

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

East Crompton St George's Church of England Primary School

George Street
Shaw
Oldham
OL2 8AX

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Manchester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	September 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	Cranmer Education Trust
Date/s of inspection	25 November 2016
Date of last inspection	31 March 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 142271
Acting Headteacher	Linda Baldwin
Inspector's name and number	Gail Fullbrook 530

School context

Numbers on roll at St George's school have risen in recent years and are currently 207. There have been a significant number of staff changes since the previous SIAMS inspection and the current headteacher joined the school in 2014. The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher appointed from within the staff team whilst the substantive headteacher is on maternity leave. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs is above the national average. A significant number of pupils join the school during their primary school education. The local church is currently in an interregnum.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian character of the school threads through all aspects of school life and has a significant impact on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Relationships with children, parents and amongst staff are founded in Christian love. Consequently, all pupils feel accepted, loved and valued.
- Times of reflection and prayer are highly valued by pupils and are included in all lessons and in worship. As a result, the spiritual development of pupils is a significant strength of the school.

Areas to improve

- Develop current procedures for self-evaluation of the school as a church school to include staff, governors, parents and pupils. This will support the school in recognising what it does well and guide future developments.
- Strengthen pupils' understanding of the Biblical stories that underpin core Christian values.

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

The school's deeply embedded Christian character centres around an ethos of the school as a family. Staff are aware of their responsibility as God's servants to ensure that pupils are nurtured and encouraged. As a result, pupils make good progress and feel safe and happy. The Biblical verse, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,' is modelled by staff to the pupils and in turn, by pupil to pupil. Where behaviour or attitudes to learning are of concern, or there are issues relating to attendance, the school is supportive of pupils and their families in seeking a resolution. Pupils, through their rainbow rules, work hard to reflect Jesus' teaching on the way Christians should live. They are familiar with a number of Christian values and understand their importance in helping people to behave and learn well. This foundation of rainbow rules and Christian values is fundamental to school life and as a result pupils thrive and have a high level of personal confidence. A wide range of experiences, including after school clubs and church and community events, support pupils' SMSC development. Pupils understand that it is important to show love to others through charitable giving and when they serve others. They raise funds for Dr Kershaw's, a local hospice, and join the community in planting bulbs to be enjoyed by others. Outstanding religious education (RE) and worship provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues of importance to them. Year 2 pupils, when asked what messages from God they would like to share with others, spoke reverently of the importance of peace and forgiveness. The spiritual maturity shown by pupils at St George's is often deeply moving. Behaviour is exemplary and relationships at all levels are strong. Pupils understand that they have a right to the friendship of others and know that in turn they should ensure that no one is left without friends. Parents feel welcome in the school and talk of the support given by the school as being above and beyond what might be expected of them. They talk of the time staff give to listening to concerns or worries and of the care taken to resolve any areas of concern. Pupils are respectful of difference and are excited to learn from their peers of other cultures and faiths. They understand the importance of the church to their school and to the town. Pupils are respectful of their peers from other faiths and cultures. They understand that Christianity is a world faith but do not have any direct experience of Christians who live or serve in other cultures. Pupils enjoy RE and lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' SMSC development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is highly valued by all members of the school community. Pupils enjoy learning more about God and Jesus and adults recognise the importance of being together and of taking time for reflection and prayer. The candle lit as worship begins reminds everyone present that Jesus is with them. They enjoy the sense of togetherness that worship brings and understand the importance of worship as a time to give thanks and to say sorry. Well-structured worship begins with a Christian greeting and includes liturgical responses to scripture and during prayer. Pupils enjoy listening to stories that teach them how to live and welcome time given to reflect on their message. Pupils share provoking and sometimes profound responses within worship. Other pupils listen respectfully as their peers share their thoughts. Older pupils learn of the importance of Eucharistic worship to Christians and the church community are keen to develop this further. Times of prayer and reflection are central to worship. Pupils know that prayer is something that comes from the heart and recognise that prayers shared in class prayer areas or directly with God can make a difference. Pupils are familiar with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and share their understanding of each form. They retell the stories of Christmas and Easter but are less familiar with other Christian festivals whose story would support a deeper understanding of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Worship is thoughtfully planned and led by a number of staff and by a locally ordained priest who is supporting the school during the interregnum. Pupils worship in church to mark significant Christian festivals or important events in the life of the school. Parents welcome such opportunities as times when they can be part of the worship of the school. Worship is effectively led and monitored. Through regular and purposeful evaluation of worship the school is able to monitor its impact and address areas where worship could be improved. Pupils contribute to worship through drama and the sharing of responses. They have the spiritual maturity and Biblical knowledge to plan and lead worship and the school recognises that this should be their next step in the development of school worship at St George's.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE makes an outstanding contribution to the school's Christian distinctiveness and to pupils' SMSC development. The majority of teaching is very good with much being outstanding. Lessons are well planned and encourage a high level of reflection and personal response. As a result, pupils make very good progress and achieve well. The enthusiasm of pupils and teachers for RE provides the foundation for interesting and exciting lessons. Pupils talk knowledgeably about Christianity and other faiths studied. Skills such as enquiry and analysis are used effectively to deepen understanding. Year 2 pupils, when thinking about the importance of angels as God's messengers, reflected on their own roles as messengers of God to the world. Older pupils have an empathetic and secure understanding

of the importance of religion to those who believe. Year 6 pupils, when considering how faith gives meaning to the journey of life, talk of believers getting to know God better. In response to a video clip about pilgrimages, a group of pupils reflected that pilgrims, 'seem somehow to share their hearts with God'. Displays in classrooms and around the school support learning and the pupils' SMSC development. They encourage pupils to reflect on how they could become more Christ-like, to think about what is important to them and what it means to be a good friend. A faith week led by students from the lead school in the academy trust gives excellent support to older pupils. Its contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of faiths other than Christianity is significant. Pupils' understanding of Christian values is well supported in RE lessons. However, their understanding of the Biblical stories that underpin the values is not as well developed. The leadership and management of RE is very strong. Teachers say that they are well supported and acknowledge that at St George's RE is treated as a core subject alongside maths and English. The new curriculum, introduced in 2015, has made a rewarding contribution to pupils' ability to reflect on the ways in which religion has impact on believers. The school is aware that for some pupils factual knowledge about religion is not as strong as it might be. Plans have been put in place to address this imbalance. Very good procedures are in place to monitor teaching and learning. Assessment tasks provide teachers and the coordinator with accurate information about individual pupil strengths and areas for development. Regular meetings with colleagues from other schools and the diocese ensures that the RE coordinator is well informed about current good practice and new developments in RE. Staff meeting time is allocated each term for this information to be shared with all teachers.

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

The school is very well led by leaders whose personal faith and commitment to developing the distinctiveness of St George's as a church school are outstanding. The commitment to acting as God's servants is widely understood by staff and this supports all aspects of teaching and learning. Collective worship, RE and spiritual development lie at the centre of the school's mission and vision. Formal self-evaluation procedures involving parents, staff and pupils support effective school self-evaluation. Currently the role of governors in this process is not well defined. As a result, their effectiveness in holding the school to account as a church school is limited. Robust action plans for RE and worship form part of the school development plan. They ensure that 'no stone is left unturned' in the pursuit of excellence in the school's approach to developing its Christian character. The focus areas identified for development at inspection in 2011 have been largely, although not entirely met. This is because of a change of leadership and the necessary changes to practice brought about when the school joined the Cranmer Trust. The school is committed to identifying and supporting teachers who have the skills and enthusiasm to become future school leaders. Newly appointed staff are given excellent guidance about the importance of their work as role models within a church school. Partnerships with the local RE hub, the diocese and with the lead school of the academy trust are strong and effective. Relationships amongst all members of the school family are purposeful and supportive. Parents speak of the openness of the school and of the commitment of staff. Links with the church community are mutually supportive. A local priest plays an active part in the life of the school and facilitates times when pupils come to worship in the church and times when they come to explore and find out about the ministry offered. St George's is a school where everyone works together to ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness is celebrated and enjoyed.