

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### **Turnditch Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Ashbourne Road, Turnditch, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2LH

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**Derby**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Date of academy conversion

March 2015

Name of multi-academy trust

Derby Diocesan Academy Trust

Date of inspection

9 March 2017

Date of last inspection

March 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Academy 141846

Headteacher

John Bolton

Inspector's name and number

Kerry Palmer (60)

#### **School context**

Turnditch is a four class village school with a mixed intake of children, from urban and rural backgrounds. They are drawn from a wide area by its excellent reputation. Almost all are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with SEND or considered to be disadvantaged are both below national averages. The school has a stable staff; both head and deputy are established school leaders. The original Victorian premises and grounds have been developed, over time, to provide a stimulating environment for education today. All Saints Church is close by. The vicar is also responsible for a large church in the neighbouring town of Belper. The school became an inaugural member of the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust in March 2015.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Turnditch Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The professional and highly motivated Christian headteacher whose individual style and dedicated staff team promote a broad and rigorous education, achieving outstanding progress for every child.
- A well-informed and engaged governing body celebrates the school's church links successfully promoting its Christian ethos.
- A close partnership with the vicar and parish nurtures seeds of faith.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Develop further strategies in collective worship and religious education (RE) that ensure a growing appreciation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Introduce Christian greetings, endings and responses into all acts of collective worship to emphasis their Anglican character.

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

It is clearly evident that Christian values underpin every aspect of the excellent education provided by this school. Parents and carers are told, from the outset, that this is a church school and its ethos is based on Bible teaching. Staff and families rightly make much of its warm, family approach. The school succeeds in its mission to provide, 'a caring, Christian atmosphere'. The wellbeing of the children is a high priority. Parents of a child affected by autism

spoke effusively about sensitive and generous support from children and staff alike. Staff, governors, children and families know each other well and mutually supportive relationships are very evident. Not only is academic progress such that outcomes far exceeding expectations are praised by the Department for Education, but learning of greater depth is displayed in many children's work. Every child is recognised as a unique and special gift from God. The education of the whole child and nurture of wide ranging gifts and talents is actively pursued. Focused support for the small number of children with specific needs ensures good progress. Challenge and rigour stimulates the more able children. A variety of clubs and enrichment activities range from archery to Monday Club. The latter is the best attended, a Bible themed Christian club run by church volunteers. Gardening club in the well-developed outdoor area is also popular, stimulating awe and wonder at the marvels of God's creation. A range of sporting activities, whilst inclusive, encourage healthy competition. School teams do well in inter-school events. Academic achievement arises from a foundation of strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This is supported by the school's RESPECT code and awards. Children say they feel safe and happy. 'There is no bullying in our school', reported the school council. 'You get included in things and everyone cares for you', commented a child at playtime. Consequently, attendance is consistently above national levels and behaviour is excellent. There is appropriate teaching about other faiths and cultures. Children from this White British community display respect and understanding of diversity. For example, exchange activities take place with a contrasting multi-racial inner city school. A strong, mutually beneficial, link is also developing with Tiltonse Community School, part of the Fisherman's Rest Centre in Malawi. Children have exchanged letter, games and songs, as well as Turnditch fundraising for 'indestructible' footballs to send to Africa! Empathy for the less fortunate is encouraged through charitable activity, such as food donations to the Padley Centre in Derby at Harvest time.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Creative approaches, incorporating Christian values are coordinated by the headteacher who leads a relevant and effective programme. All staff attend and regularly lead worship at the start of each day. Whilst generally referred to as assembly, children recognise the centrality of Bible teaching. A candle reminds all that 'Jesus is the light of the world'. However, there is insufficient regular use of welcoming and departing prayers and responses to embed the Christian context in all worship. Children often take advantage of times to pray and ponder 'Big Questions'. This is sometimes supported by a suggested structure, such as, 'think of something to say thank you for, to say sorry, to ask...'. 'If you believe in God, good things will happen for you', said one child. In this small school, there is regular, informal feedback from children, parents and staff which informs positive development. Children know the Lord's Prayer and why it is special. The distinctive nature of Jesus is understood but appreciation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is insufficiently developed. 'Jesus told people to love one another, He's God's Son' said a Key Stage 1 child. The many occasions for children to reflect and pray contribute significantly to their spiritual development. Children enjoy lively worship songs led by the headteacher on guitar. The choir entertains the wider community on occasion, including at Derby Royal Hospital at Christmas. Children play a major part in planning and leading festival services such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Festival services, held in All Saints Church, are attended by many parents and friends. Active planning and leadership of school worship by children has significantly increased since the last inspection with weekly pupil led worship which is planned, songs selected and prayers composed by the children. The close relationship with All Saints Church, regular worship, including well attended Sunday family worship, planned with the school, supports children's developing understanding of Anglican tradition and practice. Welcome occasional visiting leaders include Uncle Michael from MAST. However, children's awareness of Christianity as a world-wide faith is limited.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Imaginative use of cross-curricular links and teaching strategies, addressing varying learning styles, are promoted by effective subject leadership. A professional staff team consider religious education (RE) important and give it core subject status. Evidence from work sampling and observation confirm the school's judgement that teaching is, at least good, with outstanding features. Planning reflects clear understanding of the subject material delivered with pace and challenge. The enthusiastic subject leader is part of a number of inter-school support networks and, with advice from the diocese, has introduced the Rising Stars assessment system which plots children's progress half-termly and informs forward planning. Children make good progress and levels of achievement are comparable with other core subjects. This results from approaches that encourage deep thinking, reflection and higher order learning skills. The introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' approaches is already deepening staff and children's theological understanding. Diocesan training attended by the subject leader has been shared with staff who are beginning to put it into practice. As the school approaches Easter, the theme of salvation is being explored through age appropriate strategies. After sequencing the key days of Holy Week, the youngest children acted out Palm Sunday then reflected on the emotions of those involved. Older children explored Easter events through the eyes and feelings of Mary, Jesus' mother. RE is popular and contributes much to the school's Christian character, powerfully promoting SMSC development. Christian teaching predominates, as expected in a church school, but teaching about other world faiths is incorporated into a comprehensive and well structure programme. For example, a class exploring marriage ceremonies used Venn diagrams whilst discussing in groups similarities and differences between Christian and Hindu wedding ceremonies and celebrations.

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

The long-standing, professional and Christian commitment of the headteacher sustains the continuing development of this distinctively Christian school. In partnership with an experienced deputy, he motivates a strong and skilful staff team who share a commitment to the school's values and ethos. This is because, professional development for all and the opportunity to take additional responsibility ensures all staff feel valued. This contributes to sustained growth. Good use is made of diocesan support including headteacher briefings and leadership networks. Staff and governors are united in the pursuit of excellence and academic and personal achievement. The decision to become an inaugural school in the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (DDAT) is indicative of bold, long term strategic planning. This has had recognised benefits of increased practical support and shared professional, Christian expertise. Common policies, including for RE and collective worship, are one example. A recent DDAT review recognised, 'many strengths...across the wide curriculum'. There are well-focused and relevant development plans resulting from an on-going cycle of evaluation. This includes the self-assessment of Christian distinctiveness. Governors provide rigorous challenge and are fully supportive of the school's church foundation. The vicar regularly reviews collective worship and RE, reporting to governors and discussing ways forward with the headteacher. His welcome letter on the school website quotes Matthew 'You will know them by what they do'. He recognises the positive impact of school initiated Sunday family worship, held around twice a term, on wider levels of involvement in parish life. The Ascension Day family walk is an established village event. The school regularly contributes to the village magazine and is recognised as actively promoting community cohesion. Parents are full of praise for the school's ethos and values. They speak of 'fantastic support...staff know the children so well...school gives them a moral compass' and, 'concern for every individual'. Questionnaires show almost 100% support for every aspect of school life. The school generously fulfils statutory requirements for collective worship and RE. The potential for further positive growth is excellent.

SIAMS report March 2017 Turnditch CE VA Primary School, Belper, Derbys. DE56 2LH