

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Aston All Saints Church of England Primary School	
Lodge Lane, Aston, Sheffield S26 2BL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Sheffield
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Sheffield Academy Trust
Date of academy conversion	December 2014
Date of inspection	31 January 2018
Date of last inspection	6 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Aided 141590
Headteacher	Sue Mellor
Inspector's name and number	Malcolm Price 627

School context

Aston All Saints Primary School is an average sized school with a stable population. There are currently 210 children on roll in seven classes. Most children live within the local catchment area. The proportion of children with SEN is below the national average. Since the previous inspection, the school has gained academy status and is part of the Diocese of Sheffield Academy Trust. The current headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection. There is a strong and long established partnership with All Saints Church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Aston All Saints Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian character and caring ethos of the school are demonstrated in very good relationships
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) support this distinctiveness and offer opportunities for children to engage and grow spiritually.
- School leaders provide a nurturing environment based on its Christian character. As a result, children enjoy school life and, in most areas, achieve well and make good progress.

Areas to improve

- Using the current mission statement as a basis, develop a more sharply focussed set of core Christian values to which children can relate more readily. This task should be achieved by seeking the views of the whole school community, including children.
- Seek ways for children to be more involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship, including through the further development of the worship committee.
- Increase the breadth and depth of children's learning in RE in order to enable them to make links with the core values.

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

In many ways this school presents a clear picture of its distinctive Christian character. The mission statement, which is displayed by the school entrance, states that 'the Christian ethos is at the heart of the school' and this is demonstrated and lived out in very good relationships at all levels as well as through opportunities for all members of the community to benefit from spiritual activities. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and appreciate its strong ethical basis with many having chosen the school because of its Christian character. They praise its family ethos. Children say that 'we pray every morning and everyone seems really close and it feels like a family'. Indeed, prayer is a familiar feature of the school day. Classes use prayers at lunch time and at the end of the day, children write prayers to God and they are enthusiastic about the new reflective areas around the school that encourage them to express themselves through written prayers. Children are proud to show the altar frontals around the main hall which they create for the half-termly Eucharist services, each with its particular focus on an aspect of the school's spiritual and community life. Children can also explain that it is important to them that they attend a church school and illustrate this by referring to the cross on their badge and the links with All Saints Church. As yet, the school has not developed a clear, focussed set of Christian values and this limits children's ability to articulate what is distinctive about the school or to give specific examples of values that are demonstrated within school life. Children show respect for adults and for each other in the way they behave, but they are not yet confident enough in using examples of stories and events from the Bible to express how the Christian character of the school impacts on their attitudes and behaviour. Through its distinctive character, the school is enabling children to achieve well in maths and in reading, with most children at least meeting national age-related expectations. Children currently achieve less well and make less than expected progress in writing, particularly at Key Stage 1. Typically, boys do not make as much progress as girls. School leaders have taken action to address these issues, for example through a whole school focus on writing. In addition, they have invested in high quality targeted resources, provided opportunities for staff training and have worked closely with a national leader in education. This is resulting in children having more confidence in their learning.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship serves as a focal point for the school day. Children listen well and particularly enjoy opportunities to take part. They benefit from times to reflect and join in with responses and prayers. They understand that this is a special time and they know that the lighting of a candle at the start of worship illustrates that 'Jesus is the light of the world'. They also recognise that shining as a light can have meaning for their own behaviour and that 'when people don't know Jesus, you can tell them'. Worship is planned in themes and includes significant festivals in the church year. For instance, children learn about Candlemas and the story of Jesus being presented in the Temple. Although worship reflects the school's Christian character, the absence of clearly defined values means that children are not confident in fully expressing how it affects their attitudes. Collective worship has most impact where children have a greater role in planning and leading. The most obvious example of this is the half-termly Eucharist service which children, staff and parents consider to be a highlight of school life and from which the school community derives spiritual benefit. As a result of these services, children also have a clear appreciation of the Last Supper and can explain how the bread and wine represents Jesus' body and blood. Children also enjoy worship held in All Saints Church, which the worship committee helps to organise. Those on the committee say that 'we all have a part – some read prayers or we make our own' and 'we choose the story'. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to be involved in planning and leading worship on a more regular basis. Collective worship is well supported by clergy and church members including the local Open the Book team. The school does not as yet encourage visitors from a wider range of churches in order to extend children's appreciation of different Christian practice. The impact of collective worship is monitored by staff through their discussions with children and through surveys sent to parents which indicate universally positive views. There is scope for extending the range of people contributing to the evaluation of worship and for diversifying the methods for gathering feedback.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The school provides children with a good range of learning activities in RE and, through this, children are beginning to develop an understanding of how these studies can impact on their own attitudes and behaviour. For example, in learning about Jesus' dealings with Zacchaeus, children could explain how Jesus changed his behaviour and were also encouraged to think about how they might be challenged to change their own attitudes. They could explain that the key message in this story is the principle of forgiveness. In a similar way, children planning to lead the Eucharist service on the theme of love could refer to the parable of the Good Samaritan and to the Great Commandment, explaining that 'you might want to help others'. Children can apply Bible stories in other ways when prompted. For instance, they can suggest that the stories of Moses and the Burning Bush and Noah's Ark are both about listening to God and choosing the right way. They understand the Christian message at its most fundamental level and can explain that Jesus died on the cross 'because he loved us so much'. However, there are not yet enough opportunities for children to use Bibles in class activities or to develop their knowledge and understanding of Bible stories, and this reduces their ability to make links to the school's Christian character. Lessons are most effective where teachers are confident in their own knowledge and understanding. In these cases, children work well together and demonstrate good engagement. Children also engage more deeply when teachers encourage them to respond to reflective comments and questions in marking. Teachers give children opportunities to learn about other faiths, for example through their studies of Passover in Judaism, the Hindu festival of Diwali, and the use of prayer mats in Islam. These studies have not recently been enhanced by visits to places of worship. Subject leaders have received training in the new Understanding Christianity resources and teachers have made a good start at using the units. The school has rightly adjusted its approach in line with recent changes to assessment procedures and has good systems in place for assessing and recording individual children's attainment and progress at the end of each unit.

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

School leaders have worked well together to maintain and develop the school's distinctive Christian character. The result of this can be seen in the quality of teamwork and relationships at all levels and in the support given to new members of staff. The headteacher, leadership team, governors and church leaders present a unified approach and articulate the same vision for the school. A practical example of this is the revision of the mission statement, which also involved children through school council representation and class discussion. As a result of undertaking a self-evaluation exercise, governors have a clear idea of the priorities for the school and of the skills they can offer to support the leadership team. For example, they agree that raising attainment in writing and planning for staff development and succession are important areas. The partnership with the parish church is strong and this benefits children not only in terms of opportunities for collective worship but also in support for studies in RE and in providing confirmation classes for children who wish to take their faith further. School leaders encourage children in leadership roles and value their opinions. For example, the worship committee have carried out a survey asking children their views about being in a church school. The overwhelming proportion of these views are positive and children pass comments such as 'it feels amazing to be part of Christ and this church school'. Children's views are acted on and, as a result of this survey, the length of the Eucharist services has been reduced. The school council have been proactive in designing the motto 'caring, sharing, laughing, learning' and in their recent activities supporting the revision of the school behaviour and rewards policy. School leaders help children to gain a wider perspective on the world and compassion for those less fortunate than themselves through support for charities such as Children in Need and Macmillan. They encourage children's involvement in the community through events such as Rotherham One Voice. They also help children to be more aware of Christianity as a global faith, for instance through their learning about Christmas in the Caribbean. The school has made good progress towards implementing the areas for development from the previous inspection, though there is still some progress to be achieved in relation to children's contribution to leading collective worship.