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St. Nicolas C.E. Primary School  
Boxhill Walk  
Abingdon  
Oxfordshire  
OX14 1HB  
16/11/16

### **SIAMS Inspection**

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to inform you that our SIAMS inspection took place on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the process, the inspection for Diocesan Church Schools is called '*Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools*' and takes place every five years. The principal objective of the inspection is to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school.

Three key questions are considered when judging graded outcomes for the school.

1. How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?
2. What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?
3. How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

During the inspection all aspects of school provision were evaluated including achievement, teaching and learning and behaviour.

Schools are graded for each key question and an overall judgement will be reached. Schools can be considered 'inadequate', 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'outstanding'.

I am delighted to inform you that our overall judgement was '**outstanding**', a truly fantastic outcome for the school community and something that we should all be incredibly proud of.

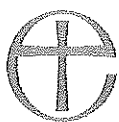
I have attached the ratified SIAMS report with this letter for you to read at your leisure.

May I take this opportunity to thank every member of the school community who took a proactive role during the inspection, and over the last few years, in order to embed the Christian values and ensure a high level of provision for our pupils.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Spooner  
Headteacher





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

<b>St Nicolas CE Primary School (Voluntary Controlled)</b>	Boxhall Walk Abingdon OX14 1HB
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese/Methodist District</b>	<b>Oxford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Oxford
Date/s of inspection	20 October 2016
Date of last inspection	21 November 2011
School's unique reference number	123166
Headteacher	Andrew Spooner
Inspector's name and number	Olwyn Davison-Oakley NS No: 822

### School context

St Nicolas CE Primary School is a larger than average urban school that draws from a wide range of social economic circumstances. The pupils are mainly of White British heritage and the number of pupils supported by pupil premium is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is increasing. After a relatively long period of staff stability a new Headteacher was appointed in September 2015.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Nicolas as a Church of England school are outstanding

- As a result of the headteacher's vision, explicit, distinctively Christian values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school resulting in high standards of achievement and behaviour.
- Respectful relationships between all members of the school community directly result from the Christian character that underpins life in the school.
- Pupils and staff enjoy engaging in a range of reflection and prayer activities which deepen personal spirituality throughout the school.
- Children enjoy school and attendance is high because of the Christian ethos that promotes the value of all children as equals.
- Leaders readily monitor and articulate the impact of Christian values on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) which leads to continued improvement.

### Areas to improve

- In order to ensure the Christian ethos of the school continues to meet the needs of all learners ensure that the school has an effective system of monitoring and evaluation driven by the governors that involves all members of the school community
- In order to improve pupils' understanding of national and global communities, further develop appropriate links.

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

St Nicolas CE Primary is an inclusive and friendly school where pupils and staff welcome all visitors as a direct result of its distinctive, inclusive Christian character. The staff underpin the school's ethos of living out Christian faith by upholding and teaching Christian values, and as a result pupils are cared for and are nurtured, loved and respected whatever their ability or faith. The home school link worker works closely with families to ensure that they feel a valued part of the school community. Consequently, attendance is good.

Parents are glad that their children attend this school and report that Christian values are deeply embedded in daily life. They affirm that this makes a significant difference to their children's self-esteem and behaviour. Parents state that their children are well prepared for their next steps in life because of these values and can 'cope with any situation'. Behaviour of pupils is exemplary and firmly rooted in respectful relationships. Parents regard the school as a 'family'. Christian values are closely linked to everyday life and their impact on achievement of pupils, academically and socially is clearly articulated by all members of the school community. Teachers talk openly about the way in which the Christian values influence learning and behaviour and parents state that their children are cared for and encouraged from their first day in school. Parents, staff and governors are proud that pupils from St Nicolas are easily identified in their next school by their resilience and courage to 'have a go' at any challenge. As a result of the school's passion in working within Christian values, pupils enjoy school and feel safe to express themselves, knowing that their opinions are valued. The headteacher greets pupils and families each day on the playground, and his approachability as well as that of all staff reinforces the inclusivity of the school and its Christian character.

Pupils readily articulate how the Christian values such as friendship and unity and the teaching from the Bible help them to live a better life. They are proud to have responsibility given to them and work hard to make the school a happy place for everyone, appreciating the opportunity to help others in school and in the wider community. Pupils understand the importance of service for others and the school council is active in a number of charitable activities which demonstrate that they want to help to make the world a better place. Religious Education provides the pupils with a wide range of experiences that contribute to the Christian character of the school and pupils understand the importance of respect for diversity within other faith communities. New resources in RE enhance the RE curriculum and develop pupils' independence. Through enquiry based teaching and the growth mind set initiative pupils are encouraged to express and listen to the opinions of others. Pupils demonstrate respect for their peers. The school has recently begun to explore how to develop links with Christian communities at a national or global level in order to improve pupils' understanding of difference and diversity within other communities. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular provision that is available for all pupils. Consequently all children feel included in these activities and their enjoyment of school is reinforced. Visits to local places of worship, a residential Year 6 visit to Kilvrough and a well-developed forest school initiative contribute to their SMSC development. The school celebrates pupils' work throughout the school and bright, interactive displays and reflection areas nurture spiritual development. Pupils take responsibility for key areas in Christian distinctiveness such as the prayer spaces and they contribute to the impact of collective worship through questionnaires.

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

Collective worship has a high profile in the school. It is planned to be inclusive for all and as a direct result of this it has an outstanding impact on the spiritual life of the school. Pupils of all faiths feel included by the worship and parents affirmed that they are welcome to class worship and festivals in the local churches. These opportunities for worship are valued by all. Collaborative planning with local clergy ensures that worship is highly valued and this makes a significant impact on the pupils' behaviour and understanding of the Christian way of life. The headteacher and local clergy have developed a comprehensive two year collective worship plan. This plan enables worship to be led by different staff and the vicar from the local church, offering rich experiences both in school and at the local churches at Christian festivals. Worship in St Helen's and Christchurch is valued by the whole school community including parents. Parents are delighted that the school is involved in the St Nicolas Day celebration each year, stating that it is excellent that their children are involved in such a large community event. A small prayer group meet weekly to pray for the school community, and pupils and staff contribute to prayers. Christian values are cleverly linked to stories and teaching from the Bible which makes them relevant for all in worship.

Conversation with pupils endorses the importance that the school places on the teachings of Jesus and of prayer. Pupils are active participants in worship which is based on Christian values, and they reflect on issues such as equality, enhancing relationships throughout the school. Pupils readily confirm that the school values help everyone to be better people and that friendship is improved because of them.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school values and their Biblical links, clearly recognising that there is a strong message which links Bible stories and Christian values to their everyday life in school and at home. Mutual respect between staff and pupils is very evident. Pupils are aware of some Anglican traditions of rituals, responses, reflection and prayer. Worship begins with the lighting of the three wick candle to represent the Holy Trinity and a further candle is lit to denote the beginning of shared prayers and personal reflection. Pupils demonstrated the importance placed on prayer by their sensitive response during prayers in worship. Pupils are able to recognise the importance of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and explained with confidence their understanding of this. Pupils engage and contribute enthusiastically throughout the worship by sharing thoughts, reading prayers and singing hymns. Pupils and school leaders have been involved in monitoring and evaluating collective worship through questionnaires and discussion, although systems for this have not yet been fully embedded. Pupils lead class worship and the collective worship co-ordinator is keen to develop this further. Pupils understand that prayer is important and that reflection can take place anywhere. They report enthusiastically about the prayer spaces in the school and how pupil worship leaders encourage the use of these at playtime and lunchtime. They feel valued that the staff have entrusted them with promoting prayer in times outside of collective worship and proactively support the use of these prayer spaces. Parents report that their children appreciate the opportunity to lead prayer in this way and are happy with their children's involvement. Pupils clearly see the value of prayer both in worship and outside of worship.

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

Leaders in the school are consistent and confident in articulating and promoting the school's Christian vision and values. The impact of these is the high level of respect shown to all, whatever their background. Pupils feel safe and nurtured and are able to take risks in their learning.

The headteacher ensures that life in the school is informed by a distinctive Christian vision and school leaders recognise the importance of planning, monitoring and evaluating Christian distinctiveness; however, governors do not yet challenge the headteacher and senior leaders in the school sufficiently in this area. School leaders, including governors, place great importance on the professional, personal and spiritual development of all staff and governors, and have identified areas for support in skills and expertise. They are committed to the development of future school leaders and work closely with the diocese to provide a comprehensive programme of continual professional development and advice for school improvement. The school recently introduced new RE resources to enhance the curriculum, and the impact of staff training in the use of these resources now needs close monitoring to measure the improvement in standards.

Parents are happy with the school and its impact on the attitudes and values of their children. They feel welcomed and are pleased to contribute to school life so that pupils benefit. They feel that the Christian values of the school result in calm behaviour and an ability to attempt any challenge. They speak with enthusiasm of the school's pastoral care and the staff commitment to their pupils' needs, socially and academically. They are involved in self-evaluation of the school through parent surveys.

The relationship with St Helen's Church is strong, with pastoral and spiritual support from the local incumbent. This provides a strong link with the community and strengthens the schools distinctive character. This also provides pastoral and spiritual support for the staff. The school is further supported by effective links with other local churches. However, understanding of the benefits from links with national and global communities has yet to be embedded in the school. As a result of the shared Christian ethos, the headteacher and staff work to achieve the vision for each pupil to attain well regardless of their background or ability. Pupil standards are high and the impact of the school development plan ensures that all children continue to make rapid progress.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.

