



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Bellamour Way
Colton
Rugeley
WS15 3LN

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 17 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 19 October 2009

School's unique reference number: 124335

Headteacher: Paul Lovern

Inspector's name and number: Huw D Bishop 344

School context

The school is part of the St Mary's and Richard Crosse Federation. There are 87 full-time pupils on roll with just over 30% coming from a wider catchment area including the nearby town of Rugeley. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are below average. The majority of pupils are of White British Heritage with just 1% having English as an additional language. When last inspected by Ofsted in November 2014, it was judged to be a good school.

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

- Clear and distinctive Christian values guide every aspect of school life and pupils achieve well in their learning and personal development.
- Relationships in school are exceptional. There is a welcoming Christian ethos with happy children thriving within a very caring Christian community.
- The quality of worship is very strong and all children and staff are actively involved.
- Religious education is planned thoroughly and delivered effectively. Pupils enjoy a strong variety of learning experiences that supports their personal and spiritual development.
- The outstanding Christian leadership of the Executive headteacher is supported strongly by governors and staff

Areas to improve

- With the strong connexions that already exist with the parish church and ministry team, develop the formal evaluation of collective worship, to inform planning and its contribution to pupils' personal spirituality.

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

Christian values are a central focus for the whole school and these are rooted in Christian belief and practice. The Christian character of the school also makes a significant impact on the academic achievement and the progress that pupils make across the curriculum as well as their

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The support that is given to pupils at St Mary's reduces barriers to learning significantly. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning in the classroom and pupils demonstrate high levels of interest, engagement and enthusiasm. Standards of attainment for all groups of pupils in all years are above the national averages. Pupils enjoy their lessons and conversations with them show that they believe they are taught well and know where to go for help when they need it. The school's mission statement and ethos underpins all this work and pupils thrive because of it. Attendance is very strong which indicates the high level of enjoyment they get from being at St. Mary's. Behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. The quality of relationships between all members of the school community is excellent and this, together with the emphasis on caring for others, makes an exceptional contribution to pupil's personal and spiritual development. All pupils feel valued, safe and special. Pupils are proud of their school and speak confidently about why it is special to them. Pupils have good levels of self-esteem, respect and understanding as the school is a harmonious Christian community where pupils and adults get on with and care for one another and respect differences. The school's Christian ethos ensures that pupils learn to respect and value the uniqueness of the individual and this also helps them to develop strategies to support others who may encounter prejudice or discrimination. The school environment makes a strong contribution to the spiritual development of all learners through displays, worship corners in classrooms and the sensory garden.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship has a high profile in school. It occupies a vital part of the school day and acts of worship are planned effectively and their effectiveness is evaluated by pupils. The coordinator for worship monitors this. Worship reflects the school's distinctive Christian character and has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils. The headteacher and head of school lead by example, ensuring that worship plays an important role in the lives of all associated with St. Mary's. Worship is led by all teachers and the vicar of the parish church. The strong links between the school and ministry team at St Mary's Church contributes well to a strong sense of family and belonging in the school. The resources used are modern and relevant and help pupils to focus well on their own spiritual awareness. The celebration of festivals in the Christian calendar reflects local Anglican practice and pupils go regularly to the parish church for worship. Pupils experience Eucharistic worship which is used purposefully to reinforce their sense of belonging to each other, as well as belonging to the wider church community. Pupils value worship highly and talk with enthusiasm about its themes and purposes. Pupils are engaged, show respect and enjoy opportunities they are given to lead in worship. Daily worship includes opportunities to sing, pray, reflect and listen to Bible stories. The main area where worship takes place is surrounded by a constant reminder that St Mary's is a Christian community, with the cross and open Bible reminding pupils that Jesus is the central focus of their worship. Worship always begins with a proclamation to all that God is present and concludes with the Lord's Prayer and 'messy grace'. This was so effective in an observed act of worship during the inspection, with the headteacher, staff and pupils together on the floor, representing equality before God, with joined hands to symbolise their unity as a Christian community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The school follows the Lichfield diocesan syllabus. Religious education is timetabled weekly in each class and is given the appropriate time allocation for each key stage. Expectations are high and standards are improving. Pupils' attainment in religious education is very good and standards are in line with those in other core subjects. This is also well evidenced in class and group discussions, displays and individual pupil books where pupils' individual progress over time can be measured. Pupils' enjoy religious education and demonstrate a growing understanding of what it means to be a Christian. "RE is awesome" was the view of one pupil in Key Stage 2, a view which other pupils present endorsed fully. Pupils are actively supported in reflecting on their learning in religious education and this has a positive effect on their spiritual development.

Pupils made strong progress in the lessons seen and they were keen to discuss their feelings and experiences. Reflection is an important part of lessons and pupils are given many opportunities to develop their thinking. Pupils readily join in and contribute to discussions. They listen well and make connections between the topic studied and their personal lives. The school believes that 'every teacher is a leader of religious education' and the quality of teaching, which is very high, has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The syllabus is distinctively Christian and Anglican with approximately 20% of the available time used to teach the beliefs and practices of other faiths. Religious education impacts strongly on spiritual development and learners understand the importance of celebrating the similarities and differences between each other.

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

The leadership of the school contributes significantly to its success. Leadership and management are both of excellent quality and strongly promote the school's Christian character and ethos. The headteacher and governors promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school with enthusiasm and vigour. The school's motto "Believe and Achieve" is certainly played out in the planning and carrying out of its day to day functions and aspirations for all pupils. The vicar is fully involved and the church council give their active support in many areas. The school makes a substantial contribution to the wider life of the church and diocese through participation in services for special occasions in church and Lichfield Cathedral. Parents and pupils speak highly of the school and parents are keen to support the school because of the positive effect it has on their children's personal and spiritual development. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is an accurate reflection of where it is now. Also highlighted are its aspirations for the future, but this could be enriched further by giving the whole school community an opportunity to evaluate its effectiveness as a church school. Opportunities abound to nurture younger staff towards leadership and management responsibilities within a church school and foundation governors are committed to this development at all levels.

SIAMS report March 2015 St Mary's CE (VA) Primary School, Colton WS15 3LN