

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School

Stanway Road West Bromwich B71 1RP

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

Lichfield

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Sandwell

Date of inspection

25 May 2017

Date of last inspection

18 April 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

VC Primary 103989

Headteacher

K Duff

Inspector's name and number

R M Gale 337

School context

St Mary Magdalene C of E VC Primary school is an average sized primary school serving 242 pupils. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national percentage. Many families face particular difficulties with socio-economic challenges. There have been significant changes to the leadership team of the school and All Saints church since the previous inspection. The current leadership team have been in post since September 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary Magdalene Primary as a Church of England school are good.

- The quality of relationships in school which are very strong and appreciated by pupils and parents alike.
- The positive and inclusive support for all pupils.
- Leaders at all levels who are passionate about developing the school's distinctive Christian ethos and promote its Christian values.
- The delightful and articulate pupils.

Areas to improve

- Revisit the school vision and embed it in all areas of school life.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to plan and lead school worship and share those moments with parents to enhance understanding of the school's core Christian values.
- Ensure that all stakeholders, and the governing board, engage in the formal monitoring of the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- Ensure there is consistency in the approach to prayer and the teaching of the Holy Trinity through worship and Religious Education.

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

St Mary Magdalene CE VC Primary school fulfils its mission statement by educating pupils in a happy and caring community nurtured by the 'Loving 4' values of 'Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Aspiration'. As a result, pupils are supported fully in all aspects of learning and are placed at the heart of the school where everyone is encouraged to shine. The school motto of "Learn to Love, Love to Learn" is understood by all and lived out through the care, attention and opportunities given to pupils. Signs and symbols, of which there are many, celebrate the Christian foundation of this school. In addition, wall displays and artefacts visually express the school's Christian distinctiveness and promote discussion and debate. One pupil stated, 'we embrace God; God is with us everywhere, we are watched over by God.' Pupils are nurtured and encouraged by this Christian family and as a result, most pupils meet the national floor standards in reading, writing and mathematics, which are the minimum standards for the achievement of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 set by the government. Leaders are currently building on and embedding the school's Christian vision to ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to realise their potential. Effective systems are in place to monitor outcomes and target interventions to ensure the needs of all pupils are addressed. Pupils are, therefore, well-prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils are keen to attend school because they see school as a safe and happy place to be. One pupil said, 'the teachers care for us like their own children, we are one big family with a big heart'. This results in very good levels of attendance and punctuality. Reward systems enable a culture of praise and encouragement and serve as a reminder of the school's core Christian mission to develop the potential of all within a Christian caring environment. Pupils and parents talk enthusiastically about walking down the red carpet of success in the Friday celebration assembly. As a result, behaviour is very good as pupils know that their efforts will be acknowledged and praised. Pupils are encouraged to look after each other. The pupils clearly connect initiatives such as the '40 days of kindness' to the school's Christian values. As one pupil said, 'We must be kind to others and we must follow the rules, just like Jesus did.' Special areas such as classroom reflection areas and the developing outdoor prayer area give pupils opportunities to develop their spirituality through reflection. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is formally recorded in an on-line tracking system. There is much to record as the school offers many quality experiences across the whole curriculum and in the range of extracurricular clubs. Pupils speak confidently about their learning especially with regard to exploration of art and literature. This supports the way pupils are encouraged to appreciate a sense of awe and wonder from their learning. Pupils talk positively about religious education (RE) and how this contributes to the Christian character of the school. One pupil stated, 'we read the Bible and then make wise decisions.' Monitoring by the RE subject leader shows that the RE scheme of work impacts well upon this. Fund raising events such as 'Slippers for Shelter' and the school's work leading on initiatives such as 'Beat the Street' within the community, celebrate the school's Christian outreach. In all these ways, pupils are committed daily to making a difference to the lives of others as well as their own families. All of this is supported by effective Christian moral teaching and guidance. Members of the school and worship council speak of their team work, maturity and responsibility for God's world. They are encouraged to be pro-active and responsible in improving the school environment and developing initiatives to further support the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Pupils have a good sense of self-worth and are being prepared well for their journey in life. As was noted on a display in the year 5 classroom 'the beauty we see in others is the reflection of your soul'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective worship, which is also referred to as assembly is valued highly and is central to the Christian character of the school. It offers pupils an opportunity to further develop their understanding of the Christian faith through story, prayer, praise and reflection. Whole school, key stage and class worship feature across the school each week. Staff include a range of stimuli and the pupils are encouraged to support the delivery of whole school and class worship sessions. Daily worship is planned and monitored by the collective worship co-ordinator. The Christian calendar, alongside the school values, inform the planning. Bible stories, film clips, music and role play are just some of the activities used to engage the pupils in collective worship. As a result, worship provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual development as well as informing their behaviour, attitudes and relationships. It deepens their understanding of the school's core Christian values too. They relate these core values to Bible stories. For example, they link the story of the Good Samaritan to that of respect and responsibility. Pupils understand that responses, prayer and song are central elements to the structure of worship and participate well in these. They understand the significance of the cross and the lighting of a candle in worship. One pupil explained 'the son of God is the light of the world'. Collective worship is delivered by a variety of staff and the vicar. This is appreciated by the pupils. They express feelings of happiness, respect and being at peace when they attend worship. Pupils are at an early stage regarding their learning about the importance of the Holy Trinity however. A display called the 'Worship Web' encourages pupils to reflect on the importance of worship outside of the formal context. Pupils collaborate in the writing of prayers and these prayers are then shared in class worship. Prayer prompts, such as prayer pebbles and displays on how to write a prayer with the help of 'Thea Thanks, Suzy Sorry, Andy Ask and Peter Praise' give

opportunities for pupils to make prayer personal to their own lives. Reflection areas in each classroom are utilised to further support prayer and reflection. There are however, some inconsistencies in the use of prayer from class to class. Worship is monitored using pupil voice. The governing board, at present, evaluate worship and the school's Christian distinctiveness informally. It is their intention to formalise this process. Pupils and parents join with the church community for major Christian festivals and special services at All Saints church and other places of worship. These services are enjoyed by all and promote the understanding of core Christian beliefs. Parents state that attending worship at All Saint's church is uplifting. This was particularly noted in Christmas celebrations.

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

Leaders display great passion for the school and articulate and promote Christian distinctiveness at the heart of the school's work. They consistently model the school's values and there is an emphasis on being 'Resilient, Respectful, Ready and Responsible'. The family environment in school centres on caring and other pastoral aspects, thus nurturing each child as a child of God. This was particularly evident when the school was rising to the challenge of explaining the events of the very recent Manchester terrorist attack. There is a close relationship between All Saint's church and the school. The pupils speak of the church as a place of peace. Members of the church family are part of the school community and support the school. Pupils visit the church as part of their learning in RE as well as for worship during key Christian festivals. This gives pupils and staff a developing experience of the Anglican tradition. Parents are supportive of the school. They attribute the strengths of the school to its family ethos and Christian values. They say that this has an impact on the development of their children in the widest sense. One parent stated, 'this school lays the foundations of respect and care'. The school is described as a welcoming place by pupils, parents and visitors. They comment on the openness of the staff and the outstanding contribution of the headteacher, resulting in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Parents emphasised the strong community links generated by the school. A parent commented, 'this school is reaching out to the local community in so many ways, nothing is too much trouble'. The RE subject leader who is also the worship co-ordinator, is very effective in her monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. Through targeted professional development, leaders have strengthened the school's capacity to plan and develop a vision that will be owned by all. Governors monitor and evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school in an informal manner, suggesting ideas to develop and delegating resources as appropriate. Leaders use additional funding such as pupil premium and sports funding effectively to support the individual needs of pupils appropriately. Partnerships and links with other places of worship and faith traditions are being effectively developed, thus enabling pupils to respect and value others. The headteacher and her staff engage in careful self-evaluation of the school's distinctive character with consideration of pupil and parent views as part of this process. As a result, the school has effective development plans for pupil achievement, worship and religious education which aim to work towards delivering outstanding provision in all areas. Although improvements are clearly planned, the school needs time for the full impact of these plans to be realised. The development points identified in the previous inspection have been addressed this has been achieved with the effective support from the Lichfield Diocese.

SIAMS report May 2017 St Mary Magdalene CE (VC) Primary School B71 IRP