

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Stretton Handley Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Beresford Lane,
Woolley Moor,
Alfreton,
Derbyshire.
DE55 6FH

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Derby
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date/s of inspection	16 March 2017
Date of last inspection	6 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	112859
Headteacher	Julie Dunbar
Inspector's name and number	Louise Patterson (310)

School context

The school is a very small rural primary school with 46 pupils currently on roll. These are split between three classes for the majority of the time. Pupils are drawn from a wide area and often join the school in year groups other than Reception. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage and come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with additional needs is above average. The church is within walking distance from the school. There has been no change in leadership since the previous inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stretton Handley Church of England (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school has a very distinctive Christian ethos based on a clearly defined Christian vision which is understood by all stakeholders. This is securely embedded in all aspects of the school and impacts very positively on the school's provision and outcomes for the pupils.
- Worship inspires and embraces the whole school community and provides a daily opportunity for pupils to pray, praise, reflect and learn more about the Christian faith through Bible stories and the Christian values which are fundamental to the school.
- The very strong Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher and governing body solidly underpins the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- Excellent relationships based on Christian values that lead to a very positive and supportive learning environment which enables all to succeed.

Areas to improve

- To include the impact on pupils, staff and visitors when monitoring collective worship.
- Monitor the recently introduced Understanding Christianity resource to clearly understand the impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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

The outstanding Christian nature of the school is well demonstrated through the ethos, the treatment of every child as an individual and the quality of the relationships. The school motto of 'growing, caring and learning together' within a Christian framework is being lived out on a day to day basis enabling all pupils to achieve their full potential as well rounded, confident and spiritually aware individuals. Pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities and responsibilities both within the classroom and elsewhere which is enabling and encouraging them to be reflective and questioning in a safe and understanding environment. The excellent utilisation of the outdoor learning space is having a very positive impact. There is a distinctively Christian element to the outdoor area with a prayer tree and symbols used for reflection. The emphasis on God's wonderful creation is a central idea when focusing on the outdoors and nature. The results of this and the use of reflective areas in classrooms is evident in the outstanding quality of care and respect for each other and the natural world. Pupils are able to articulate what it means for them to go to a church school, saying, 'there is a gold cross on our school badge to show that God is everywhere', 'we have lots of crosses and decorations about Jesus' and 'if we weren't a church school everything would change and it would be really different!'

Data about outcomes for the school is difficult to meaningfully analyse as the cohort sizes vary but are usually very small, however the support and nurture given to all pupils is a reflection of the teachers' and teaching assistants' commitment to the school as a caring, inclusive establishment rooted firmly in Christian values. Though there are a significant proportion of pupils with some kind of additional need there is still the push for both personal and academic excellence. The emphasis on the development of every individual child means that pupils are developing into well-educated, rounded, and morally grounded individuals through the priority placed on their academic progress but also their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The development of global awareness through both charity work undertaken and the religious education within the school enables pupils to gain a deeper understanding of a range of culturally diverse backgrounds. Pupils and staff have benefitted greatly from faith trails around Derby and fund raising for schools linked with the diocese in Kolkata, India.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and extremely well cared for, which contributes to the above average attendance. There are very high expectations for behaviour, care and love, with staff acting as excellent role models. All staff consistently demonstrate that they care for pupils in the school both in the classroom and outside. This results in pupils who are very well behaved and have a very positive attitude towards school. They engage readily with the learning process and are keen to come to school.

Religious education is making an outstanding contribution to the school as a Christian community. It is not only enabling pupils to have a much deeper understanding of Christianity as a world religion, but also other world faiths. Pupils are being very well equipped to question and make informed decisions about faith. The subject is making a significant contribution to the spiritual growth of pupils which is demonstrated in their ability to articulate difficult religious concepts such as the Trinity and write their own thought provoking prayers. The school leadership, including governors, regularly review and evaluate the subject and the positive impact it has on pupils. The excellence of the subject within the school has recently been externally recognised with their gaining the RE Quality Mark at the highest level.

The school is regularly mentioned in the parish magazine and the school promotes church activities resulting in pupils who have an understanding of the nature of the relationship between school and the wider Christian community. The school is an outstandingly distinctive church school with pupils and staff benefitting from the impact of the Christian values underpinning every aspect of school life.

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

Worship occupies a central place in the life of the school. Worship effectively underpins and extends the school's embedded Christian ethos. The daily programme is very well planned from themes chosen by a group of pupils, the Church Council. These carefully chosen themes are based around the Values for Life resource and include compassion, respect and peace. The current theme is hope and when asked what that could mean a pupil replied, 'Easter is a time of hope that Jesus will come back alive'. Worship is delivered by all staff and a good range of visitors. The Church Council play a part in the worship on a daily basis with various responsibilities which they take very seriously. Worship content rightly explores Bible stories and Christian teachings. This includes reinforcing appropriately the idea of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the example and importance of Jesus for Christians. The concept of the Trinity is reinforced through the lighting of three candles and the greeting 'we light these candles to remember that God is with us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. When asked about the Trinity a pupil said, 'it's like three things all making one God'. There is a graphic indication of the church year which is instrumental in giving pupils a clear idea of the significance of the use of colour. Principal Christian festivals are well celebrated, both in school and in the parish church. Children have an age appropriate understanding of the meaning of the key festivals. This means that worship in the school effectively contributes to pupils' developing knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils participate enthusiastically. They clearly enjoy singing and listen very well

to what is being said. They are very keen to participate, answer questions and offer their ideas on the topics covered. Everyone involved recognises that worship is a special time to think about God and share as a community. The importance and enjoyment of worship shown by pupils is shared by staff. Worship is making a significant contribution to the spiritual development of all involved. Pupils know the prayers used, including the Lord's Prayer, and the appropriate responses. Prayer is a regular feature within worship and the school day, with pupils having a clear understanding what prayer is. They are given regular opportunities to write their own prayers which are then used in worship. Grace is said before lunch and also an end of day prayer is said by the younger children. Pupils said that they would welcome the opportunity to be more involved in both the planning and leadership of worship in the future but for now they do as much as they want to. Parents say that the worship gives pupils 'an opportunity to find God for themselves' and 'my child brings prayer home' and that their children talk about what has happened in worship and often sing the songs they have learned in school. Key elements of Anglican practice are embedded in school worship. This includes the use of opening and closing sentences with responses and the understanding of the Church calendar. The regular Eucharist, grape and wafer service, held at the church, enhances this provision. Worship is monitored by foundation governors and by the Church Council. This is undertaken on a regular basis but the impact of the worship on pupils and staff is not being reported in order to inform future developments.

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

The very committed Christian leadership and management of the headteacher and governors makes a significant contribution to the success of this outstanding church school. The school has very recently undertaken a thorough review of the church school distinctiveness, involving pupils, staff, parents and governors. This element forms a significant part of the ongoing School Improvement Plan each year. The results of the questionnaires and governor monitoring visits are reported back to the full governing body and will inform future developments in this area. The self-evaluation of the distinctively Christian nature of the school is accurate, if a little cautious, demonstrating that the leadership of the school has a clear understanding of where the school is and how it can continue to improve. The Christian distinctiveness is very effectively promoted through the vision and website which gives a clear view that the Christian foundation is central to the life of the school. Parents speak very highly of the school as a church school. They said such things as, 'the Christian values set a priority beyond OFSTED' and 'it has an environment with a spiritual side'. They say that they are kept very well informed about their children and that they appreciate the 'open door' policy that the school has in place. They greatly appreciate the 'emotional and spiritual nurture' afforded to their children. The committed and enthusiastic staff team fully support the vision and ethos of the school and there is a real sense of them working outstandingly well together to enhance the excellent support being given to every child. Pupils are encouraged to take on appropriate responsibilities from quite an early age which is helping them to develop a genuine sense of community, conscientiousness and duty. A parent commented, 'my child has been given confidence because of the ethos of the school'. Pupils feel that they have a voice within the school, especially through the various groups and committees they are involved in. They say that their ideas are taken seriously and are often acted upon.

There is a very effective and mutually supportive relationship with the local parish. There are many contacts both formal and informal, enabling pupils to have a clear understanding of the importance of the church in the life of their school. Rev. Lawrence is a familiar figure in school and is an effective spiritual guide on the governing body, along with the other foundation governors. Governors are effective and are acutely aware of their role as leaders of a church school. They take their role as leaders of a Christian community very seriously and meet with the school regularly to discuss the ethos. Foundation governors have a clear and positive view of the school and their role within it. The school feels that it is extremely well supported by the diocese and staff have contributed to their courses. School takes full advantage of the training provided by the diocese. This relationship with the local Christian community is having a significant impact on the Christian life of the school. The school is undertaking significant developments in the use of the Understanding Christianity resource. This has had an impact on pupils already and they are enjoying the elements already in use, but as yet this has not been formally monitored. The school has made significant progress in addressing the areas for improvement from the previous report. Pupils are now involved in the delivery of worship on a regular basis and the teaching of other faiths and global awareness one of the strengths of the school. RE and collective worship comply with statutory requirements.

There is continuous cycle of reflective and insightful self-evaluation of the foundation of the school, incorporating a range of stakeholder views, including those of pupils and parents. Focused and robust monitoring by leaders and governors, underpinned by the school's Christian values, has brought about improvement and is clearly linked to the school's vision.

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