

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

### Stalybridge St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Huddersfield Road, Stalybridge, Tameside, SK15 2PT

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Chester</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Tameside
Date of inspection	30 March 2017
Date of last inspection	March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 143551
Headteacher	Simon Wright
Inspector's name and number	Stephen Burrow 622

#### School context

St Paul's is a larger than average primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small percentage from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Attendance is good. The school has very recently joined the Chester Diocese Academies Trust. A new vicar and Chair of Governors were appointed in 2016 and, after a period of recruitment, the staffing of the school is stable.

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

- The strong, purposeful Christian leadership of the headteacher, supported by a committed senior leadership team and staff, provide high levels of care, nurture and guidance. This supports pupils' personal and academic achievement well.
- Attitudes and behaviour of pupils are firmly based on their understanding of Christian values. Everyone is valued as an individual and this leads to excellent relationships which are supported by strong links with the vicar and church.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) contribute effectively to the promotion of distinctively Christian values and develop pupils' spirituality.
- A committed governing body plays a full and active part in supporting staff to develop the school's Christian life. Together, they ensure that pupils' spiritual development and well-being are a priority, alongside academic achievement.

#### Areas to improve

- Extend the role of the pupils in the planning of worship, thereby enhancing their leadership skills.
- Improve procedures for governors to monitor and evaluate church school issues by nominating a link RE/Worship governor, thus enabling them to be more fully involved in future developments.
- Create an outdoor reflective area to further encourage and facilitate opportunities for pupils to engage in personal reflection and prayer.

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

The school's strong Christian ethos enables and encourages the secure partnership that exists between pupils, staff, parents, church and the wider community. The nurturing ethos and Christian care that exist within the school family are exceptional and result in excellent relationships across the school. Highly effective promotion of Christian values, lived out in daily life, means that this is an exceptionally happy school. The distinctive Christian character is evident in all areas of school life and is central to its ethos and vision. Pupils say with confidence that their school is a very safe place where everyone's beliefs and views are respected. Any problems which arise are resolved straight away. Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour and are polite and courteous. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils treat each other and all adults with great respect and care. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Pupils' attitudes to learning have a positive impact on their achievement. There are value trees in each classroom and the hall, where pupils can add their reflections and thoughts. Each class also has an RE reflection area, where pupils can think and pray quietly. One pupil said, 'We communicate with God here.' Pupils are confident their voice is heard and are given the opportunity to discuss their feelings and beliefs. They readily talk about how the school's Christian values impact on their lives and the lives of others. The school gives high regard to the development and potential of the whole child, rooted in the belief that each person is special in God's eyes. As a result, pupils' spirituality is well developed. Worship and RE underpin the Christian ethos of the school. They enhance pupils' understanding of Christianity around the world, as well as teaching about other world faiths. Consequently, pupils are prepared well for future life. Attractive and stimulating displays with prominent Christian symbols create an environment which encourages pupils to reflect on what matters to them. The school is very supportive of all families, based upon a clear understanding of each pupil's unique personal needs. Staff work very hard to intervene early, when needed, and ensure that all concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively. As a result, relationships with parents are excellent. The school's strong emphasis on caring for others leads pupils to raise money for charities such as Macmillan Nurses. Learning from this assists pupils in understanding the needs of others. The vicar maintains strong links between the church and school, giving practical and prayerful support, which is valued and appreciated by the whole school family. Parents affirm that distinctive Christian values are deeply rooted in the life of the school and spoke of the impact these have on their children. One parent reinforced this by describing the school as a 'Loving and nurturing environment'.

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

Worship at St Paul's is based on themes linked to Christian values. Significant emphasis is placed upon worship being central to school life. It is well planned and effectively underpins and extends the school's deeply embedded Christian ethos. Biblical teaching, the celebration of major Christian festivals and those of other world faiths, enhance pupils' understanding of the Christian faith. They also effectively promote pupils' respect for the views and beliefs of others. Visitors contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual development and their understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith. Pupils have a good understanding of Bible stories which enables them to explain Jesus' place at the heart of the Christian faith. Their understanding of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is well developed. One pupil reinforced this by explaining, 'God the Father is creator of the world, God the Son is Jesus coming to share God's love and God the Holy Spirit is when we say the spirit is everywhere with us.' Pupils enjoy and value their worship experiences, which also enable them to feel part of the whole school and wider Christian family. They benefit from a range of varied worship opportunities, where their different needs are met. These include whole school and class based worship. There are also opportunities to worship in church and the vicar leads weekly worship in school. The pupil ethos group meets regularly to talk about RE and worship, including ways to further improve worship. The school recognises, however, that pupils are not yet fully involved in the planning of worship themes and intend to address this further. Prayer is a key feature of all acts of worship and pupils are familiar with a range of traditional prayers including the Lord's Prayer. They also say prayers at lunchtime and home time. Pupils have opportunities to write their own prayers which form a class book of prayers. One of these is chosen daily to share with the class at home time. These opportunities for prayer throughout the day enable pupils to develop a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of prayer in their own lives. Reflection books and special quiet spaces around the school support this well. The school also has plans to further enhance opportunities for reflection by developing an outside reflection area. A respectful atmosphere is created for worship through the use of music, along with a focus table with a cross and a Bible. This enables pupils to calmly prepare themselves for worship. Pupils are reminded that 'God is with us' by the lighting of a candle and the sharing of a Christian greeting. The relevance and importance of worship and spiritual reflection is reinforced by the fact that all staff participate along with the pupils. This supports pupils in developing their spiritual awareness. The school has effective procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of worship. Findings are then used to influence ongoing improvements to ensure that the spiritual needs of the whole school community are met.

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

The headteacher, through his strong faith, provides good leadership in promoting Christian values. His Christian vision for the school, where everyone is seen as special in God's eyes, is well supported by the senior leadership team, staff and the governing body. Strong nurturing relationships, focused on Christian values, permeate daily life. Governors are committed to the school and have a clear understanding of their role. They place great importance on supporting pupils to achieve their best within a nurturing environment based on Christian values. Through their strong commitment to the school's Christian foundation, they are involved in the school self-evaluation process and offer appropriate challenge and support. As a result, governors are very clear about the strengths and areas for development. This is enhanced by their regular involvement in the life of the school and information they receive through reports from the headteacher. They recognise the importance of monitoring church school issues but have not yet nominated a link RE/worship governor to enable them to be more fully involved in future developments. All staff are encouraged to contribute to decision making and their ideas are listened to and valued. They are kept up to date through regular training and professional development opportunities, with the headteacher being registered for next year's Christian Leadership development programme. They are valued and inducted well into what is expected of them in relation to the Christian ethos of the school. One member of staff said, 'The caring aspect of the school is very important, it's all about the children.' The good leadership of the school is supported by the strong links with vicar, who is very actively involved in the life of the school. As a result prayer, pastoral and other links between church and school are effectively interwoven, to create strong church-school links. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are confident that their voice is heard, especially through the ethos group. Staff have built strong trusting relationships with parents, who appreciate the way in which the school supports them and reaches out into the community. Parents are very supportive of the school, saying that their children are happy and nurtured within a distinctly Christian environment. They say the school demonstrates respect, compassion, tolerance and patience. They feel well-informed and involved in school life and their children's learning. They say there is good communication between home and school and that any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively in line with the school's Christian values. One parent summed this up by saying, 'Our children bring the values home, making us as parents talk to and engage with them.'

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