

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Peak Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Tideswell Road, Peak Forest, Near Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 8EG
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Derby
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date/s of inspection	24 November 2016
Date of last inspection	December 2011
School's unique reference number	112848
Headteacher	Ros Carter
Inspector's name and number	Elizabeth Stanley-Wainwright 880

School context

Peak Forest is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Pupils attend from the local village and the surrounding areas. There are 33 children on roll divided into 2 mixed age classes. All pupils are white British and the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is currently above the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The headteacher became acting head in 2015, then substantive head in February 2016 and there have been 3 new teachers in school since the previous inspection. The building was been remodelled, so that all pupils are welcomed into school through the same door each morning. This has provided additional learning support space inside. Charles, King and Martyr Church is situated opposite the school on the main road.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Peak Forest as a Church of England school are good

- The school is a welcoming community where all pupils are recognised as unique and Christian values are lived out.
- Peak Forest is an inclusive, caring church school, which puts its pupils at the centre of everything it achieves.
- The dedication of the headteacher and staff promotes excellent education for all pupils.
- The school's broad curriculum contributes effectively to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners.
- Pupil's behaviour and relationships are good and have a positive impact upon rates of progress.

Areas to improve

- Strengthen the input of clergy to ensure that their expertise is used to enhance the Christian distinctiveness.
- Ensure that the Christian values of the school are communicated explicitly through website, policies and documents.
- Develop more opportunities for children to actively plan, lead and evaluate collective worship so they have ownership of their spiritual development.

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

Peak Forest is a welcoming, inclusive church school which has strong relationships based on Christian values. The staff, governors and pupils have a shared vision of the school ethos and Christian values. The aims ensure that the school community is a safe place where everyone is valued within a Christian framework. It encourages all pupils to be active members in appreciating themselves, each other and the world. The school currently uses the local woodland as a place where pupils can connect with nature and to experience awe and wonder of the natural world. This is where pupils say they feel able to be part of a team, be on their own and be close to those who they cannot see. The range of cross curricular activities that the pupils do weekly in the woodland is starting to support their knowledge and understanding of spiritual growth. The school's Christian character provides a happy and kind learning environment where pupils say 'they feel loved, cared for and safe'. Pupils have a growing knowledge of other faiths and a good concept of world religion and they are proactive in raising money for charities and are very proud of their achievements. The school has invested in ensuring that all pupils and the local community have access to multicultural displays and have worked closely with the Open Centre to have a portable display for all to learn from and pose big questions. This is evidence that the school is skilled in ensuring all pupils show empathy and understand about how their actions can impact upon others. One pupil said 'we like to raise money for great causes we work as a team and even though we are a small school we can fundraise for less fortunate people in the world'. In addition, all Year 6 pupils act as 'parliamentary' ministers who are instrumental in making a difference for all pupils across the school. The pupils show a genuine care for each other and enjoy being part of a strong school family. The staff, pupils and church community express the Christian distinctiveness through their school values but as yet have not explicitly embedded them into daily life of school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and say they gain lots of information about their children and feel part of the learning journey. Parents report that the relationships between school, home and the church are strong and they feel able to enjoy this partnership throughout the year. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school, as pupils are able to reflect, question and challenge in a caring environment. However, the school's vision and values which underpin the effective work of the school are not explicitly expressed nor widely understood as distinctively Christian, arising from Biblical teaching. The school is not yet outstanding because their Christian values are not made explicit and the school needs to further develop its understanding of spiritual growth.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of daily life and children describe it as a time where they can reflect and celebrate their contributions to the school, community and the world. Staff have worked hard to make it distinctively Christian since the previous inspection, with the regular use of Bible stories, prayer, reflection songs and some use of liturgical framework. Hall displays support the Christian focus with interactive pegs containing children's spoken prayers to listen to. The display helps to focus children's thoughts and feelings during the worship, as they are able to choose a prayer from the display to say. The school has invested in a range of materials to support and improve collective worship this is evident from the increased range of experiences that the pupils engage in. Through the use of 'ministers', pupils are involved in choosing the music, setting up the collective worship table and choosing the prayers this results in them having a sense of pride and being able to articulate their understanding of the teachings of Jesus. As the school aims suggest that 'with rights come responsibilities' this has not yet been fully embedded within collective worship as pupils need more opportunity to lead and evaluate worship. Most pupils respond positively and participate willingly. All staff lead worship and take on the role of making worship a time where the whole school can come together as one, to live out the school values and embrace the Christian traditions. Worship clearly impacts positively upon school life as termly services are well attended by parents and the local community, who use these experiences to join together and appreciate being included. Collective worship is open to the community and gives them the opportunity to learn about the teachings of Jesus and about how the school vision supports the community and the world. The school keeps the community informed by regular collective worship, newsletters and items in the parish magazines. Pupils understand that Jesus is special but as yet have little understanding of Trinity. The school is not yet outstanding because more opportunities for children to plan and evaluate collective worship is not yet a regular practice.

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

The school vision drives continuous improvement supported by robust, detailed systems which ensure that every child makes progress resulting in confident children who succeed. The leadership by the headteacher is open and the emphasis is on a whole team approach. The school's self-evaluation as a church school is sound and the school vision is impacting upon the further development of spirituality. The staff have worked hard to address some of the issues from the previous inspection through careful planning of a cultural and faith enquiry led curriculum. The governors have supported the school in encouraging the community to share a range of cultural experiences, however, the school including governors needs to continue to strengthen the evaluation of collective worship. Leaders make good use of the diocese training and through formal collaboration are strengthening the teaching of RE, using the Understanding Christianity materials which are starting to have an impact upon staff knowledge and expertise. Parents speak highly of the school as 'family orientated with a leader who is not just a headteacher, she is our everything', and 'changes to children coming into school through one door celebrates our bespoke united family'. Parents feel that they belong to a wider family who all care and respect each other and this is due to the leadership team having a shared vision. Staff promote an open door policy and this is welcomed by the parents who feel that they are able to come into school and talk to staff about issues both personal or with regards to their pupils. The headteacher and staff know each pupil and parent and the open door policy actively promotes open and honest dialogue. The governors also make sure that they contribute to the vision through discussions at meeting and by modelling the vision through their daily interaction with pupils and parents. The governing body are involved in the daily life of school and communicate regularly about all aspects of school life. Although Christian values are embedded, the distinctiveness based on the teaching of Jesus is not made explicit enough in documents, policy and the website. The contribution of the clergy is not as effective as it could be and is not yet a strength of the school due to the minimal support for leaders and pupils in exploring the school's Christian values and ensuring they are explicit. Parents and the church community are welcomed and have a strong relationship with school, supporting a range of activities. In particular, the woodland work which gives all pupils the opportunity to explore God's beautiful world. The school also ensures that children attend a local retreat to have time to reflect and be appreciate the world, in which they belong, this is helping to secure children's understanding of Christianity. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. The school is not yet outstanding as leaders need to confidently articulate explicit Christian values on the life of learners.

SIAMS report November 2016 Peak Forest VC Primary School Peak Forest, Derbyshire SK17 8EG