

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Shaw Lane Albrighton Wolverhampton WV7 3DS	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Shropshire
Date of inspection	22 nd June 2017
Date of last inspection	9 th July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 123458
Headteacher	A Skidmore
Inspector's name and number	R M Gale 337

School context

St Mary's C of E VC Primary school is a smaller than average sized primary school serving 182 pupils. The school is popular in the local community and is oversubscribed. The school caters for a number of pupils from RAF Cosford. A number of pupils join the school throughout the year. There have been significant changes to the leadership team of the school and St Mary's church since the previous inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by staff and the governing body as they work together to promote the distinctive values that guide every aspect of school life.
- Worship that is relevant and meaningful.
- The quality of relationships in school which are outstanding and appreciated by pupils and parents alike.
- The positive impact of the revised school mission statement on pupils, inspiring them to learn so that they achieve well and make very good progress and become the 'best and brightest' version of themselves.
- The delightful and articulate pupils.

Areas to improve

- Embed the revised Christian motto, vision and values outcomes with all stakeholders, exemplifying which key Christian values to promote further and ensure any changes are reflected in school documentation including the school website.
- Further develop the opportunities for pupils to plan and lead school worship and share those moments with the school community to evidence understanding of the school's key Christian values.
- Promote further opportunities for all members of the governing board to engage in the formal monitoring and evaluation of the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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

This vibrant school community thrives within an atmosphere in which the development of the whole child is secured through a strong commitment to the school's vision. The school's mission statement 'Trust in the Lord and Flourish' is lived out through core Christian principles which bind the school community together, supported by resources such as 'Values for Life' and 'Roots and Fruits'. Christian faith guides the actions of all within this school. One pupil explained, "we treat each other fairly. We respect each other and persevere; just as Jesus had to persevere in his life". Pupils are encouraged to look after each other. All of this enables the pupils to become the best they can be, by showing themselves to be resilient, respectful, generous and trustworthy. Clearly these values, the life and teaching of Jesus and positive behaviour strategies are having a profound impact on pupils. The school's proclamation of these values is also evident in the outstanding relationships within school and between the school and the church community. They work together as one, supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils are nurtured and encouraged by this Christian family and as a result, most pupils meet the national floor standards in reading, writing and mathematics, which are the minimum standards for the achievement of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 set by the government. Successful systems are in place to monitor outcomes and target interventions to ensure the needs of all pupils are addressed. This is especially true for those pupils who come from the local RAF base; the benefits of the Spitfire club are tangible. The special needs teacher works tirelessly to support pupils. Learning and worship are interlinked and pupils can talk about their beliefs and their importance. Members of the school council and worship committee speak of their team work, maturity and responsibility for God's world. They are encouraged to be pro-active and responsible in improving the school environment and developing initiatives to further support the Christian distinctiveness of the school. One pupil explained 'we have a chance to suggest things and decide things'. As a result, pupils know that they have a voice that will be heard and that their views are respected. Pupils' efforts are constantly acknowledged and celebrated; these pupils want to be in school. They work hard to earn 'dojos', team and house points. This results in very good levels of attendance and punctuality. The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning are very good because they enjoy and appreciate all the learning experiences on offer. There is much to appreciate, as many of these experiences extend beyond the school day and contribute to a broad and rich curriculum which is creative, interactive and weaves across subject boundaries making learning wholesome and relevant. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn outside of their classroom which include taking part in residential experiences such as visits to Arthog Outdoor centre. This supports the way pupils are encouraged to appreciate a sense of awe and wonder from their learning. Special areas such as classroom reflection/quiet areas and outdoor areas such as the Forest school area and garden give pupils further opportunities to develop their spirituality through reflection. This is enriched by attractive displays which link subject topics to Christian values. This helps to widen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Christian signs and symbols reinforce the school's distinctiveness and further support pupils' spiritual awareness. The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship and supports a range of charities. These fund-raising events, which include a local, national and global focus and the work of the choir within the community all celebrate the school's Christian outreach. In all these ways, pupils are committed, daily, to making a difference to the lives of others as well as their own families. Pupils speak convincingly of the importance of caring, kindness and showing generosity and can link these values to the teaching of Jesus. Pupils talk positively about religious education (RE) and how this contributes to the Christian character of the school. Monitoring by the RE subject leader, who is also the headteacher shows that the RE scheme of work impacts well upon this. Pupils understand Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and understand the diversity between faith communities. The school is currently exploring the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to further enhance these aspects. Pupils have a good sense of self-belief and are being prepared well for their journey in life. St Mary's CE VC Primary school fulfils its central aim by developing the full potential of every pupil in their care and enabling them to flourish.

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

Collective worship, sometimes called assembly, is central to the life of the school and makes a significant impact on pupils' lives. Worship helps pupils to understand how the teaching of Jesus guides Christians in their daily lives. Whole school, key stage and class worship feature across the school each week. Worship is planned carefully by the headteacher with the support of the vicar. The Christian calendar, alongside the school values and themes, inform the planning. Bible stories, audio visual stimulus, music and role play are just some of the activities used to engage the pupils in collective worship. As a result, worship provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual development as well as informing their behaviour, attitudes and relationships. It also deepens their understanding of the school's Christian values. Pupils say that Bible stories challenge them to think about their own behaviour, they feel that worship helps them to resolve conflict. One pupil explained, 'even when we fall out, we know it will end as in worship we learn how to sort things out through following the rules and examples that Jesus gives us'. Pupils understand that responses, prayer and song are central elements to the structure of worship and participate well in these. They enter and leave worship reverently. They interact and share ideas on the chosen theme together as well

as reflecting silently. Pupils sing their praise with great joy. They understand the significance of the cross and the lighting of candles in worship. One pupil stated, 'the candle is the everlasting light, the candle creates light from the darkness; goodness comes from Jesus the light of the world'. Pupils express feelings of happiness, respect and being at peace when they attend worship both at school at St Mary's church. The worship area, adorned by a cloth reflecting the appropriate liturgical colour, and a worship display are the focal points during worship. Pupils can explain about the importance of Pentecost and the Trinity and use practical examples to support their knowledge of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Older pupils can explain the importance of the Eucharist and its relevance to Christians. Worship is led by a range of leaders including teachers, the youth worker, the RAF padre and the vicar. This gives pupils experiences of a range of worship styles. They particularly value the charismatic style of the vicar in leading worship and can recall the content and the message vividly. This variety helps pupils to understand the broad nature of worship including Anglican tradition and practice. Pupils know the value of prayer in worship; it is given a high profile and they participate fully in public and private prayer in school. They are supported in developing prayer through class discussions, the class prayer books and through learning prayers to use at lunchtimes and at the end of the school day. The Lord's Prayer is known by the majority of the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to write prayers and place them on a central prayer tree for all to read. This is fully utilised. Pupils particularly enjoy class worship which affords them the opportunity to be creative and experience worship in a smaller, more intimate setting. Each class has a reflection/quiet/prayer area which is easily accessible to the pupils. The monitoring and evaluations of worship by staff and pupils are highly developed. Feedback is obtained from pupils, staff, parents and governors. This feedback is evaluated, discussed and forms part of school development. The headteacher presents a regular worship report to the governing board, this is in addition to her headteacher general report. The governing board evaluate worship both formally and informally. Pupils and their parents visit the school and St Mary's church for the principal Christian festivals and pupils enthusiastically take an active part in them. These events are much appreciated and well attended.

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

All leaders, including governors display great passion for this school and are effective in articulating and promoting the school's distinctive Christian ethos to support effective learning. Through the strategic appointments of leaders at all levels and the diocesan appointment of the vicar, the school is now a very effective school. Leaders have revisited the school mission statement and now share a common vision for the school as a Church of England school. They consistently model the school's values and there is an emphasis on enabling pupils to flourish in line with the school aims. They live out this vision in their actions and plans. They are committed to creating an outstanding Christian environment in which all aspects of pupils' development and wellbeing are fostered and promoted through biblical teaching and Christian values. This contributes strongly to the good outcomes that all groups of pupils now enjoy. Members of the church family support the school, they promote activities such as 'Messy Church'. Pupils visit the church as part of their learning in RE as well as for worship during key Christian festivals. This gives pupils and staff a developing experience of the Anglican tradition. Parents are supportive of the school. They attribute the strengths of the school to its family ethos and Christian values. They say that this has an impact on the development of their children in the widest sense. One parent stated, 'the Christian ethos is no longer stale, it has been refreshed and is flourishing'. Visitors comment on the openness of the staff; they are described as 'dynamic yet sensitive' in their approach. The headteacher's own Christian faith is very evident in all aspects of her leadership, she makes an outstanding contribution to the community, resulting in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. She is also the RE subject leader and the worship co-ordinator and is very effective in her monitoring and evaluation role. All staff engage in careful self-evaluation of the school's distinctive character with consideration of pupil and parent views as part of this process. As a result, the school has effective development plans for pupil achievement, worship and RE which aim to work towards consistently delivering outstanding provision in all areas. Governors monitor and evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school in an informal manner, suggesting ideas to develop and delegating resources as appropriate. Leaders use additional funding such as pupil premium and sports funding effectively to support the individual needs of pupils appropriately. Through targeted professional development, leaders have strengthened the school's capacity to plan and develop a vision that is now owned by all. Pupils are aware that they are global citizens and are prepared for life in a multicultural society. Links with the Wolverhampton Interfaith Network have brought visitors from other faiths into school. Pupils have also undertaken visits to a variety of places of worship and have gained much from developing friendships with an inner-city multi-faith school in Wolverhampton. The development points identified in the previous inspection have been addressed, this has been achieved with support from the Lichfield Diocese.

SIAMS report June 2017 St Mary's CE (VC) Primary School WV7 3DS