

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Bunny Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Bunny, Nottinghamshire NG11 6QW

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>      | <b>Good</b>                         |
| <b>Diocese</b>                             | <b>Southwell and Nottingham</b>     |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade            | Good                                |
| Local authority                            | Nottinghamshire                     |
| Date of inspection                         | 15 March 2018                       |
| Date of last inspection                    | March 2013                          |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Controlled Primary 122751 |
| Headteacher                                | Dan Rhodes                          |
| Inspector's name and number                | Lizzie McWhirter 244                |

#### School context

Currently there are 104 pupils on roll who are mainly White British and from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding support or who have special educational needs are both below the national average. Bunny Primary School serves the village and surrounding area. It is in the heart of the village opposite the parish church whose rector has been in post since April 2017 and is also a governor. The headteacher has been in post since 2009, before the last denominational inspection. The religious education [RE] subject leader has been in post for sixteen years.

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

- This is a welcoming and nurturing Christian community which serves its pupils and its parents very well.
- The partnership with the local churches ensures the school's Christian character permeates all school life and that pupils know the Christian story very well.
- The RE subject leader enriches the profile this key subject has in this church school, enabling pupils to be both excited and challenged by this important aspect of Christian distinctiveness, nurturing their spiritual and personal development.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that the regular and robust monitoring of RE and collective worship by governors supports the RE subject leader in her role and informs the whole governing body of focussed development plans for these two key aspects of church school distinctiveness.
- Extend pupils' leadership of collective worship gathering their viewpoints more frequently to enrich their own spiritual journeys.
- Deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith and their encounter with people of other world faiths to nurture their global awareness and their spiritual and cultural development.
- Enable pupils to grow in the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Extend their knowledge of key saints, such as Mary to whom their parish church is dedicated. This is an important part of their heritage and tradition in their ongoing journey in this church school, with the support of the church communities.

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

Bunny's school's vision of 'Growing and Learning within a caring Christian community' helps inspire all to embark on a lifelong journey to develop knowledge, faith and skills. In this welcoming community there is a family atmosphere with a focus on each individual child. Christian values, such as forgiveness and compassion are reinforced through collective worship. Pupils are fully aware that such values stem from Jesus' teaching in the Bible. Attendance is good and exclusions are rare so pupils are in school and can progress in their learning and grow in wisdom. Relationships and behaviour are good. Moreover, pastoral care is excellent; with a well-used system of pastoral cards in place should pupils need to talk to an adult. Pupils affirm the importance of, 'being kind to others and treating them as you would want to be treated'. Here at Bunny, where it is important to know what it means to be human and part of a community, pupils 'learn to be inquisitive and creative individuals who are challenged to do their best'. Good progress is made especially by vulnerable pupils. The school attributes this to small cohorts and the consistency of pupils being taught by the same teacher for two years. In addition, positive behaviour management and pupils being supported at home has made a difference to academic and personal development. Pupils are reflecting more and making good decisions within a positive 'I can do' culture in school. Parents and pupils alike feel listened to and value school as a safe space.

Worship and RE make good contributions to pupils' spiritual and personal development. This is enriched by use of the outdoor areas, class reflection areas, gardening club and community links with the parish church, for example through film nights and 'Chat in Church'. Pupils find RE both excites and challenges them because it is well led. For example, pupils comment that RE is 'fun and makes you think'. Some older pupils have been enjoying studying the 'Kingdom of God'. They like to ask big questions, such as, 'Does God accept everyone in heaven?' and speak of heaven as 'a very forgiving place'.

RE has a prominent profile in school, using the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus, with 'Understanding Christianity' as a resource. This is already beginning to make a difference. For example, pupils can explain the Christian story of salvation very well. They speak of Incarnation as, 'When God came to earth in Jesus' body. He came down to teach people the ways of God and make the world a better place'.

Areas for development include revisiting the use of prayer in each classroom, linking it to 'Understanding Christianity'. The school makes use of 'Time Travelling' visits to Southwell Minster for older pupils as well as mini Time Travelling for younger ones. Whilst visits to Christian places of worship are important as a church school, some pupils have also enjoyed visiting a synagogue and 'looking at the scrolls'. Such visits support pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils acknowledge the importance of 'learning about world peace from one another'. The school has already identified the need to focus on Christianity's global dimension as well as enrich pupils' experiences of meeting with people of faith.

Christian values, such as love, joy and hope inspire and encourage pupils to grow into engaging members of their community. Some older pupils are involved in making a difference to their local community through their involvement in the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders Award. They know the importance of 'shining as lights and being kind to someone who is feeling lonely'. The school has a lasting memorial to a former pupil who died. Joy's Bench is well used, including pupils who read to Joy's mother. She is a welcome and regular visitor to school and enjoys hearing the pupils relate Bible stories to her.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is an important part of school life at Bunny and enjoyed by adults, including parents, and pupils alike. Pupils especially enjoy worship led by visitors, which includes a range of clergy. Worship is varied in its approach and has an emphasis on Christian values, key festivals in the church year and biblical teaching. There are close links with nearby St Mary's Church and its rector. The pattern of worship includes church services at Harvest and Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Ascension Day, which are all attended by parents. Pupils say they value 'coming together and learning about stories from the Bible, such as leadership and bravery'. They go on to say they like church services as, 'they make you think more about Jesus and you have the big cross in front of you when you are praying'.

There is a significant partnership with the local churches, including the Methodist youth worker. For example, there is a new energy with visitors, such as church members coming in to lead worship in school. Pupils enjoy acting out key Bible stories, such as the wisdom of Solomon and Palm Sunday and say they would like to do this more. They relate this latter event as, 'when Jesus came into town and everyone worshipped him and sang Hosanna'. Areas for ongoing development include continuing to work on spiritual growth derived for worship, which the Thursday visitors are said to be good at. In addition, the school recognises that the active involvement of pupils in the regular planning and leading of worship is underdeveloped. The school carries out worship surveys bi-annually but acknowledge that foundation governors need to monitor collective worship and gather pupils' viewpoints more frequently.

Pupils are encouraged to write and read their own prayers as well as pray and reflect as well as lead aspects of

worship. For example, Year 6 pupils plan and lead the Leavers' service.

Pupils are growing in their knowledge of the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, they speak of Jesus as 'very special and risen from the dead'. They know that the symbolism of the Holy Spirit includes as 'dove or angel' and recall the time when a dove 'landed on Jesus when he was getting baptised'. They are also beginning to recognise the trinity when their rector gives a blessing at the end of worship. They can explain the significance of Ascension-tide as when 'Jesus went back into heaven' and Pentecost as, 'The Holy Spirit came down and everyone could understand them', that is the disciples. The school welcomes support from the local churches to help enrich pupils' learning about The Holy Trinity further as well as extend their knowledge about key saints, such as Mary after whom their parish church is dedicated. Currently, pupils' understanding in these aspects of Christian belief and worship is less well developed.

Worship also inspires pupils to charitable action. For example, one pupil said, 'a few days ago we were thinking about Christian Aid and helping to provide clean water'.

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

Bunny's Christian character is woven throughout all aspects of school life, with the core aims and values revisited in September 2016, shared with everyone. Areas from the last inspection have been addressed, with a clear focus for future development to support pupils' academic and personal development. Moreover, the wellbeing of pupils and staff alike is an important aspect for governors. They say that, 'caring for all staff including non-teaching staff is paramount'. Governors are also committed to developing and securing leadership at all levels.

Another key priority is the robust and regular monitoring of RE by governors so it is on a par with other core subjects. This supports the RE subject leader who attends training and feeds back to staff and governors. The RE profile has gone up since the current RE subject leader has been on Bunny's staff and her colleagues have grown in their subject knowledge. For example, they are enjoying using the 'Understanding Christianity' resource as 'it brings things together as part of the story'. Staff know the importance of enabling the pupils to understand their place in and being part of the world they live in. This has been enhanced by drama with Footprints Theatre Company, and has been an important part of RE and linked to Christian values. Such activities affirm 'all are unique and all are special as pupils and we learn from other cultures and disagree well', as one young pupil confirmed. The RE long term plan ensures the integrity of each religion, with some parents of faiths other than Christian, helping awareness and understanding. Both RE and collective worship are well led and managed and meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors have benefitted from diocesan training and support. Governors positively welcome diocesan training for all governors, not just foundation governors.

Community links are good with strong village traditions, such as the Strawberry Fayre, which one pupil said, 'all helps to keep the school going'. In addition, 'Messy Church' and other village activities take place. Pupils and adults take part in events to help the wider community, such as Sport Relief.

Staff confirm that Bunny is a, 'family friendly school at the heart of the community promoting quality learning, morals and kindness'. Bunny acknowledges the importance of the whole community understanding what it means to be a church school going forward on its journey to school improvement.

SIAMS report March 2018 Bunny CE VC Primary School Nottinghamshire NG11 6QW