

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Saint Stephen's Church of England Primary Academy | | | |
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| Address | Woden Road, Heath Town, Wolverhampton. WV10 0BB | | |
| Date of inspection | 14 March 2019 | Status of school | Academy inspected as VC |
| Diocese | Lichfield | URN | I44251 |

| Overall Judgement | Grade | Good |
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| How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? | | |
| Additional Judgement | | |
| The impact of collective worship | Grade | Good |

School context

St Stephen's is a primary school with 250 pupils on roll. The minority of pupils are of White British heritage. Most pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above national averages. The school moved from a hard federation arrangement to a multi-academy trust (MAT) in 2017.

The school's Christian vision

Our Christian vision is to provide pupils with excellent pastoral care and the security of a safe environment which is conducive to learning. We want them to have '**A better start for a finer finish.**' Or as Hebrews 12:1 states, **Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.**

Key findings

- Relationships, displayed by pupils of all abilities, backgrounds and faiths, reflect Christian care and love and emphasise the characteristics of the school as a distinctive, church school.
- Religious education (RE) plays an important part in celebrating the diversity and richness of the school family, building a sense of respect, by enabling all to explore and live out their shared Christian vision and values.
- The school council and the pupils involved, want to make a difference in their community, by focusing on fairness, through charitable giving, following Jesus guidance to provide for others less fortunate than themselves.
- The strong links with the church, sustained in the absence of a permanent incumbent, widens the worship experiences of the pupils, helping to support their spiritual development in a range of settings.
- The broad and balanced curriculum, underpinned by clear Christian values, offers learning experiences, adapted to support the needs of individuals to enable all to flourish as unique children of God.

Areas for development

- Revisit and review the vision and values with the current school family, to enable them to understand more clearly how these help them to progress and flourish as part of a distinctive church school.
- Build on the existing pupil voice activities, as part of the monitoring structure, to ensure these regularly explore pupils' views about the school as a Christian school.
- Further develop worship in school, to enable pupils to be challenged to make decisions about and lead worship, to encourage them to more actively support the spiritual lives of the school family.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The vision statement of the school has been in place for many years. The leaders display it widely around all areas of school, to emphasise its importance. Pupils are guided, in RE and worship, to relate it to the idea of running a race with perseverance, as suggested by Hebrews 12:1. They think, when prompted, it reminds them to do their best and not to give up, to 'try to be the best that we can be'. Perseverance, is one of their Christian values together with tolerance, respect, trust, friendship and compassion. These were chosen by a group of staff, pupils and governors in 2016. Pupils are more confident in explaining how their Christian values support them, 'They help us to see the other person's perspective, to be kind and respectful.' Consequently, these Christian values are influential in fostering an atmosphere where relationships are strong and caring. There are high levels of mobility in the school family. As a result, many of the current pupils were not involved in the discussions, when the vision and values were introduced. The school council is keen that they are asked their views, 'so we can be encouraged to look out for each other and live our values in our lives'. School leaders are aware of this. The review of the vision and values with the current school family is planned to enable them to understand more clearly how these help them progress and flourish. There is a real sense of community, where pupils are sure, 'we feel safe and happy and get on most of the time. If we fall out our values help us to make friends again.' As a result, behaviour is consistently good and pupils are nurtured and rewarded as unique children of God. The strong, Christian commitment of the leaders, governors and the staff shapes the richly diverse school into a cohesive family that cares. The inclusive systems and structures, underpinned by the vision and values raise pupils' expectations. In addition, the 'positive behaviour' approaches reward pupils, through class dojos, when their behaviours actively reflect the values they share. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence, developing the traits that build strong, caring characters and resilience.

Leaders know their pupils well. Partnerships with parents are close and create a culture where diversity and difference are celebrated. Parents are very positive about the support they receive, which they feel reflects the distinctive nature of the school. There is an open-door approach which fosters honesty and understanding of need, providing speedy responses, particularly in cases of urgency. There are large numbers of pupils judged to be vulnerable and disadvantaged. The leaders use funding effectively to provide skilled support for all pupils' academic, spiritual and emotional needs. There is a good balance of staffing to offer strong role models. All are committed to their Trust's promise, 'We will insist that all children have the same life chances and opportunities.' Pupils enter the school displaying skills well below national expectations. As a result of rigorous monitoring, through a range of strategies, underpinned by their vision and values, pupils progress rapidly. Consequently, by the time they leave the school their learning outcomes are in line, or generally above national standards. They have completed successfully, as their vision calls them to do, the first stages of their race for life.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, enriched by a wide range of first hand experiences, through visits, clubs and projects. For example, children in upper key stage 2 act as 'digital ambassadors' to help their peers to learn computing skills. They also enable them to know how to keep safe whilst researching. The personal, social and health education programmes (PSHE) include topics on emotional and social wellbeing. Zumos supports identified pupils with areas they find difficult. In addition, the achievement of 'Staff Wellbeing at Work Charter' in 2018 highlights Christian loving care in action. School funding ensures all pupils and sometimes their families, can participate in termly visits, such as the one to Weston-Super-Mare. These beyond school experiences, help to broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world. The work of the school council and the pupils involved is another way pupils want to make a difference in their community. They do this by focusing on fairness, through charitable giving. They are following Jesus' guidance to provide for others less fortunate than themselves through local and national causes. Charities supported include 'Comic Relief' and Macmillan Cancer.

Collective worship is central to daily school life. Weekly worship is well supported by school leaders or visiting members from St Stephen's, Trinity or the New Harvest Temple. The worship, over the school year, has clear links made to the school's Christian values. Special services, to which parents are invited, take place in school and church settings. These help to share Christian teaching and Anglican tradition, such as the Trinity, to broaden pupils' experiences and understanding. There is a focus on the termly value to guide and shape relationships. Reflection areas in each of the classrooms have artefacts that are used to enrich class worship. Bible stories, music, singing and prayer are regular features of worship. Pupils are often invited to participate in worship and this was an area of priority from the previous inspection. It remains a priority. Most pupils enjoy actively engaging with worship. Leaders are considering ways to further develop worship, to enable pupils to be challenged to make decisions about their experiences in leading worship. They are committed to supporting the spiritual lives of the school family by involving pupils more actively in worship. Currently this is limited.

RE is strongly led and effectively delivered by all teachers. Planning is guided by the school's Christian vision and values. It follows the Wolverhampton Agreed Syllabus and resources, such as RE Today. There are close links with the other school in the MAT and leaders are committed to providing quality learning experiences in RE. The RE leader attended training for 'Understanding Christianity' with the diocese. These approaches are currently being trialled in Year 2 to roll out to the rest of the school, during the next academic year. In RE pupils learn about core theological concepts such as the Trinity. They also study a range of beliefs and faiths that reflect those of the culturally diverse, school family and local community. One of the 'big questions' for Year 6 pupils to consider was 'Can Christian Aid and Islamic Relief change the world?' Consequently, most pupils enjoy RE and are developing an understanding of Christianity and other world religions. Marking is one form of consistent monitoring, that ensures quality and consistency across the school. Governors actively support school leaders, through their link roles to drive the development of the school as a distinctive, church school. They are passionate about their roles to support the spiritual lives of all members of the school family.

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| Head of school | Sarah Horton |
| Inspector's name and number | Marianne Phillips 586 |