

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Runcorn All Saints' Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1LD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Halton
Date of inspection	2 March 2017
Date of last inspection	April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 111314
Headteacher	Elaine Harrison
Inspector's name and number	Mike Graham 286

School context

All Saints' is a well below average sized primary school, serving an economically and socially deprived urban area. Most pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils entitled to the pupil premium, extra funding for the disadvantaged, is well above the national average. The number with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average. New rooms for the free breakfast club and for quiet reflection and small group or individual support have been added since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints' as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The clear Christian vision of the headteacher, based on gospel values, is pursued with conviction and passion. She is an inspirational leader, and the Christian values that she models are lived out by all staff and children.
- Nurturing and supportive relationships, rooted in Christian love, flourish between all members of the school. Mutual respect and care ensure that children are secure and happy in their learning, so that they make good to outstanding progress.
- Exciting and relevant worship and religious education (RE) bring joy and times of deep reflection, and lead to impressive maturity in the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development.
- The caring support given to pupils and staff extends to whole families when appropriate. The school and church work together with parents and carers, who are involved and encouraged as a result.

Areas to improve

- Pursue the ambitious plan to develop a prayer garden to inspire the whole school family in their collective and individual prayer life, so that the spiritual lives of all, including the local community, are deepened.
- Review and update the school's mission statement so as to do justice to the powerful Christian vision on which the school's ethos is based, making clear to all that its source is Jesus' life and teachings.

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

Christian values of love, peace, respect, compassion and responsibility are the foundations of all the school's work. The pupils know that God loves them because this love is passed on to them by the staff at All Saints', developing confidence and security. There is no fear of making mistakes, so the pupils are able to give of their best. The academic progress achieved, as recognised by Ofsted last July, is good and in some cases outstanding. The school's own record-keeping data confirms this. Work with the vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils is exemplary and is rooted in Christian love. All staff give sensitive support and encouragement to pupils and their families. This results in outstanding progress for this group of pupils and in improved attendance levels, which are now in line with national expectations.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development (SMSC) is impressive. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and show respect and good manners to all. The peaceful, happy atmosphere in the dining hall at lunchtimes demonstrates these attributes perfectly. The pupils do not simply know about the Christian values that are exemplified by the staff, they live them. Their behaviour is exemplary. The depth of SMSC development also stems from the rich and varied curriculum which is carefully structured and has Christian values at its heart. Excellent teaching on Christianity and five other world faiths in RE is vital in stimulating the pupils' cultural and spiritual growth. An impressive element is faith week, which takes place every term. The pupils speak with enthusiasm about the impact this has on them, one saying that it is 'great to learn about things in other faiths that are the same' as in Christianity. Pupils are well aware of the multi-cultural nature of Christianity and the variety in experience and types of worship. Two pupils were eloquent in their explanation of the dangers for Christians in some areas of the world. One said, 'Some Christians are killed for their faith.' Another spoke with horror of how 'they are sometimes put into mental hospitals'.

Excellent RE teaching is closely inter-woven with worship, making pupils and staff aware of God's love and support in every lesson and every activity. There are many interactive displays in school, including bible verses and prayer and reflection areas, giving an authentic Christian environment for pupils and adults. These make a significant contribution to their spiritual development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship at All Saints' is sincere and relevant and makes a significant difference to the lives of everyone in the school family. Varied and inventive leadership by pupils, staff and clergy ensure that worship engages everyone. The recently appointed vicar is keen to continue and build upon the links between All Saints' church and the school. He says 'it is a blessing' to be welcomed into school life, and is already involved with the breakfast club and in teaching maths as well as RE. Appropriate experiences of Anglican traditions are well established, leading pupils into a natural understanding and appreciation of this form of Christian worship.

Bible readings, drama, prayer and excellent singing, often with humour yet always with reverence and respect, are all part of a rich tapestry of spiritual inspiration. Pupils and adults gain great insight into Christian faith and values. A member of staff commented, 'Through the teaching of Christianity in school I have found a greater depth of faith and spirituality.' A Year 3 boy in worship responded to the teaching from Jesus' parables and other Bible stories by praying spontaneously when invited to do so. He prayed, 'Dear Jesus, please help us to remember you through our lives.'

The pupils have a good understanding of God as Father and Creator, of Jesus as Son and Saviour and of the Holy Spirit as comforter and guide. Prayer is seen and understood as a natural part of a life of faith. A Year 6 pupil said 'We pray and the Spirit calms us down.' The pupils welcome the fact that their own prayers are frequently used in collective worship. The depth and sincerity of prayer, frequently offered spontaneously by pupils and staff, is impressive. It makes a significant impact on the development of spiritual understanding in pupils and adults alike. The governors' meetings always include prayer. One commented that this brings 'the guidance of the Holy Spirit into meetings'.

Parents, grandparents and carers join with the school and the church community at key points in the church calendar to worship in church and in school together. The school's collective worship takes place in church once a week, and the pupils play important roles in leading services at times such as Ash Wednesday and Christmas. They also lead in special class-led worship attended by most parents of those involved. These occasions undoubtedly play their part in maintaining and strengthening the bonds between the communities. There are various strands to the evaluation of worship with pupils, staff, governors and parents involved. This helps to ensure that development and improvement are kept constantly in mind.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The passionate and creative co-ordinator for RE ensures that the teaching and learning is constantly reviewed and monitored, so as to give the pupils the best possible experiences. Their progress is never less than good and is often outstanding, as evidenced in their books, folders and discussions. The teamwork and enthusiasm of all the staff for the subject shines out in lessons and the pupils' excitement and appetite for learning is clear.

Teaching is mostly outstanding and never less than good. Reception pupils are sensitively led with open yet probing questioning, thus rapidly growing spiritually. For instance during a stimulating and interactive session on new life, one pupil exclaimed, 'God creates new things!' The impressive impact is reinforced throughout the year groups. For instance in a Year 1 lesson on the story of Jonah and the whale, a pupil said that Jonah would be frightened 'because he thinks God's not there'. Also, in Year 6, an impressively complex study of forgiveness included a focus on the 1993 Warrington bombing. Exemplary skilled questioning led pupils deep into the difficulties of this crucial Christian value. Comments from pupils included, 'they would have been destroyed and heart-broken', 'distraught and grief-stricken' and 'they must have struggled to forgive'. Bible verses are suggested to enable pupils to undertake further research. The impact on their spiritual growth is significant.

Clear links are established for the pupils between the school's Christian values and the teachings and life of Jesus. Frequent and regular observation, training, teamwork, assessment and evaluation of the work in RE ensure continuous improvement. Marking is consistently constructive and detailed, always looking for further thought and development of reflective skills.

The RE subject co-ordinator is skilful, sensitive and full of enthusiasm for her subject. This leads to highly effective teaching throughout the school. The pupils' knowledge of Christianity has a strong impact on the Christian character of the school. They are open and accepting of those from different faiths, and understand the value of studying the beliefs of others. These studies are given authenticity through visits to places of worship and discussions with and teaching from members of other faiths.

The subject has a very high profile in the curriculum, with excellent extension of the chosen Christian values into other areas as appropriate.

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

The headteacher leads the school with a clear Christian vision. The senior leadership team's summary of this vision is, 'At Runcorn All Saints' we believe that every child is a gift from God... Children at All Saints' thrive and flourish in the knowledge that they are loved by God'. Staff and governors support the headteacher in communicating this vision, leading the way in actions, not just in words. One governor said of the school, 'Christian love is in its veins.' The headteacher's own faith shines through in every aspect of her work, with the focus always on the well-being of the pupils. The leadership team, staff and governors follow and support this lead with immense commitment.

The whole community benefits from the fact that the Christian values are not just written about and displayed, but are lived out by staff and pupils day by day. The vicar and foundation governors are closely involved in school by supporting the teachers. They help in lessons, hear readers and lead holiday clubs for the children. A church group called 'open doors' also run the 'J time' Christian club each Wednesday afternoon in church. These activities reinforce the strong links with the church and governors. They know the pupils well and add to the already loving and caring ethos.

The impact made by the school's Christian vision is secured by detailed, efficient and strategic planning. This is open and honest, with governors ready to challenge when appropriate as well as bringing well-deserved encouragement to the staff team. Issues raised by the previous report have been tackled thoroughly and successfully. However, the present mission statement does not do justice to this vibrant Christian school. Future leadership in church schools is promoted through excellent teamwork, good delegation and high quality in-service training.

Partnerships and relationships with other local schools, All Saints' church, the diocese and the community at large are strong and mutually beneficial. Giving to local and international charities reinforces the pupils' understanding of Christian compassion through helping others. Parents and carers are immensely proud of their school and appreciate the openness and warmth of staff. Comments included, 'my daughter bounces into school!', 'They love RE. They talk about it all the time at home.' All agree that this is a school that puts the needs of its pupils at the heart of all that it does.

SIAMS report March 2017, Runcorn All Saints' CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1LD