

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

### **St. Saviour's Church of England Voluntary Controlled (VC) Primary School**

Alum Rock Road Birmingham B8 1JB

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Good**

**Diocese**

**Birmingham**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Birmingham

Date of inspection

14 June 2018

Date of last inspection

7 March 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

VC Primary 103406

Headteacher

Louise Page

Inspector's name and number

Reverend Alison M. Morris 759

#### **School context**

This is a larger than average primary school with a two-form entry which serves the area of Saltley. There are 412 pupils on roll aged 5 – 11. Most pupils are Muslim and of Pakistani or Bangladesh heritage. The school is in an area of significant deprivation. Pupil premium figures are well above average at 38%, and 18% of pupils receive special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) provision. The school has links with the clergy and St. Saviours' church. In September 2017, OFSTED judged the school to be Requiring Improvement. A headteacher was appointed in September 2017 and a deputy in January 2018.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Saviour's as a Church of England school are good**

- Insightful, astute and inspirational leadership by the new headteacher whose vision is impacting successfully on the multi-faith community the school serves.
- Effective pastoral care and intervention strategies that overcome barriers to learning and enable pupils to realise their potential within this inclusive school.
- The significant and purposeful relationships throughout the school community, which reflect the Christian values and enable the Christian distinctiveness to be fostered and embedded.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Consolidate governance procedures and training to ensure that formal, robust systems are implemented which can, with secure evidence, accurately challenge, monitor and evaluate the impact upon pupils of collective worship, church school distinctiveness and ethos.
- Extend with different partnerships and strategies which will allow pupils to experience different religious lifestyles and cultural traditions, to deepen pupils understanding of a multi-faith and multi-cultural world.
- Revisit documentation on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to highlight, clarify and embed even further references for practices to enhance Christian distinctiveness and to provide focused points for developing the vision for this church school.

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

St. Saviour's is a good school which is in a period of transition with a new headteacher as it explores how it can express itself as a church school within a multi-faith community. Christian values, such as forgiveness and respect, which are embraced by the school set the expectation for how all should live and this is embodied in the motto 'Together Everyone Achieves More'. The Christian vision, which is rooted in Christian values, has an impact upon the Christian distinctiveness, character and ethos. Stakeholders from across the multi-faith community can articulate the shared vision. However, the new headteacher is bringing a fresh approach to the Christian character. As such, the Christian foundation enables faith to be encouraged and provides explicit faith context for every pupil to explore their own journey in a climate of inclusion and acceptance. For example, the phrase 'Every Child Matters to God' is clearly embedded in many ways. As a result, people of all faiths are confident to speak about their beliefs, expressing their thoughts and views.

Specific Christian values such as perseverance drive a commitment to meet the holistic needs of each pupil. This has an impact on pupils' learning and particularly those with specific learning or medical challenges. Effective intervention strategies, for example, 'phonics play' and nurture provision, such as 'stay and play', provide appropriate support to meet the needs of pupils and their parents. Very good use of outside agencies and intervention resources, including the inclusion and diversity leader and the multi-faith approach to the curriculum, ensure any differences between the achievements of groups are now being overcome. As a result, the rate of pupil progress is improving and is at, or slightly above, national standards for some pupils including those supported by additional government funding. High aspirations and expectations significant impact upon pupils' lives because they positively influence their ambitions, behaviour and relationships. Pupils are valued as individuals, treated with dignity and respect to be nurtured in this caring school. Harmonious staff relationships provide very good models which are followed by pupils, optimising learning for all.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is being promoted in religious education (RE) as well as in experiences within the lessons and worship. It has a higher priority in the school development plan than previously and is starting to be nourished and challenged through the approach to the Christian values. Although staff identify time for pupils to improve their understanding of SMSC, leaders are aware that the impact is inconsistent. There is also some development within the classroom to link Christian values with SMSC but it is too early to assess its impact.

Some pupils can explain what it means to be a pupil at a church school and make the link to Christian teaching. Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) which is taught using the Birmingham RE syllabus. However, the school has identified the need to integrate further the Understanding Christianity resource so that RE becomes more challenging yet accessible to both teaching staff and pupils. As such, some pupils are aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. RE also develops an understanding and awareness of faiths such as Sikhism. The school does recognize the need to enhance pupils' knowledge about the lifestyles and cultures of people from different faiths in order to widen their understanding of a diverse society, and to raise their understanding of global issues.

An effective school council, as well as specific leadership posts such as 'play leaders', enables pupils to contribute significantly to responsibility and decision making. They participate in service to the wider community through fundraising and charitable giving, such as the Birmingham Children's Hospital and Homeless Heroes.

Very good behaviour is supported by a reward and praise policy based on Christian values. As a result of pupils' keenness to do well and good pastoral care, attendance is rising. Positive attitudes to learning by pupils are becoming embedded within this caring Christian environment. Pupils have good self-esteem and self-belief. They are encouraged to enjoy their learning, to achieve well and to celebrate success. They are happy, safe and are proud of their school.

Classrooms have reflection areas which, when used, make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding and spiritual development. A relaxed and positive atmosphere around the school enables an environment for all pupils' needs to be met, for progress and achievement to flourish, and where differences and diversity can be celebrated.

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

Daily worship is inclusive and affirming and makes a good contribution to this church school. It evokes a sense of gathering within this multi-faith community and enables pupils to hear and learn how Christians understand the role of the person of Jesus Christ and the belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Worship is planned using a range of resources based on Christian beliefs, festivals and Christian values. Pupils visit the local church at Easter and Christmas which allows them to learn more about how Christians worship. This reinforces the shared vision, improves the knowledge of Anglican tradition and strengthens the spiritual relationship between the church and school community. As a result, parents respond positively to invitations to share in worship and special celebrations. Additional activities such as attending Year Six leavers' services offer a richer experience of worship.

Worship, through its moral messages, influences the pupils' actions and behaviour, creating a good supportive environment. Using pupil-centred approaches, worship regularly uses Old Testament Bible stories to explore how Christian values impact upon lives. For example, a drama led by pupils to tell the story of Jonah and the whale,

illustrating the theme of courage made the worship engaging and relevant to the pupils. Pupils' involvement is developing, but this needs to be embedded further. As such, attitudes to worship are good because it provides some relevant and meaningful experiences rooted in Christian beliefs and festivals which are appropriate and significant to the pupils' needs, age, development and interests. However, the school recognises that further development in classroom-based worship is needed to ensure consistency in approach.

Pupils are very attentive because effective use is made of stories, music and prayer. Great care is taken to ensure that worship is spiritually nourishing, accessible and inclusive in language. This approach allows peoples of all faiths to participate and to understand the importance of worship. Pupils enjoy and respond well to questions and explanation. Artefacts such as lighted candles are used to create awe and wonder and foster reflection and prayer. Some pupils speak positively about worship and its impact upon their lives.

Prayer and reflection are integral parts of daily worship. This encourages pupils' personal spirituality. Such times allow those who want to, to explore a relationship with God. Pupils value the impact of prayer upon their lives. As a result, some pupils speak confidently about their own faith and personal prayer. One pupil said, 'Prayer brings peace into our lives'. Appropriate use by pupils of reflection corners demonstrates their understanding of the purpose of prayer.

Evaluating the impact of collective worship to inform future planning is now in place but is not sufficiently rigorous and consistent in approach by governors to ensure the continuing improvement of high quality worship. Governors are aware of this and are eager to ensure that worship continue to develop in ways that are relevant to pupils' lives and their personal spiritual development.

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

The commitment and resilience of the headteacher have brought stability and consistency to this church school. Her own strong personal Christian vision and inspirational leadership provides a clear strategic direction for the challenges facing the school. As such, school leaders and governors are on a journey of exploration about what it means to be a church school within a multi-faith community. Purposeful and professional partnerships exist between all staff to promote the vision. New management processes are being infused slowly and are impacting positively upon the quality of pupils' church school experience. This has a positive impact upon the way that everyone promotes the vision and ethos throughout this family and community orientated school.

Governors are supportive of the headteacher's leadership and are ambitious for the strategic drive to improve academic standards and foster the well being of all. Both governors and staff have an honest and challenging view of the future development needs for school improvement. Through specific support governors are showing the skills to be critical friends and so operate strategically with some monitoring and evaluation on school improvement. But the process needs to be more robust. Purposeful and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the Christian distinctiveness have been limited in their impact, because of the lack of formality and precision. This does not always generate secure and consistent evidence against which to challenge and evaluate judgments on church school development. Professional development needs have been identified so that governors and staff can receive training to fulfil their responsibilities.

Effective partnerships with the church community, the vicar and the school nurture the close relational links that exist. Together they are ensuring that Christian values within the multi-faith community and the school enrich and strengthen the community cohesion. Through the regular visits by the incumbent, in pastoral care and the classroom, a difference is made to the Christian distinctiveness of this school. This significant link enhances pupils' attitude to faith and to their spiritual journey. It also impacts positively on how the locality relates to the Christian distinctive character and how the Christian vision is accepted and understood by pupils and their parents.

Statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship are met. The headteacher has already identified a need to review the provision of RE in relation to the implementation of the Understanding Christian resource. RE has a higher priority and is being supported strategically and planned for within the school development plan. As such, RE impacts upon Christian distinctiveness and makes some positive links to SMSC provision. It also provides time for pupils to celebrate diversity and difference which enables pupils to develop their understanding of different cultures.

Effective partnerships exist with the diocese and multi-agencies. Very effective cohesive links with the multi-faith community are generated through active engagement with leaders of the community and visits to places of worship such as the synagogue and gurdwara. Parents recognise the 'welcoming and supporting Christian faith' that underpins the school and appreciate the distinctive Christian values. They feel that their children are safe and secure. Pupils' academic and personal needs are being met in the classroom and through extra-curricular activities such as sewing and drama. High quality activities enable parents to gain understanding and to be involved with their child's education. For example, 'Inspire Mathematics' workshops and 'Phonics Café' are proving effective in being mutually beneficial for pupils and for the parents' own development. Well co-ordinated training for parents is a strength of the school. Both governors and parents acknowledge the firm leadership of the new headteacher and that she is making a substantial and positive difference to how the staff lead and manage teaching and learning in this school.