

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

### Blaby Stokes Church of England Primary School

Queens Road, Blaby, Leicester, LE8 4EG	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Leicester</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	February 2018
Name of multi-academy trust	Learn Academies Trust
Date/s of inspection	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
Date of last inspection	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 145488
Acting headteacher	James Cheesman
Inspector's name and number	Kathryn Allsopp 836

#### School context

Blaby Stokes CE Primary school is a larger than average-size primary school based in the village of Blaby although some pupils come from outside the village. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. The substantive headteacher has been in post since January 2012 and has been absent since September 2017. She is due to return in April 2018. In her absence the school has been led by an acting headteacher who is the substantive deputy headteacher and has been in post for six years. The school joined the Learn Academy Trust in February 18 following its recent Ofsted inspection when it was graded inadequate.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blaby Stokes as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Leaders are fully committed to the effectiveness of the school as a church school although this is not explicitly understood by the wider school community.
- Leaders are working very effectively with LearnAT and school development planning demonstrates that they have an accurate understanding of school effectiveness and work is underway to make improvements.
- Relationships across the school community are strong and behaviour is good as a result of a strong focus on individuals and their families. Christian values are understood to underpin this work but there is a lack of consistency in the vocabulary used to explain how the values work in daily life.
- The high profile given to RE is making a considerable contribution to the Christian character of the school.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that a distinctively Christian vision and ensuing values are explicit, clearly understood and expressed by the whole school community.
- Develop collective worship by using the expertise of staff, governors and clergy in the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship and by extending the range of settings.
- Develop the leadership of this church school by providing support and training for current leaders to deepen their understanding of church school leadership.
- Sustain the growing partnerships with the multi academy trust and local churches for the mutual benefit of all.

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

Blaby Stokes is a welcoming and inclusive church school where parents say pupils feel 'safe and secure'. Despite its large size, relationships across the school community are strong. Behaviour is good and individual support is given to those who require it. When talking about behaviours pupils talk confidently about character. When prompted they are able to link the character strengths to Bible stories, e.g. Noah's perseverance when building the Ark. They can also explain how they use restorative justice to resolve issues although they do not draw on the vocabulary of Christian values to talk about behaviour. Parents appreciate the caring ethos where every child is known well, 'looked after and enabled to flourish'. They recognise and appreciate the Christian values that underpin this ethos and feel that 'these values will stay with children as they grow'. Displays of high quality RE work throughout the classrooms and the corridors make it evident that this is a church school.

Pupils are making satisfactory progress. Staff are working hard to address the underachievement of pupils which was identified by Ofsted (2017) and data suggests that improvement has occurred in all areas and the school is now closer to being in line with national averages. Learners are confident and enthusiastic. They benefit from a rich curriculum with many enrichment activities. As a result the large majority want to come to school. Where issues occur with attendance leaders demonstrate care for individuals and work closely with families to overcome difficulties. However school policies do not have a strong enough connection between this approach and the school's Christian values.

Every classroom has a reflection area and these are used by a large number of pupils to 'place their prayers, reflect on current events and ask big questions'. There are also willow structures in the extensive grounds where pupils describe going for 'quiet reflection time'. As a result pupils' spiritual development is positive and their response is increasing their spiritual awareness. Cultural awareness has been developed through the teaching of different religions, visits to places of worship and visitors from different faiths. This together with RE, worship and the many varied opportunities offered to pupils means that they have a strong appreciation of diversity. RE is well led. The teaching of RE meets requirements and enhances pupils' understanding of Christian beliefs and practice, and contributes well to the wider Christian life of the school.

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

Pupils describe collective worship as a time 'when we learn about God'. Worship takes different forms across the week including whole school, key stage and class worship. A worship table with a coloured cloth, cross and copy of the Bible signal that this is an important time and pupils enter quietly. Worship is Christian in nature and is based upon the themes suggested by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE). These are adapted to meet pupil need, for example staff planned worship about showing respect to improve behaviour around the school. It also includes special events from the Christian calendar. It is planned by the worship co-coordinator and led by senior leaders, all members of the teaching staff, local clergy and foundation governors. This makes it relevant to learners personally and learners say it helps them 'to learn to respect each other' and 'to act in the way Jesus taught'. Parents attend celebration services and occasionally church services. They appreciate that their children are 'learning about Christianity' and are rewarded for demonstrating positive 'character strengths and Christian values'. They attribute this to the good behaviour and 'care that pupils show towards each other'. As a result relationships across the school are very good. This is demonstrated by the range of charity work carried out by the school often instigated by the pupils themselves. Pupils enjoy worship; they enjoy taking part, listen with respect and answer questions in an open and thoughtful manner. However they are not involved in the planning or delivery of worship.

Prayer is a regular part of school life. Pupils recognise the importance of prayer in their lives describing it as a way 'to speak to God'. They use a teaspoon (tsp) as a way to remember that prayers can be 'to say thank you, sorry and please'. Prayers are said throughout the day including the Lord's Prayer, lunchtime prayer and prayer for the end of the day. The school has its own prayer, which was written by former pupils. Pupils write their own prayers and they explain that they place them 'in boxes in the reflection spaces' in their classrooms. They also recognise that 'you can pray anywhere'. Learners can describe some aspects of the life of Jesus and understand his importance to Christians stating 'people were turning away from God and Jesus helped them to believe again', 'he was a good role model'. They have met the concept of the Trinity in their RE lessons but are not confident in their understanding.

Pupils have some opportunities to worship in the local churches during their time in school for example for harvest and for the Christingle service. Information about church events is shared with families via the school and as a result some families attend at other times. Senior leaders are looking forward to working with the newly appointed incumbent in a manner that is helpful to both school and church going forward, following the retirement of the priest in charge. Regular monitoring and evaluation of worship takes place, which gives an overview of coverage with some evaluation. However it does not involve the whole school community neither does it inform change, and this has slowed the pace of improvement.

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

Leaders are fully committed to the effectiveness of the school and are working hard to improve outcomes for all pupils. Their aim is to provide a church school where pupils feel 'safe, secure, love and respect'. However this vision has not been expressed as explicitly Christian to the wider school community and stakeholders do not readily understand the difference it makes. The school has experienced a period of upheaval over the last twelve months. As a result current leaders have identified the need for further training in the role. The acting head teacher and governors, supported by a governor appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE), know the school well and have evaluated its Christian distinctiveness accurately. They have created an improvement plan recognising that the school's distinctively Christian vision and values need to be made more explicit and integral to the work of the school. They have also worked to raise the quality of worship and of the quality of RE teaching which are both making a contribution to the Christian character of the school.

Leaders are working to ensure that all staff are good teachers committed to developing 'well rounded pupils'. Parents appreciate that all staff 'go above and beyond' for their pupils and feel that they are 'thriving and well supported'.

Collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. The co-ordinator of RE is experienced and has successfully led a number of new developments including the introduction of the Understanding Christianity materials and the locally agreed RE syllabus. She has attended training led by the DBE and cascaded this to teachers and to governors. As a result pupils are growing in confidence to talk about key Christian concepts such as creation and salvation, which they explain as 'Jesus saving people'. This is the direct result of the school's decision to adopt the Understanding Christianity material.

The school has good links with the two local churches and pupils have met the newly appointed incumbent and talk positively about worship led by the pastor from the Baptist church. The school development plan outlines work to develop these links more strongly and to work with clergy to develop all aspects of its Christian distinctiveness. The new incumbent has already met with the RE co-ordinator and led worship. This work is helping worship make a difference to the whole community.

Leaders are committed to the school's Christian distinctiveness for the future. They have secured the strategic future of the school in light of the local and national picture by joining the Learn Academy Trust in February 2018. However the MAT has supported it since September 2017 by providing excellent support and this has been instrumental in the progress made and which is beginning to benefit all stakeholders. The acting headteacher has been supported by a very experienced church school headteacher from the MAT and this has enhanced the developing understanding of Christian distinctiveness and the work of the school.