

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School	
London Road Headington Oxford OX3 9ED	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Oxford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Date/s of inspection	13 November 2017
Date of last inspection	December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 123140
Headteacher	Jude Bennett
Inspector's name and number	Jacquie Coles 840

School context

St Andrew's is a long established primary school of average size, located in the heart of Headington, on the outskirts of the city of Oxford. The school serves a catchment area which includes a higher than average number of pupils from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. The Foundation Stage is co-located within a nursery school on a different site less than a mile away. In 2017 the school admitted an additional class in Reception due to a sustained need for school places for five year olds in the city. The headteacher has been in post since 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Strong leadership has enabled the school to make very good progress in developing the school's Christian character.
- A collaborative and beneficial partnership with the minister has been key in strengthening the school's foundational basis as a church school.
- The very good quality of relationships built on the school's Christian values, together with the value placed on each individual, provides an excellent nurturing ethos for the wellbeing of all its members.
- The outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils equips them very well for life in modern day Britain.

Areas to improve

- Define expectations for class acts of worship across the school to progress pupils' spiritual development and to foster pupil contribution, ownership, spontaneity and engagement.
- Ensure that all governors are fully versed with their corporate responsibilities for a church school to ensure that the academic standards and central focus on Christian distinctiveness are of equal importance.
- Ensure that all policies and documentation reference and grow from the Christian character of the school so that the public profile of the school reflects and celebrates the excellent qualities found within.

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

Since the headteacher has been in post, the Christian character has been strategically built into a strong framework which underpins all that the school aims to do. Pupils achieve well, through the school's central focus on the importance of understanding the needs and context of the whole child, through effective personal development from the moment they arrive at the school to the moment they leave. Christian values are successfully woven into the life and fabric of the school. This encourages all within the school community to consider how actions based on these values will affect themselves and others. Pupils are commended in the school's 'Good Citizens' book when they make good choices towards others and their work. 'Fix it Fridays' encourage those who may have made wrong choices to talk these through alongside the values of the school. Pupil behaviour is excellent and there are no concerns about bullying. The school motto 'Everyone is different, everyone is special' creates a tremendous foundation on which to embrace and celebrate the diversity found at St Andrew's. This reflects and encompasses the needs of its pupils and celebrates the Christian principle of hospitality. The high level of care and respect for others is embedded in the inclusive and thoughtful approach the school adopts towards their planned activities such as the popular international evenings and festivals. These super creative projects give a shared sense of ownership. The level of acceptance and celebration of each other can be clearly seen in the quality of relationships and the kind and inclusive way all within the school community treat each other, irrespective of their cultural differences. 'You never hear a negative thought expressed' said a parent. Pupils enjoy being a 'Sunshine friend', where older pupils support younger ones in their play and young carers are well supported in their work.

Due to the enthusiastic subject leader, religious education (RE) plays a major role in determining the Christian character of the school, also furthering pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths. Staff create engaging learning experiences, where pupils, through reflective questioning, enjoy discovering what they and others think and believe. RE lessons, alongside experience and enrichment days, clearly give the pupils an excellent understanding of both Christianity and other faiths. A range of external visitors are secured to foster understanding of both the diversity within the Christian church and across the world. Pupils are given opportunities to deepen their religious literacy, to discuss further the application of the school's Christian values. This further impacts the Christian character of the school. These strategies also prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain by empowering all pupils to hold balanced and informed conversations about religious beliefs.

Pupils at St Andrew's want to come to school. Any attendance issues are rigorously followed up and the class with the best attendance is commended each term. The school has seen success in supporting those who find attendance difficult, creating bespoke solutions and support tailored to a family's needs. In this way, the school demonstrates the values of the school through this planned and active strategy of care and concern.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The incumbent provides the key, central act of worship for the week, sharing helpful insights into the school's values using Biblical references and stories. Pupils and adults attend well, listening carefully and responding thoughtfully to questions, showing engagement, contemplation and reverence. Pupils talk about what collective worship means to them and how it helps them to have a deeper understanding of what the school's Christian values mean and how they can be applied to their lives. Theological concepts are introduced and explained as they arise, such as the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and Jesus' death and resurrection at Easter. The improvement of the hall environment supports an ethos for worship, with a tall candle representing Jesus as the light of the world at the front. Pupils show an understanding of the seasons of the church's year by the changing of the coloured cloth. Pupils enjoy using words of liturgy as part of their weekly worship with the minister and this helps familiarise them with parish services. Collective worship is a special occasion which provides an opportunity for pupils and staff to come together to learn, reflect, pray, sing and communicate their thoughts with one another and with God. The singing of 'Gloria' is striking, setting the scene beautifully as pupils journey from their classrooms to the hall. Pupils and staff sing to each other, building in harmony to announce the start of this special weekly time together. Pupils know about and understand the different Christian festivals. They have an opportunity to write and contribute written prayers linked to the school's values. However, pupils are somewhat reliant on reading out written prayers rather than responding spontaneously. They say they would like to contribute more regularly in small ways as they feel they have something more they could offer. They enjoy involvement in the planning and leading of the termly church services, but more could be done to ensure that reflections and challenges in class collective worship go beyond just good moral teaching. Staff training to define these times, would impact pupils' spiritual development further, for example, by the creation of inspirational age appropriate opportunities for pupil ownership and spontaneous prayer within the security of a smaller group. This would then impact other acts of worship throughout the week.

The ethos working group plan collective worship provision and this enables a clear focus on each term's Christian value based on Biblical teaching. This helps pupils to gain a deeper understanding of how the school's

values can be applied to their lives. Collective worship includes teaching about the centrality of Jesus Christ and the Trinity and pupils have a good understanding of who Jesus was and of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is established with feedback from some members of the school community. Incorporating key liturgical components into the incumbent's weekly assembly has significantly raised the profile of this weekly act within the school community. Whilst pupils sing well, the opportunity to use the weekly singing assembly as an act of worship celebrating the school's Christian distinctiveness is missing. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the annual prayer space event supported by a range of churches. This has developed into a popular, weekly opportunity for pupils to come to prayer space activities organised within the school. The school plans to take these prayer box activities out into the outside environment to make use of different settings and experiences to further support pupils' spiritual development. 'Prayer is important in our school' they say and proudly show where every pupil wrote a prayer on the back of a poppy on a Remembrance display. Pupils enjoy opportunities to support charities and take social action initiatives and the school is active in its support for their partner school 'Ntlama' in South Africa. These initiatives enable both pupils and staff to demonstrate their Christian values to others less fortunate than themselves.

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

The headteacher has successfully led the whole school community through a significant improvement journey which has developed understanding of what it means to be part of a church school. The vocalisation of a Christian vision is now clear. This journey to restore the foundation of the school has encountered challenges, but the profile and development of key Christian values has been significantly raised. This has considerably improved the Christian ethos and learning environment. A clear pathway of evaluation and action led by the Ethos Group, has enabled effective progress in both collective worship and RE, with feedback incorporated from all members of the school community. All areas for development outlined in the last SIAMS inspection have been addressed. Leaders have a good grasp of the next steps to ensure that the school continues to flourish. They take an active role to ensure that priorities to develop the Christian ethos of the school share equal weight alongside teaching and learning. Pupils meet their potential and academic standards are fully secured because of the deep level of understanding of, and high quality response towards each pupil's context and their needs. Parents are very confident of the school's leadership and are extremely positive about the school's ethos, provision and the behaviour of the pupils. Excellent, effective relationships exist between both, pupils and adults, the school, the church and its local community. There is a great sense of team amongst the staff with distributed leadership who are united in their passion to lead the school on from strength to strength. Their level of care and support towards each other is clear. Whilst governors take advantage of Diocesan school improvement training, more could be done to ensure that all governors progress in their knowledge and understanding of church schools and all are fully versed in their corporate responsibilities. This would ensure that both strong academic rigour and the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness go hand in hand.

There are strong links with the local parish church and termly church services give opportunities for those within the school community to come together to deepen their understanding of Biblical teaching. The school's partnership with the parish minister is a particular strength. He plays a key part in the development of the Christian character, chairing the governing body, leading acts of worship, spending time with pupils and coming alongside staff in supporting and guiding RE and collective worship planning. This has facilitated a pathway to open up where families are beginning to flow more easily between the school and church communities. Coffee times after school church services welcome parents and parents comment that their children feel at home there. Staff commend the support from external churches and the Diocese and how this has impacted their practice. Staff development is enthusiastically championed by the headteacher, who is also not afraid to challenge any areas of weaker practice.

The enthusiastic leadership of and quality of teaching in RE contributes well to the spiritual development of the pupils. Both collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. Internal staff training has raised the profile of RE and the quality of teaching, which in turn has furthered pupils' spiritual development. The extent to which the school engages with national and global communities is secure.

Further work on the articulation and public profile of the school as a church school would more confidently set the school's Christian character within all documentation. This would also secure the school's Christian distinctiveness into the future and truly fulfil the school's foundation stone in the centre of the school which is inscribed 'to the honour and glory of God'.