Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| **Dolton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School** | The Square  Dolton  Winkleigh  Devon  EX19 8QF | |
| **Current SIAMS inspection grade** | **Satisfactory** | |
| **Diocese** | **Exeter** | |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade: | Good | |
| Local authority | Devon | |
| Name of federation | **The Tarka Federation** | |
| Date of inspection | **27 September 2016** | |
| Date of last inspection | 19 September 2011 | |
| School’s unique reference number | 113450 | |
| Headteacher | Rachel Brennan | |
| Inspector’s name and number | David Hatrey 844 |  |

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| **School context**  Dolton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is a smaller than average rural school. It is part of the Tarka Federation working in conjunction with a nearby school with whom they have shared the head teacher since January 2010. The number of children who have English as an additional language is below national averages, the number of children who receive pupil premium funding is in line, whilst the number of children who have special educational needs is above national averages. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dolton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory**   * Learners’ behaviour and their relationships are good and they sometimes attribute these to the Christian character of the school. * Learners understand the purpose of prayer and have opportunities to use this in school. * Worship, religious education (RE) and other aspects of the curriculum are based upon Christian values but these are implicit rather than made explicit. |
| **Areas to improve**   * Embed and provide a theological underpinning to the distinctive Christian vision and values that enables all children to articulate the impact that this makes on their lives so that church school distinctiveness becomes an explicit aspect of the life of the school. * Raise the quality of teaching in religious education so that the attainment of learners is at least in line with national expectations. * Establish a robust system of monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of church school life that involves all stakeholders. * Develop planning, monitoring and evaluation for collective worship to secure and support children’s understanding of the Christian vision and values of the school. |

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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory at meeting the needs of all learners**  The school has adopted 4 core Christian values to underpin its work and life as a Church school. These are; patience, joy, love and kindness. These were selected by the children’s ethos committee to influence and shape everyday life. Children have some understanding of these values and could explain what they looked like in daily life giving some practical examples. Trying to link the values with Biblical teaching was challenging for children, few could attempt this and there is general confusion in their understanding as the stories they describe often do not relate to the value. Therefore, the impact of these Christian values on the lives of the children is limited. Children recognise that values come from the Bible and are given by Jesus to show us how we should live. Yet children could not articulate that these values make a difference to their thoughts and actions. Many children are confident to share examples of how well they support one another, particularly the older ones through the “Buddy system” and are involved in fund raising projects. Behaviour is generally good and relationships strong between children of all ages. If bullying occurs this is addressed by staff immediately and parents are involved in resolving issues. There is some low level disruption in class which the school is resolving. One of the targets from the previous inspection was to develop learners understanding and expression of spirituality across the curriculum. Some progress has been made towards this, a class reflection diary used by the younger children shows a range of thoughtful responses. These show a questioning attitude exploring their own understanding, they are eager to share ideas. This is not seen in the work of the older children. Planned opportunities for reflection emanate only from class worship. Identifying experiences in other curriculum areas has yet to be completed, so valuable opportunities are lost. Children feel that reflection times are helpful as a time of calm, but the significance of this was not strong as the school has not given this a high enough profile. There is a growing understanding of world faiths, visits to other places of worship, such as the synagogue support this. Children are interested in finding out about these making comparisons and recognising differences. Links with the Morning Star mission in India, enables them to understand more about other cultures. A degree of tolerance and respect for those who hold different views to their own is evident. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**  Planning for collective worship is drawn up by the head teacher using the Leicester Diocesan model, which provides themes for collective worship and RE. Themes are selected from these linked to the Christian year with associated bible readings. A range of themes and Christian values are explored which means that children do not receive sustained teaching which deepens their understanding of their own Christian values. Knowledge of the church’s year is better with celebrations for main Christian festivals held. Children can explain the significance of these in some detail. They contribute to worship through drama, writing prayers and music, welcoming the whole community to these special celebrations. Every day worship takes place, either in church or within the school. It can involve the whole school or be undertaken within classes, with a variety of clergy and staff to lead them. Only a few acts of worship could be recalled by children. They did not think that worship and the teaching influence their thoughts and actions. Therefore, the impact of collective worship is limited. Prayer is taught well. Children knew that this is a way of sharing thoughts and ideas with God, believing that there would be a response. Younger children write asking or thank you prayers. This is developed with older children where they would think of others or respond to national incidents. Prayer stations in each class and the hall give children further opportunities to use prayer. Church and school had created a prayer day with various workshops at hands on level, however, these have not been built upon. Most children could say something about Jesus recognising that He is important to Christianity. Their knowledge of Jesus is often fragmented with parts of stories being given and unsure what parables they know might mean. Children were unaware of the Trinity. Monitoring and evaluation of worship has not been undertaken recently by members of the school family so there has been no ongoing development. Previously the children’s ethos committee asked children what they liked about worship. Minor changes arose from this such as using coloured cloths representing the church’s year for the focus table and the use of real candles. Children expressed a desire to be more involved in worship but as yet this has not been acted upon. |
| **The effectiveness of the religious education is inadequate** Quality of teaching in RE is variable, some is at least satisfactory whilst others is inadequate. In Key Stage two work is not always effectively matched to the needs of the children with too little challenge for the older children, but too difficult for some of the younger ones. Pace in lessons varies and children are not always engaged in their learning. The impact of this is evident in standards achieved, for two years standards attained by the time children leave the school are below national expectations. Children say that they enjoy RE and are interested in the subject, but they do not feel it makes a difference to their daily lives. Therefore, at present teaching in RE does not contribute to developing children’s spirituality or the Christian values. Use of the Devon Agreed syllabus ensures that sufficient time is devoted to teaching Christianity. Assessment in RE was developed, which was one of the previous inspection targets. However, this has been replaced with assessments without levels. The school is developing this. The school handled concerns from parents about teaching children about Islam sensitively and effectively. The school enables children to see this as another world faith. The previous RE coordinator had been effective in establishing a range of good practice. Lessons were monitored and guidance given to raise the impact of teaching further. New initiatives were introduced, such as the prayer focus areas in class and visits to other places of worship. In the current position where the school is seeking to raise standards elsewhere the importance of RE has been temporarily lost. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is inadequate**  “Each of us is unique and special to God,” is at the heart of the head’s vision for this church school. As such they should receive the highest quality of education to meet their diverse needs and experience love and forgiveness. The school is seeking to place Christian values at the centre of school life, creating this caring church family. This vision is shared by governors, whilst children have some understanding of this. Christian distinctiveness is shown for example through the school’s dedicated care for individuals at crucial times in their lives. This has made a real impact for these children. At present the leadership and management of this church school is inadequate. This is because standards of attainment in the core subjects have been below national expectations for a number of years, although it is recognised that the number of children in each cohort is small. The school is acutely aware of the necessity of raising standards in some key areas with all of the head’s enthusiasm dedicated to this. In addressing these the focus on being a church school has gone. Monitoring and evaluation by the school has centred upon standards, excluding Christian distinctiveness. Therefore, little or no progress has been made in the area of being a distinctive church school as there have been no plans to raise the impact of this further. RE does not have a high profile. Worship, RE and other aspects of a church school are informed by a range of Christian values, but these are implicit rather than made clear. Children know they are part of a church school, although they are not always able to recognise or articulate the impact this is having on their lives and thinking. Indications show that the school’s focus on raising attainment is slowly being effective with better progress being made, although still below expectations. This is evident in key stage one whilst in key stage two most year groups are making better progress. Positive relations with the diocese have seen joint workings to move into a church multi academy trust. Good relationships with the local church are evident with the vicar leading worship as well as creating some interactive theme days. Both parents and children celebrate the family atmosphere which the school has created, where everyone is valued. Parents indicate that one of the strengths is the way school develops children’s confidence so they overcome barriers to their learning. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. |

SIAMS report September 2016 Dolton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School EX19 8QF