions which they enjoy. There is an emphasis on visual images, drama and hearing stories that start from their own experiences with opportunities to share their ideas and learn from others. There are good opportunities to reflect on the messages of worship and children are encouraged to think about what they would do or say in response. These are followed up in class so the significance of these is deepened. Children have some understanding of the main Christian festivals. For example, they take part in the nativity which they talk about in detail. Their appreciation of Easter is developed through RE and the Easter experience. Each member of staff prepares one of the stations in the last week of Jesus' life with an activity using music, drama or reflection. These interactive opportunities deepen their understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection, considering why He died. Knowledge of other festivals is at an early stage of development. Links to biblical stories enable children to acquire a good knowledge of Jesus. Younger children identify Christian values in these stories whilst older children explore parables with growing accuracy. A Trinitarian greeting at the start of worship helps children develop an understanding of the nature of the Trinity. Prayer is thoughtfully developed with all children appreciating that this is a way of sharing their ideas with God. Younger children express thank you prayers and see this as a natural part of their day. Their understanding of prayer is developed through 'teaspoon prayers' which include saying sorry and a request for help for themselves and others. Reflection spaces provide opportunities for children to express ideas using prayer cards that provide a way for them to write their personal thoughts. Children explain how moving pebbles into a dish reinforces the idea of giving these thoughts to God. Prayers for festivals and worship are written by children and show a growing depth of understanding as they link to local events. Planning for worship has a good structure where an aspect of each value is explored. Positive links are made to biblical stories which enable more staff to lead worship with greater confidence. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is undertaken at an informal level. Governors attend but do not identify strengths or areas which could be improved. Senior staff are beginning to talk to children about their thoughts, but as yet this has not included worship. Some improvements have been made with classes leading worship and contributing to parts of this. At present children's ideas about worship are not effectively used to inform future improvements.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is at least good and there are a number of examples where this is better. An enquiry approach engages children in their learning. Every two weeks a question is considered in some depth through a range of interactive experiences. For example, the feelings of characters in the Easter story are explored through drama and skilful questioning by staff which deepens children's understanding of events and people's actions as they are encouraged to 'put themselves' into the story. They are confident to express their ideas as they know their responses will be valued. Time is given for them to reflect upon their thoughts and what they mean to them. The use of iPads is imaginative and reinforces key ideas by encouraging collaboration. An Easter garden created by the children has become a focal point in worship with children articulating subject specific vocabulary with confidence. Children record their work in a variety of ways including art and craft which extends their understanding. Written work shows that attainment is good and compares well with other core subjects and national expectations. Work is well matched to the ability of particular groups which enables them to make progress. Christian values are woven strongly into teaching and learning and all staff take opportunities to extend children's understanding of them by demonstrating where they are used in everyday situations showing their relevance and importance. Every two weeks, targets are set for each child to achieve as part of their learning journey, two of these come from RE. Children comment that they enjoy these and frequently consider them first as they are creative or reflective and extend their thinking. They say they are successful in RE as they achieve these targets on their learning ladder which 'boosts' their confidence. Christianity is well taught and are children developing a good understanding of key Christian concepts. Marking of work is becoming more focused on providing greater feedback for children that indicates what they have achieved. At present though it does not always make it clear how they could improve further or extend their thinking by posing challenging questions either verbally or written, though this is developing. New assessment systems are being trialled which provides data that is beginning to be used to inform planning. The school is aware that moderation with other church schools would strengthen this. Children's responses to RE are very good, their comments demonstrate that they enjoy RE, finding it interesting and fun. They feel they learn well and that their ideas help them to contribute to school life and enrich and support their thinking. Monitoring and evaluation of RE is undertaken but not always in sufficient depth to lead to ongoing improvements.

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

At the school's conception the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust and the headteacher set the school's vision. It is very clear that this vision has guided the school on its journey by informing policy and practice at all levels. The headteacher gives strong Christian leadership and lives this out in the daily life of the school. She is fully supported by a skilled and dedicated team who together drive the vision forward. Every year a visioning day enables all staff to reflect on the vision, consider how they contribute to its implementation and set targets to enhance its impact. This is a reflection of their commitment to the work of the school as a church school. The young children do not yet fully understand this vision so a child's strapline is being created. They articulate the vision through Christian values that are lived out through a growing appreciation of how they shape relationships. The school's Christian distinctiveness is apparent in the sense of being a Christian community and in the quality of collective worship and RE. The school's care for all, reflecting God's love, stands out in the support for particular families which have had a marked impact on their lives. School data indicates that children make good progress from their starting points which compares well with national expectations. Effective support for disadvantaged children is well focused enabling them to make progress and develop good attitudes to learning. Rigorous monitoring of pupil progress is established with frequent reviews involving most of the leadership team. Swift action is put in place to address any identified needs. However, monitoring and evaluation of the work of as a church school is completed at a more informal level. Although some evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness has been completed, this has not identified strengths or aspects to further develop the Christian vision. Some changes have been made by the leadership as part of everyday evaluations and these are beginning to be informed by pupil interviews. These do not as yet always influence plans for future actions. Continuing professional development opportunities are well focused on identified needs particularly in RE with adviser support drawn from the Trust. This has enhanced staff skills and knowledge to implement the new Swindon RE agreed syllabus. Guidance and support from the Diocesan Trust is readily discernible notably through governance. Future leaders of church schools are recognised and provided with opportunities to develop the necessary skills. The school is at the forefront of building a community in this emerging village. The head goes beyond expectations taking a leading role to enrich community resources showing God's love and care through her work. The local church is steadily making a greater contribution to school life through leading worship. Experienced RE and collective worship leaders are well supported developing good practice which is making a good impact on children's lives and thoughts fully meeting the statutory requirements.