

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

<b>Christ Church</b>	
Christ Church Lane, Lichfield WS13 8AY	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lichfield</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Staffordshire
Date/s of inspection	23 March 2017
Date of last inspection	22 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	124457
Headteacher	Julie Pilmore
Inspector's name and number	Susan Blackburn 756

### School context

Christ Church is a larger than average primary school with 418 pupils on roll, most of whom are from white British backgrounds. A smaller number of pupils are eligible for support through pupil premium funding compared to those pupils nationally. The school also has a lower percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register compared to those nationally. The headteacher has been in post for three years. The school has strong links with the local church.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher, well supported by an effective governing body, provide strong leadership founded on Christian values of respect, care and responsibility ensures pupils achieve well and are cared for as individuals.
- Excellent relationships between all members of the school community which exemplify Christian values.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are courteous, welcoming and respectful to all members of the school community.

### Areas to improve

- Provide wider opportunities for pupils to gain experiences first hand of meeting people from other faiths and cultures.
- Provide opportunities for visitors from other Christian denominations to come into school to develop a broader understanding of Anglican practice.
- Embed the excellent practice recently introduced into the life of the school including developing the use of pupils' reflection books across the school.

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

The school vision and values statement make it explicit that Christian values are central to the work of the school and this focus on care, respect and responsibility have a significant impact on academic and personal development. Every possible opportunity is used to promote Christian values in school and in the wider community. Vibrant displays around the school feature Bible stories or Christian values. The school website emphasises the link with the local church and the importance placed on being a distinctively Christian school.

The establishment of a reward system based on value tokens, provides all members of the school community with the opportunity to reward and praise pupils for demonstrating Christian values in their behaviour. Broadening the impact of this approach in giving tokens to the wider community has engaged a greater audience in promoting outstanding behaviour both in and out of school. Governors contribute to the promotion of outstanding behaviour through governor value awards. Pupils understand how Christian values make them better people by reflecting on their actions and concentrating on demonstrating respect and care towards others. The school's core values contribute to pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The creation of leadership roles for pupils enhances their personal development. Class ambassadors are confident in greeting visitors and initiating conversation, demonstrating the utmost respect. Pupils reflect on their behaviour and the way they treat other people. One pupil commented that values are important because Jesus made them, if we didn't have the values there would be chaos. Pupils say values such as resilience make you work harder and that the focus on Christian values makes people think about their actions. Marking in books includes references to values so that Christian values are promoted in all aspects of school life.

Parents say the school has a strong, caring family atmosphere where their children are happy and that the school does all it can to enable pupils to be the best they can be. Teachers welcome pupils into school every morning so that the care and support is provided as soon as pupils enter the school. Pupils achieve well at Christ Church. Their achievements are celebrated and their God given talents valued. Attendance is celebrated and promoted through school. The school has put in place strategies to improve attendance for some groups of pupils. The popular 'Inspire workshops' have had a positive impact on relationships and on attendance for some pupils. These opportunities for parents, grandparents and pupils to work together and learn together to demonstrate how adults can support their children at home in a fun way. The activities are centred on big questions and opportunities to promote values with adults, such as 'Your child is resilient in learning', reinforces the values approach. Proud clouds are used effectively in the Reception class so that every child's achievement at home and school can be shared and promoted. The inclusive nature of the school ensures all pupils feel proud of their school and contribute to its success.

The school provides frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect. Pupils are keen to share their reflection books which have been recently introduced. Key questions are used to prompt their thinking and spiritual development. Reflection areas are valued by pupils who say they are calm areas where we can think. They are taught to be kind, thoughtful and tolerant. Religious education (RE) is used to promote thinking and debate on Christian values and on lessons we can learn from Bible stories such as Noah's ark. Pupils could link the values of responsibility and learning what is right to do from this story. The school provides opportunities for learners to develop their understanding of other faiths and cultures. Sikh parents are invited in to speak to classes about their faith and events such as World religion day enabled the whole school to focus on a variety of faiths including the Hindu and Muslim faiths. The school recognises the need to provide more opportunities to enable pupils to have a wider understanding of other faiths and cultures and is exploring links with schools in other countries such as Dubai and Jamaica. Pupils are given opportunities, both within the RE curriculum and through attendance at church services to learn about and celebrate major Christian events and symbols.

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

Worship has an impact on the lives of the school community. All staff attend worship and share the importance placed on gathering to worship together. The worship cycle contains frequent opportunities to focus on different stories from the Bible and a strong focus on Jesus Christ, which enables pupils to relate the values seen in his life to the values in their daily lives. Worship includes focus on Christian and British values and is often led by pupils. Worship engages all pupils. They demonstrate respect and sing with enthusiasm. One pupil gave an example when they listened to the story of the Good Samaritan, that pupils may feel 'compelled to act like this person'. Pupils say prayer enables them to consider their actions and to thank God. Competitions, vibrant displays including bird houses on the prayer tree promote the sharing of pupils' prayers. Prayers are shared with the school community by selecting a prayer from the prayer tree and putting it on the website. The worship table and candles are seen as Anglican traditions and the use of a vicar puppet dressed in the correct liturgical colours linked to the church calendar provides a reminder of the church year. The Incumbent and the diocese have provided support in developing worship. The introduction of a new altar cloth and establishing the lighting of a candle to start worship provides an opportunity for pupils to focus and reflect. The incumbent supports the school in delivering aspects of

worship. Recently she engaged pupils in exploring their understanding of the Trinity using analogies that the pupils could relate to such as a triceratops and a crème egg. As a result pupils can demonstrate an increased understanding of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A governor has supported pupils in learning a wide repertoire of traditional hymns that the pupils enjoy singing. Worship monitors are very helpful and competent. They take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils have opportunities to visit local churches and the cathedral to develop their understanding of Anglican practice. Every year group visits the church every half term and they are joined by many parents who welcome the opportunity to worship together. The school actively consults all members of the school community to evaluate the effectiveness of worship and for ideas as to how it can be improved. Parental questionnaires, pupil voice meetings with governors, as well as listening to the school council has helped to increase the effectiveness of worship. Pupils are actively consulted and encouraged to have a positive role in school improvement. A direct result of their input has been to change the worship cycle so that the Friday celebration worship is now led by children. This takes the form of a focus on values or a Bible story. The school council wanted to choose the theme for Friday worship so that the pupils take a key leadership role in the content of this worship. During the inspection the Junior Leadership team led worship focusing on identifying key values depicted in different stories from the Bible. Pupils demonstrated a clear understanding and were eager and confident in giving their views.

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

The school's shared Christian vision and values are articulated by all leaders who have been actively engaged in developing and promoting Christian values in school life. Pupils are engaged in leading the school, the school council were involved in devising the vision statement and have a key role in school improvement. The Junior Leadership team play a significant role in leading the school as a church school. Pupils contributed to the development of the behaviour policy and promote positive behaviour through giving value tokens when they notice Christian values being portrayed.

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and the impact of her clear, whole school approach to school improvement is recognised by the school community. Together with a strong leadership team and effective governing body, there is a commitment to improve as a distinctive church school. Pupils are actively engaged in this process and have a significant role in contributing to this outstanding church school. School leaders and governors are effective in monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school. They work closely together to ensure high standards are maintained. Areas for improvement from the previous SIAS inspection have been met. In their monitoring role governors look through reports 'through a lens of a church school' to determine their appropriateness as to whether they foster a Christian ethos. Governors are mindful of the Church of England reports 'Protecting God's children and Valuing all God's children' in determining school policies such as the behaviour policy.

Governor monitoring records are comprehensive and include focused questions to prompt governors and empower them to ask relevant questions relating to the effectiveness of the school as a church school. Prompts such as 'Are pupils able to talk about Christianity and other religions knowledgeably?' enable leaders to evaluate the impact of worship and RE on pupils understanding. Presentations to governors on worship and RE ensure leaders are fully informed about the work of the school. Governors are actively involved in the development of new initiatives and developments such as the introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' materials following training by the diocese. There are strong links with the local churches. The incumbent leads worship and is actively involved in school improvement.

The highly inclusive nature of the school is grounded in a strong emphasis on nurturing and caring for each individual. High expectations are reflected in the school development plan and performance management targets which prioritises leadership of the school as a church school. Governors are actively engaged in talking to the children, undertaking focused book trawls and in building plans for the following year. Because of this high engagement with the school they know the school well and make an effective contribution to school improvement as a distinctive church school. The governor Health and Safety team meet with the pupil Health and Safety officers in order to monitor the school environment. The effectiveness of self-evaluation is further enhanced through the use of a pupil self-evaluation document. Questions such as 'What makes learning enjoyable?' ensures that the work of the school is fully informed through pupil involvement.

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