

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Stonnall, Staffordshire WS9 9EE

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Lichfield

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Staffordshire

Date of academy conversion

1 July 2016

Name of multi-academy trust

St Chad's Academies Trust

Date of inspection

16 February 2017

Date of last inspection

9 March 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Academy 142982

Headteacher

Tracey Parton

Inspector's name and number

Huw D Bishop 344

School context

St Peter's Church of England Primary School is smaller than average primary school and currently has 197 pupils on roll. This has doubled since the last inspection. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged, eligible for free school meals and are supported by additional funding known as the pupil premium are very small. The school became an academy in July 2016 sponsored by the St Chad's Academy Trust in the diocese of Lichfield. The school has very strong links with St Peter's parish church in the village.

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

- The determined leadership of the principal and deputy principal as they establish Gospel teachings as the basis for distinctive and clear Christian values in school.
- The positive ways in which leaders and teachers have secured improving attainment and progress for all groups of pupils in school, meeting their needs within an inclusive and caring Christian environment.
- The quality of relationships in school which are very strong and appreciated by pupils and parents alike. Pupils are happy, enjoy their learning and are keen to show it.
- Collective worship that is appropriate, interactive and reflects the school's distinctive Christian community as 'One Family Under God', so that every pupil shares and has the chance to develop their own spirituality.

Areas to improve

- Ensure all governors engage in the process of evaluating church school development by implementing rigorous and robust formal systems to regularly check and account for its progress.
- Increase the provision for pupils to experience Eucharistic practice within the Anglican tradition.

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

This school community promotes an atmosphere in which the development of the whole child is secured through a strong commitment to Christian values. It describes itself as inspiring pupils to 'believe and achieve as one family under God' and this is clearly evident to the visitor. There are also visual reminders of this around the school. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of core Christian values which are represented by 12 keys symbolic of St Peter, that underpin their life in school. Values such as friendship, respect, challenge and happiness were among those chosen by pupils and staff together and so embody and empower their life together. These values are also used in the context of the teaching and example of Jesus and the way this permeates teaching, learning, worship and care for all. One parent described how her child has developed compassion and care for others and can relate Bible stories to everyday events, because 'the Christian values the child has learned at school has helped him to process and deal well with situations'. The school's proclamation of these values is very evident in the outstanding relationships between all members of the school community. Pupils also talk about the twelve core values underpinning behaviour in school. This also helps them to show Christian values in action. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding is outstanding as a result of this focused Christian ethos and pastoral care. The international days which pupils enjoy as a part of their curriculum enable them to be aware of difference and diversity and ensure that they have a clear understanding of and respect for other faith communities.

Academic attainment in 2015 and 2016 was above the national average in headline figures and the progress information for pupils in school now shows that this level of success should continue. This is because the distinctive Christian environment creates a learning culture in which all pupils feel secure and supported and encourages them to become confident learners. This success is also closely interwoven with the development of pupils' personal spirituality because learning and worship are linked and pupils talk freely about their beliefs and their importance. They are given opportunities to reflect on this in lessons as well as worship. This was evidenced well in an effective lesson on the day of the inspection. Pupils were considering the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet and its teaching on the importance of service to others. They reflected carefully on the story itself and its impact on their own behaviour in school. Pupils say that leaders and teachers listen to their views and respect them. This is because the school's actions to improve pupils' chances are so strongly rooted in distinctive Christian values, that they make sure each pupil is known, valued and encouraged to succeed. Parents, too, say that they feel part of the school's family community and this encourages them to be proactive with school. One parent described the school's approach as having 'in its roots an incredibly beautiful attitude towards children, filled with warmth, understanding and a genuine sense of care'. Pupils' efforts are acknowledged and celebrated and pupils want to be in school. Consequently, their attendance is above the national average. Pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning are also outstanding because they enjoy and appreciate all the learning experiences they are given. Pupils enjoy a broad and rich curriculum which is creative and interactive. This is enriched by attractive displays and classroom reflection areas which link up to Christian values. Pupils say that they enjoy the opportunity given to them in the 'Golden Book' weekly celebration of achievement and progress because it increases confidence and inspires them to want to do well. Christian signs and symbols reinforce the school's distinctiveness and support pupils' spiritual awareness and development. Pupils know about the Trinity, the seasons and liturgical colours of the church's calendar and the Lord's prayer. The school has a strong commitment to after school activities including a varied programme of residential experiences promoting the creative arts and sporting opportunities within a Christian context.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is at the school's heart. It is planned carefully and includes themes based on the Bible, Christian values, and Christian festivals, as well as those of other faiths and events of national importance. Jesus is at the heart of all the school does and worship helps pupils to understand how His teaching guides Christians in their daily lives. Worship begins with a liturgy to light a candle representing God's presence with the school community as one family. Pupils offer one another a sign of peace as the candle is extinguished at the end of worship. This enables pupils to gain a deeper understanding of Christian belief and practice and makes a significant impact on pupils' lives because it reinforces their unity as 'one family under God'. As such they are very aware of the theological basis of collective worship. Pupils say that Bible stories challenge them to think about their own behaviour as well as learning about people. Pupils lead and contribute to worship too and they enjoy these opportunities to take on responsibility and show what they believe. Each class has a reflection area and a 'Worship Box' containing a Bible, holding cross, key, candle, and appropriate liturgical cloths in seasonal colours for the church year, all enabling pupils to understand religious symbolism and its importance for Christians. These special areas reflect differences across the age range and provide another opportunity for pupils to nurture their personal spirituality. Prayer is given a high profile in worship and pupils participate fully in public and private prayer in school. Pupils recite the grace before lunch and the school's own prayer is used during worship and this has helped to develop their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils understand how prayer is used to communicate with God and how it can guide

them in their personal lives. Pupils sing with great joy and fun. The cross is the focal point during worship and links to core Christian values are displayed as reminders of, and pointers towards the school's Christian distinctiveness.

Worship is led by a range of people including senior leaders, the vicar, members of a local 'Assembly team' and the local 'Open the Book' team. Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides are all represented in school and this builds strong links between the church, local community and the school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their involvement. Pupils are given a range of worship experience and this also helps them to understand the broad nature of worship including Anglican tradition and practice. There is a very active link with the parish church. In 2016, some pupils participated in preparation lessons for communion before confirmation and took their first communions during the school harvest Eucharist. This feature has been welcomed by pupils and parents. Pupils and parents attend worship, sometimes in school and the parish church at the principal Christian festivals. Pupils can place prayer requests in a prayer box in the main corridor and tie prayers on prayer trees around the school. An outdoor prayer tree is used particularly on saints' days and this is decorated with various artefacts to represent pupils' charitable giving. Prayers are said as the tree is dressed, promoting a spirit of selflessness, empathy and reflection. Feedback on worship is obtained from pupils, staff and parents and this is evaluated, discussed and forms part of the school's development as a Church of England school. A significant number of parents attend the Friday 'Golden book' worship in school as well as other seasonal occasions in church.

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

The headteacher, senior leaders and staff are effective in articulating the school's distinctive Christian vision and ethos and in promoting that ethos throughout the school to support effective learning. They are committed to sustaining an outstanding Christian environment in which all aspects of pupils' development and wellbeing are fostered and promoted through biblical teaching and Christian values. This contributes strongly to the improving outcomes that pupils now enjoy. Leaders' model their Christian faith and this is very evident in all aspects of leadership practice in school. Pupils and parents agree with this and this is made clear through the school's mission statement 'Believe and Achieve, One Family under God'. Foundation governors are passionate about their school and have a clear understanding of their role. They are highly committed and support the school in several ways, including regular visits to school. Action plans for RE and worship are included in the school's improvement planning and are discussed at governors' meetings, but these are not evaluated as formally as they could be.

Leaders seek the views of parents and pupils in reviewing the school's Christian distinctiveness and are successful in ensuring that the academic, pastoral and spiritual needs of all groups of pupils are met. Issues raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. RE and collective worship are led with enthusiasm and there is a genuine desire to find ways to improve still further. Governors are totally committed to the professional development of all staff in school and this includes succession planning for future models of Church school leadership and development in the local area. Some staff from the school have been successful in securing senior leader appointments in other church schools. The school's distinctive Christian ethos has also influenced other staff with no previous experience of a church school to want to remain in a church school setting for their future careers. The school has strong partnerships with local universities' departments of education, hosting professional development opportunities for students who wish to pursue their careers in church schools. The school values greatly the support given by diocesan advisers to promote Christian distinctiveness in its school improvement journey. Parents, too, appreciate the dedicated work of staff in supporting their children's personal and spiritual development as well as their academic success. They rightly describe the school's mission statement as 'hitting the nail right on the head' in terms of its relevance in describing St Peter's school as a distinctive and effective Christian community!

SIAMS report February 2017 St Peter's Academy, Stonnall, Staffordshire WS9 9EE