

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Studley St Mary's Church of England Academy

Studley St Mary's Cof E Academy, New Road, Studley B80 7ND

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Diocese | Coventry |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Date of academy conversion | July 2014 |
| Name of multi-academy trust | Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust |
| Date of inspection | 25 June 2018 |
| Date of last inspection | 18 June 2013 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Aided 141000 |
| Headteacher | Melanie Ireland |
| Inspector's name | Krysia Vickery |
| Quality Assurance and number | Jayne Pavlou 628 |

School context

Studley St Mary's Academy is an average sized, two-form entry voluntary aided junior school, situated on the county border between Warwickshire and Worcester. There are 214 pupils on roll. The school converted to an academy in July 2014 when it joined the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust. The headteacher was appointed in January 2017, following the retirement of the previous head. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (13%) is slightly below the national average. 25% of pupils are classed as disadvantaged, which matches the national average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is well below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Studley St Mary's CofE Academy as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher works tirelessly to raise standards across the school by ensuring that the school's vision, 'Love to Learn, Dare to Dream, Grow with God', is lived out on a daily basis and, as a result, progress is clearly improving.
- The diocese, through the diocesan multi academy trust (DMAT), is clearly supportive and has a good relationship with the school in driving improvement forward.
- The learning environment has been thoughtfully created to provide pupils opportunities to contemplate, reflect, pray and be still.
- Prayer is naturally woven throughout the school day as a constant reminder of God's spirit at work, and the school community's own ability to affect change with the help of prayer.

Areas to improve

- Establish a well-developed definition of spirituality across the school to ensure that there are regular planned opportunities for pupils to develop a personal spirituality through the wider curriculum.
- Improve the quality of RE across the school by reviewing the RE curriculum map to ensure that the balance between Christianity and other world faiths is consistent across the school, and improve teacher subject knowledge through regular training, making sure that work matches the needs of all learners.
- Governors to develop a more formalised and systematic approach to monitoring the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school.

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

Studley St Mary's ethos is based on distinctively Christian values that have, with support from staff, been drawn up by the pupils themselves giving a sense of ownership. The importance of the values, including peace, thankfulness, generosity, respect and forgiveness, is made evident by the way they are prominently displayed around various areas of the school on 'rainbow boards'. The Christian values are clearly lived out on a daily basis, exemplified by very positive relationships between adults, between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves, although pupils are not always able to articulate the biblical underpinning of these values. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is developed through a concern for each child. The school's vision, which '...promotes Christian Values and fosters enjoyment, excellence and self-belief for everyone', ensures that pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of the school. This is clearly evidenced in the social and emotional support provided in 'The Hive', a caring and safe haven run by school staff. This support makes a positive impact on behaviour, relationships and attitude to work. Academic support is provided for pupils in the 'Intervention Room'. One pupil commented, 'I used to refuse to do maths, but I've been having help and motivating myself...!' A breakfast club has also recently been started to ensure pupils are 'school ready'. This pastoral support, together with emphasis on metacognition, is having a positive impact on achievement for all, as is evidenced through the school's own tracking and external monitoring systems. The school's Christian values ensure that attendance and exclusion issues are sensitively dealt with, reconciliation being the driving force. The school's distinctively Christian character is clearly evident in its involvement in charity work such as collecting for the food bank and in a project with a local hospital for terminally ill children. Visits such as those to a Mosque, Synagogue and Coventry Cathedral, and enabling children of other faiths to share their beliefs and practices with the rest of the school, is resulting in a growing understanding and respect for diverse faiths and differences. Pupils show some understanding of Christianity across cultures, however it is a developmental point for the school. Religious education makes a good contribution to the distinctive character of the school and this could be seen when the whole school explored 'The Big Frieze' through biblical text and art, culminating in an exhibition for parents. There are good and carefully thought-out areas for prayer and reflection in and around the school, which are used by both staff and pupils. The Peace Garden and Ollie's Oasis are particularly tranquil and conducive to private contemplation. There are also other opportunities to explore spirituality as in the forest school area, but the school does not have a definition of spirituality that can be shared and understood by all. There are not yet formal, planned opportunities in the curriculum for spiritual development. Parents speak positively of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Being at a church school, with its distinctively Christian values, makes a difference to them. As they join St Mary's, pupils begin to talk about respect for people of every faith, of it being 'OK' to be different and they begin to write their own prayers at home. A parent of no faith said that she welcomed the very interesting discussions that now ensue at home regarding those 'big questions'. Parents also speak highly of the good relationships and behaviour that they attribute to the Christian values and ethos promoted by all staff and pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is clearly valued, as evidenced by the hall altar covered with the appropriately coloured cloth, Christian symbols such as a dove and cross, and Christian displays around the walls. Whole school worship is a time when the school is brought together as one family, and where its distinctively Christian values are shared and explored. Planning ensures that it is based on Christian values, biblical teaching and the church's liturgical calendar. This enables all members of the community to gain an understanding of the importance of Jesus Christ in Christians' lives. The pupils' enthusiastic singing creates a sense of joy and praise. A pupil led collective worship team opens worship with phrases and responses, and finishes with a prayer and blessing to signify God's presence. Pupils are helped to develop an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the lighting of three candles at the altar. The worship team enjoys contributing in this way, though does not yet take an active role in planning or leading other aspects of worship such as the main content. Whilst biblical content features strongly in whole school acts of worship, the annual cycle does not provide a clear biblical content for worship across the whole week. Collective worship impacts positively on all aspects of school life, as seen in pupils' relationships, behaviour and attitude to learning. They are able to make links between the messages in Bible stories and their own lives and school values. They are also able to reflect and evaluate aspects of worship. For instance, when asked how they felt about the worship based on The Lost Son one child said, 'We all have a chance to forgive and be forgiven.' Pupils' experience of worship is good and includes regular involvement of church members from a variety of settings. Worship also takes place in a variety of settings such as whole school, class and the local church. Parents respond positively to sharing worship with their children in church at Christmas and Easter. The school has plans to involve parents even more in worship by investing in 'Home School Values' to complement their 'Roots and Fruits' scheme. Prayer is a regular part of the school day, for example at lunchtime and end of the day. Personal prayer and reflection areas to develop spirituality are used, such as in classrooms, in corridors (including a prayer board) and outside. Ollie's Oasis, in memory of a past pupil, was described as, '...a beautiful place for reflection'. Praying helped another pupil through a difficult time. The inclusiveness of spirituality regardless of belief is exemplified by a child in

the forest school saying, 'I don't believe in God, but I still think it's all beautiful.'

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Many displays evidence teaching and learning in RE. As well as displays in corridors and the hall, each classroom has a dedicated RE board celebrating current work. Pupils were actively engaged in lessons seen and they can reflect and express some understanding of religious belief and symbolism, such as what a Christian might put in a memory box and why, for example, in contrast to what a non-religious person might. Pupils are able to reflect on learning and express their understanding of different religions through the arts as seen through collages representing the Holy Spirit at work at Pentecost, and a display of the Pillars of Islam. Within RE, pupils visit different places of worship which reinforce their understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and some other world faiths. Some links are also made to SMSC and the school's Christian values as seen for example, in one RE lesson where pupils were given moral dilemmas on which to reflect. RE is sometimes interwoven with other subjects. When studying WWII pupils are able to consider the treatment of Jewish people in Europe at that time, developing skills of questioning and reflection linked to the school's Christian values of respect, tolerance, forgiveness and peace. There is some good teaching in RE but overall the effectiveness of RE is satisfactory. The RE curriculum needs to be reviewed to ensure the balance of Christianity and other world faiths is appropriate across every class. Work in books is not always pitched accurately, and learning activities are often not differentiated enough for those pupils needing either reinforcement or extra challenge. In turn, this indicates that assessment, although taking place, does not accurately inform future planning for all pupils. Although there is some monitoring of RE, the impact does not ensure consistency of standards across the school. Governors are supportive and come into school. They know that a rigorous monitoring system is required but, as this is not yet in place, they do not have a grasp of the standards in the subject and are therefore unable to report on attainment and progress. A newly established RE review group to monitor understanding in RE has been set up. As this is still in its initial stages, the impact is not yet known. The RE leader is enthusiastic and has tried hard to make the Bible more accessible to all by introducing The Brick Bible, for example. She keeps up to date with current developments in RE and she has supported staff in implementing part of 'Understanding Christianity' this term. However, more regular training for staff is required to ensure that subject knowledge is developed and that high quality RE provision is consistently delivered across the school to meet the needs of all learners.

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

Leadership under the headteacher is a strength and she has quickly and successfully built up good relationships with staff, pupils, parents and governors. The school's vision, 'Love to Learn, Dare to Dream, Grow with God' is based on distinctively Christian values which are lived out on a daily basis in this inclusive school. Support staff describe how the school's distinctive Christian character instils respect and promotes understanding of the importance of forgiveness, within school and further afield, and even when awful things are happening in the world. The importance of Christian values is fundamental in the appointment of new staff. Governor meetings start with prayer to help make the right decisions for the good of the school, and the school's Christian vision is actively promoted on its website and policies. The headteacher works tirelessly to raise standards. Priorities for improvement are identified through rigorous and honest self-evaluation. Rigorous monitoring by the DMAT verifies the accuracy of the self-evaluation. The diocese, through the DMAT, has a good relationship with the school and is clearly supportive in driving school improvement forward through staff training, for example. Leaders' in-house tracking systems show that these initiatives are now having a positive impact on pupils' academic standards, and progress for all is clearly improving. The school's Christian vision, which promotes '...self-belief for everyone' also clearly supports pupils' personal, emotional and social needs. Leaders' investment in 'The Hive' nurture group is testament to this where adults model the Christian values in order to help pupils understand and manage their feelings and cope with day to day life. One pupil said, 'I like going there. It helps (me) go back in class and do what I need to do.' Staff wellbeing is also well supported, as seen by the introduction of a mental health wellbeing board for them. The collective worship and RE lead is being given support in fulfilling her role through diocesan training and working in collaboration with other schools in the Trust. Consequently, RE and collective worship meet the statutory requirements. Other staff members, such as the SENDCo and deputy, are also supported by the headteacher and DMAT to develop leadership skills and enable all pupils to flourish. Whilst there is some monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school, currently there is not a rigorous and robust approach in place. As a result, although very supportive of the school, governors are not able to clearly articulate how effective and distinctive the school is as a church school. Parents speak highly of the leadership of the school, its inclusivity and its welcoming approach. The fact that it is a church school, with a strong Christian ethos and Christian values, makes a difference to them. Staff support their children very effectively, resulting in positive attitudes and relationships built on trust, understanding and mutual respect.