

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

### St Anne's Church of England Primary School

Trinity Road, Sale M33 3ES	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Chester</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Trafford
Date of inspection	23 November 2017
Date of last inspection	September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 106343
Headteacher	Polly Goodson
Inspector's name and number	Barbara Easton 862

#### School context

St Anne's is a one form entry primary school. The proportions of children in the school with a statement of special educational needs, an education, health and care plan or eligible for additional support through pupil premium are all well below national averages. The percentage of children with English as an additional language is also lower than average but has risen since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post for three months; the deputy is also new since the previous inspection. The parish church currently has an interregnum with the curate assuming additional responsibilities for the school.

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

- The ways in which members of the school community support and care for one another make St Anne's an exemplary Christian community. This is particularly evident in the quality of relationships throughout the school, its strength on issues of inclusion and diversity and the responsibility pupils take one for another.
- The Christian identity of the school is deeply embedded, leading to a warm and welcoming school environment and excellent behaviour and attitudes. Pupils conduct themselves with a confident dignity.
- Under the strong Christian leadership of the new headteacher, the school is charting a wise path which marries the challenge of invigorating energy and insight while treasuring the school's longstanding strengths and heritage.
- The close relationship between the school, the parish church, families and the wider neighbourhood creates an almost seamless community of mutual support and common endeavour around the nurture of children in Christian and shared human values.

#### Areas to improve

- Clarify and frame the school's vision in a way which enables all stakeholders to articulate and identify the Christian foundations upon which the school's good work is built.
- Develop the school's strengths in religious education (RE) by using more pointed assessment to encourage all pupils consistently to express deep reflection and higher order thinking.
- Extend opportunities for greater depth, imagination and spontaneity in pupils' spirituality by continuing to mature the school's practices around worship.
- Move towards becoming a more outward-facing school community so that teachers and governors are enriched by engagement with the best practice of others within and beyond this small school.

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

St Anne's is a school which is rooted in its Christian mission. Because of this it is remarkable for its sense of community. Learners are successful and, in addition, they also flourish as human beings. Parents are particularly appreciative of this rounded contribution of the school to their children's lives. Because it is strong in its sense of self, the school is able to embrace all who come so that it is highly valued for its practices around inclusion and diversity. There is particular strength in the work done with pupils with special educational needs. Pupils generally achieve well and the school is working in a focused way to iron out any inconsistencies in outcomes. New initiatives, introduced since September, are enhancing classroom practice to give a renewed energy to teaching and learning. There is an increased focus on the confidence and resilience of learners at all levels. Pupils were especially keen to talk about the positive impact on them of the school's move to a 'growth mindset'.

The school's unremitting focus on its list of Christian values is evident across the whole of its wider life. Conduct is outstanding and relationships between all members of the school community are impressive. Pupils are able to make links between their own behaviour and attitudes and the biblical teachings on which the school's values are based. They can be seen putting these ideals into practice in their daily lives in school. Older children naturally take on responsibility for the youngest without needing any prompting. The care taken by pupils one for another, their support for each other and their willing approach to any challenge they are given is testimony to the work of the school. The figures for attendance are high because children like being at St Anne's.

There is a particularly strong link with the local parish, to the extent that the school is seen as 'another room' of the church and vice versa. This means that across the whole school family there is almost a seamless link that brings together the rounded aspirations of the school, families and the church in the nurture of the community's young people. RE is strong and its influence is seen in the ease and confidence with which staff and children address matters of faith and reflection across the school. There is a strong emphasis on global citizenship and appreciation of what it means to belong to a worldwide church.

The values underpin every aspect of the school and have a positive influence on the rounded education of pupils particularly their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils carry these values beyond the school, into their homes and the wider community. Because of this foundation, they continue to be distinguished as 'St Anne's children' well into their futures.

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

The worship life of St Anne's is fundamental to its identity. There is a longstanding tradition within the school that honours the times when everyone comes together to worship. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. They participate enthusiastically, sing heartily, pray with commitment and sign the songs without hesitation or embarrassment. In a whole school assembly led by the curate, the pupils who contributed took great pride in their preparation. Their enthusiastic leadership brought to life a complex gospel story and enabled pupils across the full age range to recognise and remember important truths. Under the new school leadership, worship has been given greater prominence. In response to self-evaluation, new strategies have been introduced to increase consistency of practice so that pupils are more aware of what to expect and are better able to engage. This means that, besides increasing their familiarity with Anglican practices and traditions, pupils are developing a better understanding of why worshippers value these as expressions of faith. The use of symbol and imagery has been thoughtfully developed. The main hall is now more conducive to worship, and the worshipful ambience is more pervasive throughout the rest of the school. Simple but effective techniques have been introduced to help pupils access difficult concepts more readily. For example, at the beginning of worship, three candles are lit to symbolise the presence of God in the three persons of the Trinity. Symbols and imagery are also used to mark the liturgical seasons so that pupils have a good sense of the rhythm of the Christian year. Each classroom has its own well curated worship area. Although these appear rather static, other work in classrooms reflects an immediacy in pupils' recourse to prayer and reflection. The time given to worship clearly makes a difference to pupils at St Anne's. It helps them to embrace the school's values and gives them resources of Christian spirituality which they take beyond the school. Pupils speak readily about how their learning in collective worship leads them to pray beyond the school and at home. Foundation governors identify the links between worship in school and in the parish church, particularly in the ways in which the practices of the school have been copied in the church's work with young people, and sometimes vice versa. Because of the emphasis that has been given to consolidating the worship experience of the school, its leadership has been restricted to a small number of key staff. This is embedding good and more consistent practice but means that the range of voices to which the school is exposed in worship is currently rather narrow. Leaders are aware of this. Their evaluation of the school's traditional practice has already led to a deeper and more imaginative approach. Their ambition to lay a foundation of making space for reflection which will serve each pupil in later life is admirable.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

RE is a popular subject at St Anne's. Subject leadership is driven and energetic, imaginative and creative which in turn influences the place of RE in the practice of other colleagues. Staff are well supported with the result that the delivery of RE is strong across the school. They deal with matters of religion confidently in their classrooms and approach lessons with an impressive range of activities so that RE is lively and engaging. Pupils' levels of participation are excellent. They respond well to activities, willingly share their ideas and discuss challenging topics. In one classroom, for example, pupils were moving around the room to consider posters showing familiar Christians living out their religious commitment in their daily lives. Each child in the group was given a distinct, differentiated theme to pursue which stimulated their active engagement. In another classroom the youngest pupils were being expertly guided to explore the significance of the features of the church using wooden blocks on the floor. Year 6 pupils were doing 'rally robin' in pairs to reflect on questions about marriage and relationships which enabled them to articulate and consider a range of issues. Sometimes the learning generated from all this activity is thinner than it might be, especially where learners extend their study through acquisition of more knowledge rather than through greater depth of understanding and reflection. Where learning is strongest, pupils do not only learn information about religious practices but take their understanding wider and deeper. For example, Year 1 pupils were enthusiastically working in lively groups meeting visitors who had brought in a Bible which has special meaning to them. The very best learning was observed where the teacher did not simply accept pupils' first enthusiastic answers but challenged even the youngest pupils to think more deeply about questions of meaning and significance. As a result, they shone. Currently, progress in RE focuses mainly on the acquisition of knowledge. The school's processes of self-evaluation correctly recognise that the way pupils' learning in RE is assessed needs to be further developed. This will help teachers to pursue greater depth in learning so that achievement in RE reflects high levels of thoughtful evaluation and reflection. Because the subject is so well embedded across St Anne's, it makes a strong contribution to the wider spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of learners. The school makes good use of the diocesan syllabus and the teaching of Christianity is a strong feature. The school has places on the training for 'Understanding Christianity' and this can only enhance existing good provision.

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

St Anne's is a school much treasured within its community. The school is firmly anchored in its Christian values and strong heritage, so that its work in the nurture of children as citizens of the world and the Kingdom is secure. However, the school currently does not have a single agreed statement which expresses its vision and mission. Formalising this was a target for the last inspection which has not been fully resolved. Because of this, people within the school are not able to talk readily about the links between the school's ethos and the outworking of the Christian gospel. Governors have shown wisdom in postponing the work on their mission statement while the school has been in a transitional period.

The new headteacher brings impressive energy, vision and drive to the school. She combines her specialist expertise in inclusion and longstanding affection for St Anne's with a deep personal Christian commitment. Because of this the school is becoming more clearly and identifiably a Church of England school with a stronger emphasis on overt expressions of Christian identity such as visible symbolism and use of the church building. It is striking that under her leadership, the school has been able quickly to embrace change. This is because colleagues recognise that her fresh ideas and breadth of experience are enabling them to deliver their commitment to the ongoing Christian story of the school. Because of this, the school is strengthening aspects of its provision in teaching and learning while holding on to everything that was already very good in securing the excellent behaviour and attitudes of pupils. Youngsters were particularly keen to talk about the opportunities of adopting a growth mindset and appreciated the change to the rewards system which recognises everyone as starting the day as 'good to be green'. This positivity is highly consistent with the school's Christian identity and enhances the priority which the school already gives to well-being. St Anne's prides itself on being an inclusive school where pupils achieve well. The new energy of leaders and governors, their reflective analysis and fresh approaches, all serve to strengthen this.

The commitment of school leaders to the heritage of St Anne's and their enthusiasm for its future development as a church school are strong. There is clear support for staff professional development both as classroom teachers and as church school leaders, with places secured on training for the Church of England's new RE curriculum and for Christian leadership. Although the school is busy with several new initiatives, RE and collective worship have not been neglected. Indeed they have a heightened profile. In particular, the attention which is being given to evaluation is refining practice so that they lay even more secure foundations both for pupils in their future lives and for the life of the school today.