

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

All Saints Church of England (VC) First School

Church Lane, Standon, Staffordshire, ST21 6RN	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Staffordshire
Date of inspection	1 March 2018
Date of last inspection	13 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary controlled 124274
Headteacher	Vicki Bradley
Inspector's name and number	Eleanor Benson 920

School context

All Saints CE (VC) First School is a very small rural school with 57 pupils aged 5 – 9 years. There is a nursery on site run by the school's governing body. The percentages are much lower than average of pupils eligible for pupil premium and of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of those with English as an additional language is much lower than average. An increase in school numbers has led to a recent re-organisation of classes. Pupils are taught in three classes, of which two are mixed age.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints CE (VC) First School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher, governors and staff share a clear Christian vision which is embraced by all members of the school community. They are highly committed to the continuous development of the school's Christian character, drawing on realistic self-evaluation.
- Core Christian values are lived out by pupils and staff, producing exemplary behaviour. As a result of the warm and supportive relationships within the school community, pupils make good progress and flourish as individuals.
- A close reciprocal partnership between the parish and the school, with strong leadership by the vicar and headteacher, enriches the collective worship, making it engaging, varied and inspiring.
- Religious education (RE) is well led and taught, raising pupils' interest in spiritual and moral issues and informing pupils' religious understanding.
- Dynamic links between the school, families and community make an important contribution to the Christian character of the school as well as strengthening the local community.

Areas to improve

- Develop the teaching of Christian values by linking them more explicitly to pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Continue to extend the understanding of diversity gained through the teaching of RE by increasing pupils' direct experiences of other world faiths and of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith.

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

This is an extremely caring, inclusive and happy school. Central to the life of the school community are six core Christian values of hope, endurance, acceptance, reverence, thankfulness and service. Pupils and staff are very conscious of these Christian values and routinely apply them whether it be to the discussion of a book's characters in an English lesson or of a pupil's behaviour. An emphasis on acceptance and thankfulness helps pupils to settle and form friendships quickly. Putting the value of service into practice, pupils of all ages befriend, help and care for each other across year groups. In addition pupils give to various charities, most recently, Operation Christmas Child, a women's refuge and the poppy collection. The combination of carefully considered behaviour management strategies with the focus on Christian values results in excellent behaviour and attendance above the national average. A parent commented that the Christian values 'really soak into' children and they 'become better people'. Pupils refer to specific Christian values according to the situation. A typical comment from a pupil in relation to learning was that 'sometimes I think of things and give up. Hope helps me to remember to carry on.' Others spoke, in particular, of endurance and acceptance. The result is that pupils are enthusiastic about learning and their achievement and progress at each stage are good, regularly exceeding national standards. The core Christian values are well linked to Bible stories and verses although their foundations in the big story of salvation in Jesus Christ are less firmly established.

Curiosity in learning is developed through RE lessons. In common with foundation subjects the curriculum is based on challenging learning questions such as, 'Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'?' These stimulate pupils' independent thinking skills. The teaching of Christianity in RE has been strengthened by the recent introduction of Understanding Christianity. Pupils have a sound knowledge of Bible stories and Christian beliefs which underpins their understanding of the core Christian values. The teaching of Sikhism and Islam has been developed to give an accurate knowledge of basic beliefs. This has led to class discussion among older pupils which questioned stereotypes about Muslims. Since the last inspection some multi-cultural links have been initiated to enhance pupils' understanding of other faiths and of the world-wide church. However, pupils have limited opportunities for a more direct experience of other world faiths and of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith. Pupils enjoy RE and are challenged morally and intellectually by what they learn. For example, in response to studying the Sikh value of hospitality, pupils collected food for the local food bank to distribute. When studying the 10 commandments, a pupil said that they not only learnt some commandments for the first time but that they wanted to obey them. Pupils listen carefully to each other and to adults and are confident in discussing beliefs and moral issues. As a result, pupils frequently talk with their families at home about issues that have been raised in lessons and in collective worship. For example, in one family, the child explained to their parent in the supermarket which would be the best purchases for the food bank and some reasons for its existence. Another family discussed their child's wish to give all their pocket money to the Christingle collection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is an essential part of school life, valued by the whole school community and nourished by an effective partnership between the school and the local church. There is a determination shared by school and church that collective worship should be engaging, relevant and inclusive. Collective worship is carefully planned and well-resourced, based on a systematic programme of biblical material and the school's core Christian values. The inclusion of some suitable short liturgical responses helps to familiarise pupils with Anglican traditions. Pupils have some, but limited, understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils enjoy worship and actively participate. They sing with enthusiasm and readily volunteer to pray extemporarily in whole school worship. They also know various prayers by heart including the Lord's Prayer. Staff also value collective worship, highlighting the time of reflection that is always included. Those who lead collective worship consider that they benefit personally from the preparation necessary especially the thinking about how to engage young pupils successfully.

In addition, festivals of the church's year are marked by special services, some of which take place in the nearby parish church. The use of the church enriches pupils' experience of worship. For example, the candlelit Christingle service in church is regarded by whole school community as a highlight of the year as may be seen by the attendance of the vast majority of families. Some pupils also participate in leading the Sunday service on occasions such as Remembrance Sunday. Messy Church several times a year adds to the rich variety of worship enjoyed by pupils and their families.

Regular opportunities for prayer during the school day in addition to daily collective worship have an impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils, especially younger pupils, go of their own accord to the class reflective area to pray or reflect quietly. Pupils value prayer and recognise the part it has played in their spiritual development. Identifying the difference from their previous school, a pupil said, 'Here we talk a lot about God and

do a lot of praying and it's helped me understand what God's like and how he helped me.' Another pupil said, 'Praying helps me to realise I've done something wrong and to say sorry.'

The impact of collective worship is evaluated in a variety of informal and formal ways including an annual pupil survey. As a result of feedback and reflection, the headteacher and worship committee, working effectively together, have introduced beneficial changes and continue to develop collective worship.

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

The headteacher shows strong, clear-sighted leadership and a passionate commitment to the whole school community. The headteacher and governors have implemented effective strategies based on a thorough understanding of the school. For example, school leaders set out to increase admissions from the nursery and improve standards by raising the numbers in nursery, developing its teaching and improving its accommodation. As a result, the school's intake has been increased and levels of achievement have risen due to effective foundations laid in nursery. School leaders are fully committed to nurturing the Christian character of the school. Priorities for the school as a church school are integrated into the whole school improvement strategic plan and self-evaluation. Governors monitor the school's Christian distinctiveness effectively through surveys, headteacher reports, the worship committee and visits to school. A powerful strength of the school is the unity of vision shared by school leaders and all staff and their trust in each other.

School leadership has prioritised the teaching of RE and supported the continuing professional development of the RE co-ordinator through training and subject networks provided by the diocese and Entrust. The RE co-ordinator is a capable middle leader whose commitment and love of the subject are evident. She has strengthened the teaching of Christianity by successfully introducing Understanding Christianity and training colleagues to deliver the new programme of study with increasing confidence. She has improved the assessment process by creating a whole class RE album which includes pupil feedback and is backed by a digital achievement record which demonstrates understanding and progress. Staff find this straightforward to use and pupils enjoy talking about their work shown in the album. The school also benefits from being a member of the Stone cluster of schools which provides an important network for moderation of standards in core subjects and for continuing professional development. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and for worship.

Partnerships with the diocese, the local church, and local community sustain the school. Regular visits by the diocesan adviser have made a significant contribution to the development of many aspects of the school's Christian character. The vicar and members of the parish church have forged a vital and mutually beneficial partnership leading to activities such as an after school club run by the vicar, some staff and parishioners in addition to the collective worship within the school day. Parents are grateful for the care and commitment shown by the vicar and church members in providing this, and without charge. A member of staff commented of the church and school that 'without one, there isn't the other'. Parents and the local community are welcomed into the school and the school, in its turn, contributes to community events. As a result, parents and other donors have raised money for improvements, for example, in outdoor equipment and for the library. Parents are strongly supportive of the school especially commending the clear and easy communication between home and school and the personalised knowledge of pupils shown by all staff. They appreciate the bonds that are created through events such as grandparents' lunch with the children. A parent summed up by saying, 'It's not really a school, it's a family'.

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