

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Ferrers Road, Weston, Staffordshire, ST18 0JN	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	February 2016
Name of multi-academy trust	Mid -Trent Multi Academy Trust
Date of inspection	15 March 2018
Date of last inspection	29 January 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary academy 124298
Headteacher	Paul Hayward
Inspector's name and number	Eleanor Benson 920

School context

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School has 174 pupils on roll, aged 4 – 11 years. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. About one quarter of pupils are the children of Ministry of Defence (MOD) personnel and about one sixth are traveller children. The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school during the year is above average. The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below average as is the percentage of pupils with special needs. St Andrew's is one of 3 Church of England primary schools in the Mid-Trent Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's Church of England (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Pupils' excellent behaviour and caring relationships spring from the core Christian values. As a result the school is a happy place to learn and work where pupils are encouraged and nurtured.
- The close and mutually beneficial partnership with the local church makes an important contribution to the school's Christian character and to collective worship.
- Engaging collective worship and a determined approach to strengthening the practice of prayer enriches pupils' personal and spiritual development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding is seen in the confidence and interest with which pupils discuss moral and spiritual issues and express their views.

Areas to improve

- Articulate and promote the biblical teaching on which the school's Christian values are based so that the whole school community consistently understands these values in the context of Christian faith.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to play a full part in planning and leading as well as evaluating collective worship.
- Develop the teaching of world religions by giving pupils opportunities through visits and visitors to engage with people of other faiths.

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

This is a school where pupils are welcomed, known and nurtured as individuals. The school's Christian ethos is based on long-established core values of happiness, confidence, achievement, family and respect under the motto, 'In God we believe and achieve'. These values have recently been extended with links to joy, perseverance, courage and fellowship. The school's core values are well understood, owned and lived out by pupils and staff. Parents noticed how their children felt 'very at ease' in talking about faith. The impact of Christian values may be seen in the quality of relationships within the school community. Pupils, staff and parents talked of being part of a family. One pupil commented that 'teachers really care about how we feel.' An example of the care successfully given to individuals may be seen in the provision of additional support for the children of MOD families. This enables all pupils to settle into the school quickly and leads to good levels of attendance. A pupil who joined the school mid-year said, 'I was very nervous and I was welcomed.' Pupils show kindness and helpfulness to each other across the year groups. In response to one pupil's chronic illness, the school council organised fundraising for a charity specialising in care for that condition. Generosity is developed through charitable giving to a variety of causes including gifts of food at harvest to a local food bank. An emphasis on confidence and perseverance encourages pupils in their learning and has a positive impact on pupils' achievement which is in line with or slightly above national standards. Pupils listen to each other and contribute confidently to discussion. Behaviour is excellent and exclusions rare. However, the biblical teaching behind the school's ethos is not always made clear. As a result members of the school community do not explain with confidence how the school's values are rooted in Christian teaching. Pupils enjoy Religious Education (RE). An older pupil commented that they 'learn in depth, get to ask questions and teachers answer enthusiastically.' RE supports worship with some effective teaching about the Trinity. RE also makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of other world faiths. However, pupils have limited direct experience of multi-cultural diversity whether of churches beyond the parish church or of other world faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is very important in the life of the school community. Pupils experience variety in a weekly programme of whole school acts of worship and prayers in class. The latter often includes reflection on news events. Careful thought has been given to an attractive focus for worship in the school hall. Artefacts on the worship table included stones representing promises made at the beginning of Lent and candles lit at the start of collective worship. A wall display next to a prayer tree reminded pupils of the Lord's Prayer, aspects of God and the core Christian values. Pupils are familiar with church festivals and attend services in Advent and at Easter in the nearby church, and, at harvest, in the village community hall. Collective worship is enriched by the close partnership with the parish church. Clergy regularly take collective worship and fortnightly Open the Book assemblies led by parishioners are a real highlight. They reinforce the teaching of Bible stories in a memorable way and give Year 5 pupils, in particular, some responsibility in their delivery. A pupil who is not a churchgoer at home said appreciatively, 'If you don't go to church, you feel you're at church in school'. Monthly Messy Church and Good Friday workshops which take place outside the school day are clearly advertised in school and well attended by families. Pupils notice with approval that school leadership has responded to their suggestions for improvements in a recent survey by, for example, teaching new songs for collective worship. The school's leadership has made the development of habits of prayer a priority. The reflective area in each classroom includes a prayer box made by the class into which pupils often place prayers which they have written themselves. Each week older pupils on the worship committee retrieve the prayers, choose those suitable for general use and copy them onto leaves to go on the prayer tree in the hall or on the worship table. That allows for their selection and use by other pupils in collective worship. Pupils also contribute by writing and reading prayers for special services, for example, Remembrance. The habit of prayer is instilled in class at the start of the day, lunchtime and before going home with regular use of the Lord's Prayer, class prayers and St. Andrew's school prayer. Class prayers are differentiated for each year group showing a concern to make prayer accessible for all ages. A typical comment from pupils was that 'prayer is like speaking to God and helps us show thanks to God.' Creative activities broaden pupils' understanding of prayer. For example, pupils are taught about a different kind of prayer such as intercession each half term and then write their own. By the end of the year each pupil has written 6 different kinds of prayer for their personal use. However, apart from contributing prayers and some choices of songs, pupils take little part in planning or leading collective worship.

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

The headteacher is passionate about developing the Christian ethos of the school and leads by example. Staff are fully committed to nurturing every pupil and living out the school's values. The foundation of the school as a church school is protected by the multi-academy trust. Alongside diocesan advice and opportunities for training, the multi-academy trust supports and extends the capacity of school leaders through networks across the 3 schools. A broad

curriculum incorporating a wide range of visits widens pupils' experiences and promotes good moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher and the chair of governors give a strong lead to ensure a high quality of RE teaching and to develop engaging collective worship. Although at an early stage, this is supported by the multi-academy trust's RE and collective worship network. The RE syllabus has been carefully revised to deepen pupils' understanding, to promote independent thinking skills and to assess progress. The headteacher is mentoring a new RE co-ordinator and all teachers receive detailed briefing on the subject. The school acts on the evaluation of collective worship through pupil survey and peer observation although this is not consistently recorded in formal development planning. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and the teaching of RE. Clear understanding and evaluation informs whole school planning and has led to improved achievement and a sharper focus on aspects of the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The partnership with the local church benefits the whole school community at a number of levels. In addition to the contribution to collective worship, the curate acts informally as a chaplain to staff and parents. The clergy also respond quickly with expert advice to staff questions about challenging RE topics. Parents are highly supportive of the school and value its Christian ethos. They commend the fact that their children's education is 'holistic' and has 'spiritual input'. Parental support may be seen both in effective fundraising for causes such as school trips and also in the number of parents who volunteer in school with such activities as reading.

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