

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wincle Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Wincle, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0QH	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cheshire East
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	7 March 2018
Date of last inspection	September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Aided, 111326
Headteacher	Sarah Smith
Inspector's name and number	Tracy Beatty 890

School context

Wincle is a very small primary school with 54 pupils on roll. It is situated in the rural village of Wincle and serves the neighbouring villages of Wildboarclough and Macclesfield Forest as well as pupils who travel from outside the catchment area to attend the school. The school's context is predominantly white British, with English as a first language for all pupils. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well below average, as is the percentage of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There have been significant changes to staff since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wincle as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher ensures that relationships on all levels are grounded in a Christian ethos.
- The Christian character of the school pervades everything and all members of the school community can articulate its biblical foundation and the positive impact it has on their own spirituality.
- The dedicated governing body firmly upholds the Christian ethos and ensures improvement is sustained.
- There are very strong links with the school, church and community that are enriching for all. The committed clergy ensure the pupils have a very deep knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and this encourages their spiritual walk.

Areas to improve

- Continue to enhance the provision of visits and visitors of other faiths and increase global links to further develop pupils' awareness of different faiths and cultures.
- Continue with school plans to create an outdoor prayer space which will further develop spirituality and an understanding of prayer.

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

The school's motto 'Shine like a star' is based on Philippians 2:15 and is the thread that runs through everything the school does. A governor described the vision as radiating God's love in everything the school does. It is applied to attitude to learning, the formation of relationships and character. It has a striking impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of every child which the pupils can readily articulate. The school mission statement and vision are proudly displayed on every piece of documentation as well as on the website and the school's social media page. However, the school is very forward facing and thus has set up a working party to revisit this. The school has invested time in exploring and developing its distinctiveness collectively. For instance the school community has explored what it means to 'shine' and each member of staff has chosen favourite Bible verses to display around the school. Pupils particularly like the affirmative verses that encourage them not to give up. For instance, pupils may say 'I'm tired' and Jesus says 'I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28). There are scriptural words of encouragement in cupboards and even the cloakroom and these constantly remind pupils of the Christian ethos and God's love for them. One member of staff said, 'I feel blessed to work here. The compassion shown is second to none and I go home lifted every day.' Christian values are modelled by every member of staff 'which trickle down from the headteacher'. These values contribute to an atmosphere for learning where the potential of every pupil is fostered. Parents report on the impeccable hospitality shown to them by the kitchen staff, who were recently voted as 'everyday heroes'. Staff describe the support they receive as phenomenal, like a close-knit family. Parents claim their children are looked after by the dedicated staff as if they were their own. This emphasis on Christian values shapes attendance, which is above national average and pupil attainment is consistently among the highest in the county as a result of the unceasing focus on excellence.

Behaviour was observed as exemplary in worship, lessons and around school. All pupils insisted that no-one behaves badly because they are taught so well to live as Christians. All pupils show an exceptional level of courtesy and respect to one another. Care for each other is seen on every level along with a desire to give and serve one another. The school makes a virtue of being a small school in the way it has set up a support system of older pupils for young. Parents comment on the difference the school values make to behaviour exhibited at home. For instance, as they learn about humility, they are putting it into practice with their siblings. Parents are impressed by the level of empathy that has been developed in their children. This can be seen in their responses to issues in the news, often producing incredible ideas spurring them to action. Multicultural education has been a particular focus this year because of the school's unique context and has effectively instilled in pupils an understanding of difference and diversity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a highly valued and central part of school life. It is a well-planned, daily, inclusive act with a biblical focus that encourages pupils to embody the teachings of Jesus. For instance, a Year 5 pupil said, 'I am learning about humility which has made me ask myself if I am putting others first.' The pupil ethos group enthusiastically led the act of worship observed. They focused on delivering the story of Moses through drama and sang heartily to Christian songs from their recent 'I Sing Pop' project. They demonstrate that they are confident to plan and lead worship and assert all pupils regularly participate in saying prayers and choosing songs. They often volunteer to take part spontaneously. An understanding of the Anglican tradition is evident with the use of a structured liturgy and a worship table with candles, a cross and backcloth of Christian symbols. Pupils are able to explain the Trinity, which is also visually represented through the lighting of three candles. The headteacher explained that staff enjoy being creative in worship. The small number of pupils means they can sometimes be seated in a circle rather than rows, or use equipment and games. As a consequence of this inventive approach, pupils say worship is always uplifting and special. Prayer is highly valued at Wincle. The staff meet daily before school in the hall to pray for the school and each other. Their modelling of personal prayer has resulted in it being a natural response for pupils. They know traditional prayers and are confident to pray spontaneously in their own words. The school has put in a bid to create an outdoor prayer trail and sensory prayer garden to further develop spirituality.

There are excellent links with the church. The vicar and curate are frequent visitors to the school, regularly leading child-focused worship. The school has also invited leaders of other faiths and charities to provide a rich variety of visitors. The curate runs a Christian after school club and assists in religious education (RE) lessons and ethos group. The experienced and well-loved vicar reinforced the views of parents on the tremendous difference the curate has made by cementing relationships and bringing families into church. Parents commend the way the clergy find vivid ways to help pupils understand the Bible and absorb its values, resulting in them spilling into the home. Parents feel the mystique about church has been removed and a warm welcome extended, bringing in people who previously would not have felt comfortable in a church building.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is enjoyed by all pupils. The school's unique context of two mixed classes has resulted in them designing a bespoke scheme of work on a four year rolling programme. This ensures stimulating activities and deep learning are combined with creative differentiation so that every child is inspired and makes progress. All pupils have their own Bibles, provided by the school. They are well used in every lesson, resulting in pupils being able to navigate them and read along with the teacher. The personal importance of RE for staff ensures they infuse it with fun and high quality learning experiences, resulting in standards exceeding national expectations. Pupils can readily recall stories from the Bible and their understanding of the Christian faith is very mature. They speak of how the Bible teaching they have received has changed their perspective and the way they live, wanting to be more like Jesus. For instance, a pupil related the story of Zacchaeus to her own life. 'I learnt about Jesus befriending him and listening to him, so now I try to value others' opinions and listen more.' The school builds on concepts introduced in collective worship and plan to allow the whole school to study one theme together.

In the lessons observed, drama and Godly Play enhanced the story of Jonah in key stage one. Pupils related the concept of forgiveness and obedience to their own lives. The floor books show the creativity that teachers put into their lessons, such as a role play area transformed into a church and a Pentecost party. The key stage 2 lesson explored sophisticated themes of how Jesus rescues us today and how He heals today. A Year 6 pupil said, 'Jesus rescues us if we have physical illness by giving us hope and strength to carry on.' Another pupil said, 'Jesus rescues us from loneliness because He keeps us company in our prayers. He's always there.' Pupils are rightly proud of their books which were well presented. They describe RE lessons as pitched just right because of the system in place whereby pupils choose their own level of challenge. The headteacher stated the emphasis on oral work removes barriers to learning if pupils are not naturally writers. Assessment is accurate and effective, leading to every individual making at least good progress. Leaders have fully addressed the previous development points for the improvement of RE, raising the standards to the level of other subjects in school. RE has a focal place in the strategic planning cycle and is reported on in depth to governors.

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

The headteacher's vision is unequivocally shared and lived out by all members of the school community. Her own faith sustains her and influences every decision. She is intent on creating in pupils a firm grounding in Christian values. Parents describe the staff as 'tireless' in their care for pupils, unlocking new ways of learning, and constantly seeking ways of improving the school. They are understandably very proud of the school. They feel staff treat them with dignity and are intent on solving problems if they arise. The governing body is highly committed and dedicated in its support of the school, evidenced by attendance at all meetings and the sustained drive for excellence. Governors place a high priority on recruiting staff who will uphold the Christian values. They also prioritise their continued professional development. The governors describe the transition of leadership to the new headteacher as 'Seamless. We thought the distinctiveness was strong before, but now it has blossomed and surged to a new level.' They are visible and consequently knowledgeable about the school's performance and prioritise its Christian distinctiveness.

Leaders have a robust understanding of performance and self-evaluation is accurate. A regular pattern of evaluation is now in place for RE to which all stakeholders contribute. The headteacher leads collective worship and RE. Monitoring is high quality, leading to genuine improvement. There is a robust system in place of reporting on the effectiveness of both RE and worship to governors. There are good links with the diocese, who have lent support with training and creating a syllabus. The curriculum is clearly designed with the school's Christian character as its starting point and consequently supports the SMSC of all pupils very effectively.

Links with parents, the church and community are exceptional. The pupils have an endearing desire to reach out to the community to share God's love, understanding that with privilege comes responsibility. They have planned a tea party 'Don't dance alone' which involves escorting villagers to school and entertaining them, many of whom may feel isolated. This charitable school also supports projects internationally such as Christian Aid and the Samaritan's Purse. The mutual benefit of partnering with the school is stark for the church. As a small elderly congregation, parishioners are delighted by the influx of young families and are adapting to the change this has brought. Special services such as the Narnia Christmas experience epitomise how the church and school are working together to share the gospel. The 'C' club, run by the curate after school and supported by staff, reinforces in a fun way how to be a disciple of Jesus. There are good links with a neighbouring school in Bosley, and there are plans to work together more frequently on joint projects.

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