

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Walton on Trent Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Coton Road
Walton on Trent
Swadlincote
DE12 8NL

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Derby
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date of inspection	03 October 2017
Date of last inspection	23 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 112861
Headteacher	Sarah Rowe
Inspector's name and number	John Clapham (775)

School context

Walton on Trent is a smaller than average rural primary school serving 135 children and their families within the village and surrounding areas. Pupil numbers have risen significantly since the previous inspection and there have been a large number of staff changes. Currently, there is not a vicar in post in the parish. The proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium (those eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care) are below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are within the average, although no children are currently supported with statements or Education Health Care Plans. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The school has recently achieved the foundation level of the International Schools award.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Walton on Trent as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Walton on Trent school is characterised by high levels of care, where nurture and strong pastoral support are underpinned by the school's distinctively Christian character.
- The whole school community share a passion and vision for the school, and the head teacher and her team consistently demonstrate and live out the distinctively Christian values of the school with conviction, enthusiasm and compassion.
- Children are valued and affirmed as individuals. They are proud of their school and make a significant contribution to the life of the school through a wide range of responsibilities, including in collective worship.

Areas to improve

- Involve all members of the school community in formally evaluating the impact of collective worship.
- Further enhance children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development by embedding the new Understanding Christianity resource in Religious Education (RE) through a wide range of higher level enquiry skills.

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

The values of respect, kindness and honesty are an integral part of the whole life of the school and are clearly understood by all members of the school community as distinctively Christian. As one child noted, 'our values of respect, kindness and honesty are all in Jesus' teaching- they teach us how to live and help our actions every day.' Well developed areas for reflection in classrooms and outstanding provision for reflection in the outdoor environment have contributed strongly to children's spiritual development. This includes opportunities across school for children to explore their feelings and emotions and how they relate to others. The focus across school on Growth Mindset has given children the opportunity to explore their underlying beliefs about themselves, their intelligence and their capacity to learn. This has impacted strongly on children's resilience and their self-esteem. Children's achievements and successes are celebrated and rewarded consistently across school, contributing to the children's sense of self-worth and their motivation to be the best they can be. Care and nurture are integral to the work of the school. A well planned programme of nurture and support ensures that children's specific social and emotional needs are met exceptionally well in a happy, caring environment. As noted by a parent, 'this school is an extended family where everyone feels accepted and so kindness and care translate into all areas of school life.' Children are given many opportunities to develop their skills and work collaboratively. This is evident in the school woodland where children manage the woodland safely and effectively while enjoying the joys of God's creation. As noted by a parent, 'children are tolerant, thoughtful and forgiving'. They work through difficulties and are given the skills to resolve differences for themselves. This can clearly be seen on the playground, around school and at lunchtime, where children work together, play together and care for each other exceptionally well. Children know that any issues are dealt with quickly and fairly and so they are confident and feel valued. The confident, articulate children are proud of their school and value the many opportunities they have which contribute to the whole life of the school. The roles of sports crew, fitness instructors, friendship ambassadors, school councillors and RE ambassadors have helped children to feel supported, valued and listened to by each other. As the retired vicar noted, 'children help and support each other and are there for each other- now that's Christian living in action.' The children are particularly proud of their 'random acts of kindness', which are recognised in a hall display and celebrated regularly in collective worship. The children are also keen to contribute and make a difference beyond their own locality, where a number of the many charitable causes that the school supports have been instigated by the children themselves. Recently established links with schools from around the world and visits to a range of places of worship are helping children to develop an understanding and respect of the faith and values of other communities. As one child noted 'different religions come together at our school and so we have the knowledge to relate to other religions and understand other people.' Teachers across school use high quality questioning in RE to encourage the children to think deeply. The recently introduced Understanding Christianity resource is already beginning to impact on children's spiritual, moral social and cultural (SMSC) development through a range of enquiry skills, although this is not yet consistent across the school. The school's Christian character results in a secure and caring environment where children attain well both academically and in terms of their SMSC development. As a result, attendance is very high and children value school as a safe, happy place.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a high profile in the life of Walton on Trent school. It is relevant and inclusive, with clear application for the children's lives. This is why children value worship, respond positively and engage willingly. Collective worship contributes to the ethos in which children thrive, succeed and are happy, and influences the thinking and day to day actions of the whole school community. Prayer is integral to the life of the school, with many opportunities for prayer and reflection embedded into the school day and a clear expectation that prayer is central to collective worship. The children know the Lord's prayer well, and enjoy the actions that they use to make prayer active and fun. Children are developing an understanding of simple Anglican liturgy and practice. Children and parents value the involvement of the church in the life of the school, with collective worship in church now increasingly well supported by parents. Children report that they 'love to go to church because they feel safe and calm.' Recent changes that bring the whole school together daily for worship have given a consistent expectation that worship is a valued part of the life of the whole school family. Most adults in school are involved in collective worship at some point during a week, and all come together on a Friday to celebrate the children's achievements. Collective worship plans, which use a published scheme as a starting point, make clear links with the Bible. As a consequence of this, children are developing a good understanding of the teachings of Jesus and of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As one

child commented, 'collective worship, raises our awareness about God. We are a small school and when we get together it feels like a family and we feel safe.' RE ambassadors, elected from each class, contribute regularly to collective worship. This is beginning to bring more creativity to collective worship, including the recent use of drama and role play and more opportunities for children to explore their feelings and emotions. The children have recently been given experience of evaluating the impact collective worship, although this is not yet well developed. A range of regular visitors from several local churches as well as from a number of secular organisations input positively into collective worship. In the absence of a vicar, the school has been particularly well supported by a local retired vicar, who uses drama, storytelling and Godly Play to bring the Bible to life.

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

Walton on Trent school is well led at all levels and has made a great deal of progress since the last inspection. The head teacher leads by example, is highly committed to the whole life of the school and has worked hard to build strong relationships of mutual trust with children, parents and staff. The time taken to talk and listen to people ensures that all members of the school community feel valued and affirmed and have opportunity to contribute to and participate in the strong Christian ethos and values that now underpin the life of the school. The head teacher's conviction that 'relationships are the most important part of school leadership,' has ensured that the staff team are united in living out the school's distinctively Christian values with love, care and compassion. Parents report that they find the head teacher and her staff 'approachable, receptive and very supportive'. They greatly appreciate the fact that 'we are listened to, the school works with us and they go out of their way to help.' Governors have a strong understanding of progress and standards in Maths and English through insightful self-evaluation, although similar processes for monitoring the impact of RE and collective worship are not yet fully developed. School improvement planning is rigorous and thorough and strongly reflects the Christian character of the school. The school leadership and governing body have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school and are highly committed to a rigorous cycle of school improvement. New initiatives are well planned and evidence based, such as the recent attachment aware action research undertaken by the school. Although the parish does not currently have a vicar, a retired vicar has worked tirelessly to re-establish links between school and church and offers strong pastoral support to the school community. The school is increasingly making use of the church building in the teaching of RE, although the full potential for mutually beneficial partnerships between church and school have not yet been fully realised. Partnerships with other church schools across the cluster, engagement with diocesan training and a creative approach to joint staff development with a range of schools have helped to build a skilled and valued team. The professional development of all staff and governors is planned strategically, building up a strong team well placed to take the school on to its next stage of development. All areas for development from the previous inspection have been fully met. RE and collective worship are well led and meet all statutory requirements.

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