

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Saviour's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Congleton Road, Talke, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST7 1LW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Staffordshire
Date of inspection	5 May 2017
Date of last inspection	15 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 124255
Headteacher	Lynn Davis
Inspector's name and number	Reverend Alison M. Morris 759

School context

St Saviour's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school. It is a one form entry school with 188 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 11 years. It serves the area of Talke and its surrounding areas. Pupils are mainly of White British origin with some from the Polish community. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by additional funding is almost twice the national average. There is a smaller than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disability. The headteacher has been in post for the last three years. The school has strong links with St Thomas' church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Saviour's as a Church of England school are good

- A developing Christian vision, based on Christian values is being actively promoted and embedded by the dedicated headteacher and strongly supported by the Senior Leadership Team and foundation governors. Together, they are developing the school's distinctive Christian vision and identity within the community.
- Purposeful and effective pastoral care and intervention strategies based on Christian values are enabling pupils to be nurtured within a safe and nurturing Christian community.
- Significant and purposeful relationships throughout the school community reflect how Christian values are being embedded further to foster the Christian distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Engage all governors in the process of implementing rigorous and robust formal systems of monitoring to establish a wider range of Anglican rituals, traditions and practises to facilitate their understanding of diversity within the world wide Anglican communion.
- Create more partnerships to allow pupils to encounter experiential lifestyles of people of different faith and cultural traditions, to deepen pupils' understanding of a multi-faith and multi-cultural world.
- Implement the new religious education (RE) scheme of work alongside the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to make RE more accessible to all pupils and enhance their spiritual development.

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

A distinctive Christian character and ethos is apparent in the school. School leaders and governors are working to embed clearer expressions of Christian distinctiveness, character and ethos. These are explicit and are at the centre of an accessible vision which is being shared among all stakeholders. Core Christian values, which are rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, have been recently revised to clarify what the Christian ethos expects of all. As a result, the school is trying to live out its mission statement of 'Believe, Grow, Achieve with Christ'. This is supported with a gospel sentence '...love one another' which permeates the school vision. These values are also personalised through a display of teddy bears, each one representing a Christian value. For example, honesty or respect. Pupils relate very well to this effective display in the school hall which is accompanied with books and prayers on each value. One pupil said, 'The bears help us remember the Christian values'. This approach encourages pupils to understand the values and to encourage discussion around their contribution to a distinctive Christian ethos. Pupils feel valued and treated with dignity within this happy, welcoming and inclusive learning community. Very good relationships exist within a 'family' ethos where individuality and difference is also celebrated to promote community cohesion. This enables pupils to develop a sense of Christian identity and belonging. The Christian character underpins the school's approach to pupils' learning through its commitment to meet the holistic needs of each child. Christian values and distinctiveness foster a safe and secure atmosphere where pupils are starting to enjoy learning and aspire to do well. An engaging curriculum is helping to raise academic progress. This is enhanced through work with outside agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) who provide personalised support where needed. In addition, intervention programmes such as precision teaching target the specific needs of pupils in their learning. These approaches are starting to show a life-changing impact on some pupils. Pupil progress is showing some improvement but attainment is still low, so emphasis upon academic improvement for all pupils to reach higher attainment is a priority. Effective tracking systems and half termly progress meetings identify key actions for pupils who are underachieving or who are causing concern. British Values, including social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development are being partly promoted in religious education (RE) as well as in some experiences within worship and other lessons. RE also makes some contribution to the Christian character and encourages a respect for Christian values and beliefs. However, the school has identified the need to integrate the Understanding Christianity resource, so that RE is more accessible for all pupils and so enhance pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are eager to attend school and to do well and because of good pastoral care and welfare, attendance is rising. Attitudes to learning are also improving within a culture of praise and reward. This helps pupils to make some progress. Pupils are respectful, courteous and happy. Staff now have higher expectations for pupils and are good role models of Christian values. Behaviour is good in lessons following new strategies to bring about improvement. Pupils are starting to understand their responsibilities as citizens and shown by opportunities to be play leaders. They also participate in the mission of the wider community through fundraising and charitable giving. For example, donations to St Thomas' Food bank show the pupils' attempts to put their faith into practice. An effective school council allows the pupil voice to contribute to decision making. Older pupils understand what it means to be a pupil at a church school and make the link to Christian teaching in the Bible. Classrooms have developed prayer and reflection areas which, when used, make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Creative displays of religious artefacts and symbols in the foyer express the school's Christian distinctiveness and encourage discussion. A calm and purposeful atmosphere now promotes a positive learning environment.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily worship is distinctively Christian and is important to the school community. It has a strong focus on the person of Jesus Christ and developing understanding of the Trinity. Worship is valued and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Artefacts such as lighted candles and the cross are used to create a spiritual atmosphere and to foster reflection and prayer. This is a significant step forward in developing symbolism within worship. The sharing of Bible stories energises pupils' attention. It also affirms and influences pupils' actions and behaviour, making it a positive experience for pupils. The pupil friendly approach which includes a gathering response, such as 'Jesus is here; His spirit is with us', biblical material, prayers and reflection clearly relates to the pupils' own experience. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to worship because the thematic approach is child centred towards understanding about Jesus and God. Pupils are actively engaged throughout and feel comfortable with the routine of worship. They enjoy worship and they speak positively about it. In addition to collective worship, pupils have some time for spiritual reflection and evaluate their own behaviours and attitudes through RE and personal, health, social education (PHSE). Pupils are reflective about core Christian values. This view is seen in the way pupils relate and respect each other during the school day. Worship is planned on a termly basis using a

Christian value. Staff are encouraged to approach the theme from their own perspective to give a range of approaches using different materials. Through the work of the curate, purposeful pupil involvement is beginning to take place at specific Christian festivals. For example, a wedding was acted out in church by pupils. The school does identify that pupil involvement needs to be developed further, including engaging them in the evaluation process. Some Anglican traditions and practices are being embedded in worship but knowledge of the broad range of worship in the Anglican communion is the next step for deeper understanding. This may include exploration for pupils to understand and experience the Eucharist. The relationship with St Thomas' parish has influenced pupils' spiritual experiences through activities and events arranged by their curate. For example, holiday clubs and 'Go Mad with Dad' encourage outreach and mission. Major Christian celebrations, such as harvest, Christmas and Easter take place in St Thomas' Church. Links between the church and the foundation governors are ensuring that Christian values are being reinforced and that Christian distinctiveness is being embedded even further. Additional activities such as Open the Book, 'Walk through the Bible' and links with the Baptist church add some depth to the worship experience. Parents respond very positively to invitations to join in worship. There is increased provision for prayer and reflection which now enables prayer to be a natural and integral part of school life. Prayer spaces and reflection areas within the limited space around the school are starting to influence pupils' personal spirituality and prayer life. Pupils and staff regularly write their own prayers which are used when leading worship. One pupil explained, 'We use the 5-finger prayer area to help us with our prayers'. Pupils also use familiar prayers, including The Lord's Prayer, and their own school prayer. Evaluating the impact of collective worship to inform future planning is however, too informal and needs to include a wider range of stakeholders. This needs to be formally embedded by foundation governors so that the quality of worship continues to be strong.

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

School leaders have faced challenges with determination to re-establish the school's identity as a church school and form relationships within a new parish boundary. The headteacher, supported by a strong leadership team, is developing a vision and commitment to enhance the school's Christian distinctiveness. Both the leadership team and governors are keen to live out the Christian vision and values to raise the Christian profile of the school. A simple, clearly expressed vision is being internalised and upheld by many stakeholders. This results in a caring ethos based upon positive relationships that permeate the whole school. There is a real desire to promote structures so that the Christian distinctiveness can become more secure. Senior leaders demonstrate the capacity to continue this momentum for church school development and to nurture a distinctive Christian approach during their transition to academy status and beyond. Staff and governors have an honest view of the future developmental needs of this school. The recent School Improvement Plan represents a very significant step forward in this development. A commitment to improve standards and pupils' outcomes is driven by the leadership team who show the skills and expertise to enable further improvement to take place. For example, the regular monitoring of teaching has led to improved practice which has impacted upon the improving rate of pupils' progress. All governors are supportive of this strategic drive to improve academic standards. A governance review indicates that governors are working to be more rigorous in their quality assurance on standards. Improved systems of monitoring and evaluating are now in place for both pupil achievement and the strategic direction of a church school. Governors are starting to act as critical friends and challenge leadership on effective deployment of staff and resources. A significant contribution by the headteacher has strengthened the capacity to plan for future development and to ensure improvement in progress and attainment. Statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship are both met. These areas are led with enthusiasm, supported by staff and enjoyed by pupils. RE is planned in line with the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus with use of the 'Discovery RE' programme so that pupils have a deeper respect of Christian values and beliefs. It is also developing an understanding of other faiths, such as Islam. Monitoring of pupils' books takes place and subject plans identify the focus for future lesson monitoring. Positive relationships exist between staff and pupils and within the school community. They feel valued. An example of this is seen in the very positive links between home and school, as well as the support of the Friends of St Saviour's. As a result, parents appreciate the improved welcome and open door policy. Parents have confidence in the school, feel valued and are positive about the future. Effective communication with parents, such as the Home Learning Values Challenge has allowed parents to appreciate the Christian values that underpin school. Since the last inspection, through use of social media, governor newsletters and parent lunches, there is increased parental involvement in the daily life of the school. Parents believe pupils' academic and personal needs are being met and enhanced through enrichment events and extra-curricular activities such as street dance and gardening. Regular visits by the curate nurtures the close links that exist between the church and the school. This adds to the Christian distinctiveness. Partnerships are developing with Lichfield diocese and the local community. The school is popular within the locality and this is reflected in the increase of those who wish to take up places at the Early Years provision. Pupils have a deepening sense of Christian identity and are starting to think globally and to be culturally aware of their wider responsibilities within a multi-faith and multi-cultural society. The teaching about France in Key Stage 2, as well as the Inter Faith Week, Nowruz (Persian New Year) and theme days are examples of emerging practice and development. However, the school

acknowledges that further planned activities for pupils to encounter the lifestyles of people of different faiths are important for deepening pupils' understanding of a diverse society.

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