

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Reservoir Road, Hednesford, Staffordshire WS12 1BE

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Staffordshire
Date of inspection	7 July 2017
Date of last inspection	18 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary and nursery 124252
Headteacher	Samantha Price
Inspector's name and number	Rosemary Woodward 583

School context

St Peter's CE Primary School is a two form entry primary school and nursery. Its 439 pupils are housed in bright, modern buildings on the edge of Hednesford, a former mining town on the edge of Cannock Chase. Pupils are from predominately white British backgrounds and the percentage eligible for Pupil Premium is below national average. Headteacher and church clergy, new to role at the previous inspection, work with a staff team almost all of whom have been appointed in the last five years. St Peter's parish church is adjacent to the school.

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

- A holistic approach that nurtures each individual in God's love, enabling every pupil to feel special and valued and so flourish and make significant progress in all areas of school life.
- The inspirational leadership of the head teacher who works with a very committed team to realise their shared vision for a school where the Christian faith is modelled and lived out.
- The pupils' secure understanding of the key concepts and beliefs that lie at the heart of the Christian faith, and are explicitly proclaimed throughout the school.
- Christian values and relationships that are embedded in all areas of school life.
- Strong links between school and church, who together share Jesus' love with the local community.
- Lively and relevant worship that inspires and is valued by the whole school community.

Areas to improve

- Encourage pupils to take an increasingly active role in planning and leading worship.
- Extend opportunities for governors to explore the pupil voice directly, and respond to their findings.
- Create opportunities for pupils to engage further with those from a diversity of faith and cultural settings.

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

The key Christian beliefs of creation, incarnation and salvation underpin the vision of St Peter's school, where pupils are enabled to 'Reach for the sky'. These concepts are foundational to a holistic approach in developing the whole child; personally, spiritually and academically, as they strive to reach their full potential. The Christian concepts are expounded through the values of thankfulness, trust, humility, endurance, forgiveness and friendship, all of which are clearly linked to Bible passages and Jesus' life and teaching. These are lived out and modelled by staff with the result that pupils feel loved and supported and link this care to the Christian character of the school. Forgiveness and the assurance of a fresh start allow pupils to see the school as a safe and secure place where they can achieve. Data confirms that progress and results are consistently strong. Behaviour is very good, and conflict and bullying are dealt with in a very proactive way. The engaging curriculum is effective in actively promoting pupils' spiritual and moral development, and pupils are very well supported on their learning journey. Every pupil is known, loved and supported as an individual and all are included, including an increasing number with challenges not managed well within other schools, yet who are thriving in this setting. Achievements are valued and celebrated very well, and parents are actively involved in their children's learning. Pupils take great pride in their school. They talk confidently about its church links and the story of St Peter, whose patronal day is celebrated in a joyous community parade. The place of St Peter is further proclaimed through art work centred on St Peter as fisherman, fisher of people and the rock on which Jesus' church is to be built. Pupils are taught to develop as responsible citizens, and are offered many opportunities to show generosity to others, and they give very generously of their time, talents and money.

Well planned religious education (RE) lessons offer opportunities for deeper study of Christianity and an exploration of a number of other faiths. Pupils speak confidently about what they have learned and older ones can compare and contrast features of different faiths. They can debate some of life's 'big questions' and are not afraid to express their own informed views and opinions. The use of the Understanding Christianity resource is just beginning in the school. If well used, this will add the further depth and challenge needed to build on the existing understanding of the concepts at the heart of Christianity. However at present pupils have only limited opportunities to engage directly with those of other beliefs and experiences living beyond their immediate community, either within RE or wider school life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Well planned and structured worship is central to life at St Peters school and plays a key role in developing and inspiring the pupils' personal spirituality. A combination of whole school and class worship ensures that the content is relevant and age appropriate. Pupils are confident in discussing the importance of worship and what they have learned from it. Worship times end with a challenge for pupils to respond and put what they have shared into practice in their lives, in a way relevant to those of any faith or none. The school's Christian concepts and values are constantly referred to within worship times, to reinforce their importance and root them within biblical teaching. The school strongly values the place of prayer and reflection. Pupils are very confident, not only in sharing liturgical and written prayers, but contributing their own spontaneous prayer and praise. This extends to classrooms and beyond and is not limited to formal worship times. Pupils explain that they value and use the interactive reflective areas in class and in the church building, although the school's outside areas are not yet fully utilised. Pupils also have a very good knowledge of a wide range of Bible stories and teachings. They have an extremely sound understanding of what it means to follow the Christian faith and can explain beliefs about God, the Trinity and the person of Jesus. Pupils confidently explain that Jesus' death and resurrection offers forgiveness and hope of eternal life for Christians. Some explain that Jesus was 'God come to earth as a human' as well as God's son, linking this to their understanding of the incarnation. All pupils very much enjoy sharing in joyful singing and praise and clearly link the songs' content to the Christian message. A very young pupil explained that Jesus is like a lighthouse as His light and teachings can help us be safe in the way we lead our lives. Pupils have also had some opportunities to engage with members of other local churches and so are aware of some of the diversity found within the Christian faith. This is enhanced by an awareness of Christianity as a global faith, and links with a Christian work in Thailand. Effective strategies are used to evaluate the impact of worship in the school. Pupils' opinions are regularly sought by staff, but there are, as yet, few opportunities for them to be directly involved in the planning and delivery of worship. The

pupils' understanding of the Anglican tradition is good because of the strong partnership with the local church. They have a very good awareness of the principle Christian festivals, including Pentecost, and of the use of liturgical colours. Celebrations of festivals and key points in the school year are shared by church and school and very well attended by parents. This is further enriched for older pupils through their participation in services of Holy Communion, and the Ash Wednesday ashing service.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision, fully endorsed by the senior leaders and governing body, for the school as a holistic community in which the Christian faith is foundational. One leader summarised the vision as 'a culture of high expectations within the context of God's love'. There is no division between the distinctive Christian character of the school and the drive for excellence in education, but the team talk of 'joined up thinking'. Dedicated staff work hard to ensure that their vision becomes reality, and as a result the school has moved forward considerably in all areas over recent years. The Christian foundations, values and strong church links are clearly modelled and lived out by the whole team, led by those who confidently proclaim their own commitment to the faith. Governors are very active within the life of the school, and are involved in taking a role in strategic planning for its future. The foundation group of governors meet regularly to ensure that the school does not lose its Christian focus. They discuss the impact of the school's Christian effectiveness with confidence, but opportunities for governors to explore the pupil voice directly are limited. Staff are supported very effectively and given good opportunities to develop professionally. Many of this staff team have entered the school as newly qualified teachers and are being encouraged to flourish and develop their role within this community where care and support are not limited to pupils. This has resulted in a very committed and dedicated 'home grown' leadership team. The church works extremely closely with the school. The husband and wife clergy team participate very actively in school life, and pastoral care for all is given high priority. Pupils and parents see the clergy and other members of the church team as trusted friends. Parents recognise and celebrate the strong partnership between school and church. They speak extremely highly of the school's care and loving support for pupils and their families, which begin from the moment their children enter the school. They affirm that every pupil is seen not just as a child but as a unique individual. Partnerships beyond the local area, including closer links with the Diocese, could further extend the drive to develop this distinctive, caring and inclusive community where pupils are helped to achieve 'life in all its fullness'.

SIAMS report July 2017 St Peter's CE (VC) Primary, Hednesford WS12 1BE