

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

### Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Clifton Road, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire. DE4 3PW

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Derby</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date of inspection	22 June 2017
Date of last inspection	31 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC primary 112841
Headteacher	Sally Swain
Inspector's name and number	Louise Patterson (310)

#### School context

Holy Trinity VC Primary School is a very small school with 43 full time pupils on roll taught in two mixed age classes. The school is short walk from the church through an adjoining gate. The school enjoys extensive outdoor space. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, there are currently 16% of children eligible for free school meals and five children with additional needs. The headteacher has been in post for two years, as has the senior teacher. The other member of staff has been in post for three years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- There is a distinctively Christian ethos within the school which is understood and can be articulated by the vast majority of stakeholders. This impacts positively on its provision and outcomes for the pupils.
- There are excellent relationships throughout the school which are based on Christian values. This results in a very positive and supportive learning environment.
- High quality collective worship, RE and the strong relationship with the local parish form a solid foundation for the Christian life of the school.
- Pupils are confident, well-behaved and developing into well rounded individuals in the knowledge that they are loved by God.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop the role of more pupils in the planning and delivery of worship to strengthen ownership.
- Strengthen pupil appreciation of diverse communities through links with other schools and visitors from a range of backgrounds.
- Embed the range of developments undertaken in the last two years to ensure their impact is sustained.

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

The Christian ethos permeates all aspects and dimensions of the life of the school and is having a significant impact on all those involved in school life. Part of the school vision statement quotes the Gospel of Mark saying, 'anything is possible for him who believes'. The idea of aiming high in school, in life and in faith is lived out daily through the ethos, relationships and the treatment of every child as an individual, underpinned by Christian values. This results in pupils who are confident, well rounded and often quite spiritually aware individuals who are encouraged to be the best that they can be. There is a clear emphasis on the personal, spiritual and academic growth of every child within the safe, caring and Christian environment provided by the school. There is a good range of opportunities and responsibilities afforded to pupils of all ages, both within the classroom and around school. This is enabling and encouraging them to be responsible and caring individuals with a real empathy towards other pupils but also with the wider school and church community. One of these opportunities is the pupil Church Council, who are involved in worship at different levels. The utilisation of the outdoor spiritual spaces is still under development but the respect demonstrated for the natural world is enabling pupils to be more reflective and respectful of nature's beauty. The impact of this emphasis on Christian values shows in quality of care and respect for each other and the natural world.

The vast majority of pupils are able to articulate what it means for them to go to a church school, saying, 'we follow the Christian values', 'we talk about what we do in a church school' and 'His spirit is in our school'. When asked what would change if the school was no longer a church school pupils commented, 'pretty much everything really', 'we wouldn't have the same values to remind us how we should be' and 'school is mainly based around the church and Christianity so it wouldn't be anything like it is now!'. Even the younger pupils have an age-appropriate concept of the impact of the Christian foundation of the school. Pupils feel that they have a voice within the school and they say that their ideas are taken seriously and are often acted upon. Pupils were unanimous in that they feel very safe in school and there is always someone to go to if you need to and this contributes to the very good attendance. Marvellous Mentors are allocated to each child as a nominated adult to be able to turn to and all adults are fulfilling this role superbly well. There are very high expectations for behaviour, care and love, with all staff acting as excellent role models both in the classroom and outside. This results in pupils who are extremely well behaved and have a very positive attitude towards school. They engage readily with all aspects of school life, including the academic, and are keen to come to school.

Data can be unreliable due to the very small number of pupils on roll but it generally indicates that outcomes for pupils are at least in line with national expectations. The positive outcomes are an indication of the highly effective support and nurture given to all pupils which is fundamental to the development of every child. The teachers and teaching assistants are clearly committed to the school as an academic and caring, inclusive school rooted firmly in Christian values. There is an emphasis placed on the personal growth of every child which means that pupils are developing into well-educated and morally grounded individuals. This is achieved through the priority placed on their academic progress but also their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This shared vision by all involved is a real strength of the school. However, due to the limited time elapsed, the developments in the Christian distinctiveness of the school taken in the last two years, are yet to become embedded and the impact monitored. The development of global awareness through visits to a range of places of worship within RE is enabling pupils to gain a deeper understanding of a range of culturally diverse backgrounds. This area is in need of further strengthening to ensure pupils are given a wider world perspective.

RE is making a significant 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 well equipped to question and make informed decisions about faith. The subject is making a positive 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 prayers. The school leadership, including governors, regularly review and evaluate the subject in the cycle with other foundation subjects. The subject is being very well led by the co-ordinator. The school is a distinctively Christian 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 good.**

Worship occupies a central place in the life of the school and it reflects the school's Christian ethos. It is enabling both staff and pupils to develop a sense of community and Christian fellowship, with all staff in attendance. There are opportunities for the development of the spiritual dimension within worship with singing, prayer and periods of quiet reflection. The impact of these opportunities is evident in the way pupils and staff speak openly about this aspect of school life. The opportunities to take part in elements of worship are taken up with enthusiasm, with lots of volunteers who clearly have a good background knowledge and understanding. One pupil commented that, 'it makes you feel part of the story'. Church Council members lead the opening and closing with sensitivity. Pupils generally have an understanding that the teachings of Jesus and Christian values which are discussed in worship are

to be lived out through their behaviour towards others and the choices they make. The impact of this is pupils who are considerate of others and make positive choices about their behaviour. These values and teachings are regularly reinforced through the appropriate use of Bible stories. Pupils and staff are fully engaged in worship and clearly enjoy the experience. Prayer is a regular feature of the school day, with pupils having an understanding of what prayer is. Prayer is used within worship and also at lunch time. Pupils seem to enjoy opportunities to write their own prayers. The coordinator of collective worship also coordinates RE. As part of the quality development within the role she has introduced a long term structure based on the Roots and Fruits resource. There have been developments and changes to the planning and delivery of worship as a result of feedback from pupils. School worship is clearly well planned and thoughtfully delivered. Not enough pupils are involved in this stage, though the Church Council take suggestions from pupils, which are taken and fed back to the group. Children enjoy regular worship led by local clergy and gain insight into Anglican practice. A pupil commented that Rev. Nick 'is the friendliest vicar I've ever met!'. They also said how much they enjoy going to church because 'everyone is really friendly down at church' and 'it is lovely and quiet and peaceful'. Major festivals are celebrated in church and parents greatly appreciate being involved in these experiences. This reciprocal relationship has grown into a strength of the school in recent years. This approach is widening the Christian experience for both pupils and staff.

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

The highly committed and capable Christian leadership and management of the headteacher and governors makes a significant contribution to the success of this good church school. The school monitors and reviews its Christian distinctiveness with discussions in the full governing body with reference to reports from the headteacher. This is enhanced by the feedback from governors on their regular visits into school to deliver worship, help with clubs and informally monitor the Christian distinctiveness.

The governors know the school very well. The results of the headteacher reports and governor monitoring visits enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Christian nature of the school and inform future developments in this area. The Christian distinctiveness is effectively promoted through the website which gives a clear indication that the Christian foundation is central to the life of the school, stating that they 'are guided by Christian values, rooted in the Church and where we live'. Parents speak highly of the school as a church school. They said such things as, 'there is a real sense of community tied to the church', 'it is like a family - they all mix really well together' and 'they are given a set of values which they can take into adult life'. They say that they are kept well informed about their children and that they appreciate the 'open door' policy, especially the headteacher being readily available at the start and end of the day. They said that they appreciate being asked their opinions and 'there are no surprises because the school takes a real pride in every pupil'.

Though the staff team is small they are all fully committed to and enthusiastically support the Christian vision and ethos of the school. Though the team has only been together a very short amount of time they have made significant progress. There has been the introduction of a wide range of ideas, processes and developments within this short time span. These are having a positive impact on all involved in the school. There is a real sense of all staff working very well together to enhance the educational experience being given to every child within a Christian framework.

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. The school, the local church and the community work well together. The vicar is a familiar figure and his positive presence is appreciated by pupils, staff and parents.

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. Foundation governors have a clear and positive view of the school and their role within it. The school feels that it is well supported by the diocese and takes advantage of the training provided by them. This relationship with the local Christian community is having a significant impact on the Christian life of the school.

The school has made progress in addressing the areas for development from the previous inspection. Worship has been the focus for feedback from pupils and there has been some review to ensure that worship is central to the life of the school. The regular use of the interactive boards in the hall and classrooms has enhanced the worship experience and the outdoor space has been used at times for worship.

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