

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bredbury St. Mark's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School	
Redhouse Lane, Bredbury, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 1BX	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Stockport
Date of inspection	2 March 2107
Date of last inspection	June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 106104
Headteacher	Alison Whitehead
Inspector's name and number	Anne B. Woodcock 445

School context

St. Mark's is an above average-sized primary school. It serves an area of high deprivation within Stockport. The vast majority of the 308 pupils are of White British heritage. They come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds with a significant number coming from low income families. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding for social deprivation is well-above the national average. The school supports an above average, and increasing, number of pupils with additional needs. Significant change in staffing has resulted in many middle and senior leaders being in post for approximately two years. Pupils benefit from high levels of support including behaviour and parent support mentors.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bredbury St. Mark's as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher's distinct Christian vision, which is shared and ably supported by staff and governors, inspires and directs all that is achieved in school.
- The excellent nurture and support provided for pupils and their families, which is founded on Christian love and hope, has a very significant impact on learners' attendance, personal development and self-belief.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes are founded on their understanding and use of Christian friendship, trust and forgiveness.

Areas to improve

- Extend pupils' knowledge of diverse cultures and faiths, including addressing the multi-cultural nature of Christianity, so that they can more fully understand and respect differences.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship independently, so that they develop their understanding of the nature and purpose of Christian worship.
- Support pupils in writing and using prayers for public and private use, to deepen their understanding of the nature and purpose of prayer.

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

Well-established Christian values are at the heart of the school. Pupils talk confidently about how they use values such as forgiveness and trust. 'Jesus told stories to teach us about Christian values. They help us to make good decisions and show us how to live our lives,' explained a Year 4 pupil. Behaviour is excellent because all pupils strive to apply Christian values. Pupils' attitudes are very positive because they know that they are valued and loved.

The vast majority are enthusiastic learners who strive to achieve the targets set for them by teachers they trust and respect. The calm, purposeful working atmosphere provides a learning environment in which pupils can flourish and grow personally and spiritually. The extremely high levels of support provided for pupils and their families reflects the school's inclusive vision and aims, which recognise that all are unique and special to God. For example, attendance is improving through the work of the attendance mentor. Parents value the extent to which the school supports and nurtures their children. 'Our children are supported within a caring community which recognises the needs of the whole child,' explained one parent.

Although a significant number of children enter school with skills and abilities well-below those expected, they make good progress from their individual starting points. Robust tracking and monitoring ensures that gaps in learning are identified so that interventions can be tailored to meet pupil needs. For example, one Year 6 pupil proudly stated that her reading age had increased by two years since September. Although standards of attainment do not yet consistently meet national targets, improvements in teaching and curriculum design continue to impact strongly on levels of pupil attainment. Pupils' personal development and emotional well-being is promoted well. Pupils accept responsibilities eagerly. They enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities in addition to well-designed curricular visits and visitors. Provision for their spiritual development is good. Pupils are increasingly reflective and they express their ideas creatively. They make effective use of the interactive classroom worship spaces.

Religious education (RE) contributes significantly to the school's distinctive Christian character. Pupils enjoy and are challenged by their learning. The wide range of activities used provides repeated opportunities to investigate and analyse ideas and beliefs. 'RE is interesting because there are usually no right or wrong answers. Your opinion and beliefs are important,' explained a Year 5 pupil. RE supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through the study of diverse faiths and cultures, such as Judaism and Islam. However, their knowledge of key facts, similarities and differences is not secure and they have limited first-hand experiences, such as visiting places of worship or meeting people of faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. Pupils enjoy their worship experiences because they feel included. 'Even people who say they are agnostic or aren't sure about their beliefs are included,' explained a Year 5 pupil. Themes are rooted in Christian values and Bible teaching. They are delivered imaginatively by staff, clergy and visitors who ensure that key features, such as the use of candles to represent the Trinity and honour Christ's presence, support pupils' understanding of traditional Anglican practices.

Pupils have a good knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus. They make effective links between parables and their own actions. For example, a Year 2 pupil stated that they help those less fortunate to have better lives because that is what Jesus taught in stories like the Good Samaritan. A Year 6 pupil explained, 'God is like a shepherd. He watches over us all and loves us,' relating this concept to the parable of the Lost Sheep. Pupils' understanding of the Christian concept of the Trinity is a consistent focus. As a result, pupils refer to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One reception child wrote, 'Jesus is in heaven with God.' Pupils are familiar with Christian festivals and special times of the year, such as Lent.

Prayer and reflection are key features of daily worship. Children know the Lord's Prayer. They write prayers to use in class at different times of the day. However, they do not have regular opportunities to write and use their own prayers for public or private use.

Collective worship is a participatory and joyful experience. Children enjoy their in-class worship, worship in church and the weekly worship led by the vicar. Parents value and attend the special festival services held in church in considerable numbers. They also share in their children's work and worship in school, through the end of term class-led worship events. Pupils take some responsibility for leading these and other worship events. However, at present they do not regularly take responsibility for planning and leading worship independently.

The monitoring and evaluation of worship is very effective. Pupils provide immediate feedback every day using 'what I have learnt and how I feel' statements. Staff, senior leaders and governors monitor worship, providing

feedback which informs future planning. As a result, collective worship continues to evolve and inspire all members of the school family.

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

The headteacher's singular purpose, to sustain and develop the nurturing Christian environment in which all pupils can flourish and achieve as valued individuals, is shared and supported by all members of the school community. As a result, governors and senior leaders strive to overcome challenges related to staffing and pupil attainment.

Governors monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively through observations and visits. Feedback from staff, pupils and parents informs school self-evaluation and ensures that church school issues are prioritised within whole school improvement planning. The level of commitment to improving outcomes for all pupils, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged, is exemplified through the allocation of human and financial resources. The parental support, behaviour and attendance mentors have an extremely positive impact on pupil attendance and engagement which in turn, support their spiritual, personal development and emotional well-being.

Governors have secured effective leadership for RE and collective worship. Both are well-resourced and supported. The transition in leadership has been well-considered, ensuring that RE and collective worship continue to improve. Both RE and collective worship meet all statutory requirements. Issues from the previous denominational inspection have been fully addressed and the impact of changes continues to be monitored.

Mutually beneficial links with the church continue to be strengthened. Pupils benefit from events such as 'church week' and 'Experience Easter' which are supported by members of the church. Pupils and their families attend special services, such as messy church, in increasing numbers. Pupils past and present attend the weekly 'Rock Solid' group.

Partnership with a group of local church schools supports senior leadership. Staff feel well-supported both professionally and personally. Strategic development is well-considered. Middle leadership roles have been developed, strengthening the school's capacity for improvement, supporting the challenge of raising standards and providing future church school leaders.

Links with the local community support children's understanding of community service and personal responsibility. Links with the wider world, though not well-developed, are effective in supporting pupils' understanding of different communities and global issues such as refugees and injustice.

SIAMS report (March 2017) St. Mark's Church of England Primary School, Bredbury, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 IBX.