

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

All Saints Church of England (VC) First School

Oak Lane, Denstone, ST14 5HT

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Diocese | Lichfield |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Staffordshire |
| Name of federation | The Saints Federation |
| Date of inspection | 2 February 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 8 December 2011 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | VC First School 124246 |
| Executive Headteacher / Federation Deputy Headteacher | Sarah Robson / Rebecca Walker |
| Inspector's name and number | Huw D Bishop 344 |

School context

All Saints' is a small first school with 77 pupils on roll, mainly of White British heritage. Attendance is very high and well above the national averages. The school is part of The Saints Federation of three local church schools. A well-established governing body, representative of the distinctive Church of England identity of each of the three schools is in place. An executive head teacher and the federation deputy headteacher share the leadership of the school. The school has very low numbers of pupil premium and SEN children and has very strong links with All Saints' Church in the village.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints as a Church of England school are good

- The effective senior leadership, strongly supported by staff as they promote distinctive and clear Christian values that guide every aspect of school life.
- The supportive and inclusive ethos which helps all groups of pupils to learn well.
- The quality of relationships in school which are very strong and appreciated by pupils and parents.
- Worship which is at the heart of school life, extending particularly to pupils' learning in class.
- Governors who are totally committed to the school's distinctive Christian ethos making sure that church and school work together for the local community.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all the positive initiatives to proclaim Christian distinctiveness which are in place are evaluated and recorded formally by leaders and governors, to ensure they become deeply embedded and understood by all members of the school community as Christian in origin and as a result, impact significantly on the lives and achievements of pupils.
- Ensure the reflection areas in classrooms are more interactive and used to encourage prayer and the development of pupils' personal spirituality.

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

Christian values such as love, respect and kindness influence all aspects of school life and parents affirm that this helps to influence pupils' attitudes to learning at home as well as in school. These core Christian values were chosen by pupils to reflect what they saw as best describing All Saints School. These values are displayed clearly in the entrance hall and, together with other symbols, the visitor is in no doubt that this is a Church of England school. Conversations with pupils formally and informally confirmed the way these values impact upon their daily lives and encourage them to improve their chances to achieve. All groups of pupils recognise that their learning experiences in school have improved greatly under the current leadership arrangements. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding their expected progress is above the national average. This achievement is also supported by systems to identify quickly those who need additional help. Excellent relationships and interaction between teachers and pupils contribute to a high level of enjoyment of learning by pupils and this leads naturally to their better progress. As a result, attendance to school is very high and well above national figures. The management of behaviour in school is also carefully linked to Christian values and teachers and other adults, including adults from the parish church, model them in their daily work. Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and that staff deal quickly with any incidents that arise. Pupils feel safe in school and say that the school helps them to understand the importance of keeping safe in a variety of situations including when they use computers. The school celebrates the way in which children demonstrate Christian values in their daily lives in school and particularly the way they behave in lessons and move around school and the playground. All pupils feel valued and are given 'golden time' activities to enjoy as rewards. This motivates pupils to want to do well. Religious education (RE) makes a valuable contribution to the school's Christian character and schemes of work enable pupils to explore Christianity and other world faiths and their practices effectively. Pupils are aware that Christianity is a world faith through a range of topics and activities in lessons, worship themes and visits to special places. Pupils also took part in the 'Reconciling a Wounded Planet' project at Coventry Cathedral in 2015 and were able to share their ideas with other schools nationally through their work. Links with the parish church are very strong and pupils enjoy and gain greatly from them. Members of the parish support pupils in a number of ways in school, including the organisation of a weekly church club and this reinforces pupils' understanding that the school is a distinctive Church of England school. The whole school has also participated in the Derby Faith Trail, visiting places of worship and taking part in a special workshop to give them a clear opportunity to experience other cultures first hand. Pupils know and discuss biblical stories with confidence and understand the theological significance of key events in the Christian calendar. Reflection areas in the corridors and classrooms are available for all pupils to use, but these could be deployed even more effectively to help develop pupils' personal spiritual development. Displays and artefacts in classrooms and around the school remind pupils of their distinctiveness and challenge and encourage them to think deeply about significant issues. Classrooms are stimulating learning environments and reflect high expectations, aspirations and achievement. All members of the school community know that they are valued and an ethos of trust and mutual respect is very evident in school. Since becoming part of The Saints Federation, the school has dealt with a number of issues relating to school organisation and its impact on the particular needs of all groups of pupils. Parents spoken to on the day of the inspection say that recent strategies to improve the school's effectiveness are now beginning to succeed. This is helped particularly by stability in leadership and opportunities to engage, share and gain from the strong combined practice in the federation.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship occupies a central position in school and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. This happens through the particular experiences given through worship which help pupils to reflect on Christian values and the implications for their life in school and at home. Worship in school is described as 'reflecting the centrality of Jesus gathering a community of people to worship God' and a real sense of that was encountered on the day of the inspection. There is a carefully planned programme of worship that gives pupils a structure that enables them to encounter Christian belief and practice and consider its relevance in their daily lives. Pupils enter the hall used for collective worship with dignity and show respect throughout for the importance of the occasion. Worship is related to important events in the school's calendar as well as the seasons of the church's calendar. The wide variety of activities and content keep worship fresh as an important and special occasion. The programme is also linked to RE lessons and this was evidenced on the day of the inspection when pupils from the reception class led the school to appreciate and consider the story of Noah and the flood. This was later followed through in a class lesson where pupils considered key elements of the story further through discussion and play. Worship is led by a range of people including pupils, the federation deputy headteacher, the vicar of the parish church and other local Anglican ministers. Pupils' experience of worship is, therefore, rich and varied. Pupils have a good understanding of the nature of worship, the wider Christian faith and the Anglican tradition and practice in particular. Pupils also sing songs which are lively, engaging and uplifting. Pupils understand the teaching of the Trinity because of the regular symbolic references that are made to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit during acts of

worship in school and in church. Pupils know about liturgical colours and their seasonal significance in worship. Parents join their children for worship on special occasions and this is regarded as particularly uplifting by pupils and parents. Pupils also enjoy attending services in the parish church at key times during the school year. Collective worship has moved on since the last inspection and there is an increased participation by children in class worship and a greater involvement in the planning and delivery of whole school worship. This enriches their spiritual development. Each classroom has a prayer box for pupils and parents to add their own personal prayers. This has a positive impact on their spiritual development as pupils can talk about prayer and its importance in their lives. However, the school needs to consider how these dedicated classroom areas for reflection can be used more interactively so that pupils' personal spiritual development can be enriched.

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

The executive headteacher and federation deputy headteacher articulate together the school's distinctive Christian vision and ethos and promote that ethos well to support effective learning. They do this through shared leadership time in school and across the federation. As a team, they are committed to developing a distinctive Christian environment in which all aspects of pupils' learning and wellbeing are nurtured and promoted through teaching from the Bible and the Anglican tradition. This is also the basis for Christian values which are understood and appreciated as the driving influence of the school's development. This feature contributes strongly to the good progress and positive outcomes that pupils achieve. By the very nature of her responsibilities, the deputy headteacher's own Christian faith is very evident in her principled leadership in school and she has built up the confidence of pupils, parents and staff through clear processes which have enabled stability. Pupils and parents agree with this and recognise the impact that this leadership style is having on meeting all pupils' needs. Foundation governors are knowledgeable, experienced and passionate about the school and have a clear understanding of their role now and also have an eye to the future. They are committed and support the school in a number of ways, including regular visits to school. Staff and governors share the same agreed vision and work collaboratively to shape the school's future and its place within the federation. Action plans for RE, worship and Christian distinctiveness are in place and included in the school's improvement planning. Although these plans are discussed at governors' meetings, their evaluation could be done with a greater formality so that the impact of progress being made is reflected clearly in their minutes. Leaders seek the views of parents and pupils in reviewing the school's Christian distinctiveness and use every opportunity to challenge, monitor and evaluate the school's work. School leaders and governors are successful in ensuring that the academic, pastoral and spiritual needs of all groups of pupils are being met. RE and collective worship are led with commitment and there is a genuine desire to find ways to improve still further so that the school's distinctiveness as a small, rural Church of England School can be sustained for future generations of pupils. Governors are totally committed to the professional development of all staff in school and this includes succession planning for future models of Church school leadership and development in the local area. This also includes discussions which are happening currently around becoming part of a multi academy trust. The school benefits from and welcomes the support given by diocesan advisers. Parents appreciate the dedicated work of staff in supporting their children's personal and spiritual development as well as their academic success. The school's own evaluation of its work is accurate. This is clearly a good and effective Church of England school with a number of emerging strong features. Issues raised at the last inspection have, mostly, been addressed although some elements require further work to ensure that they are deeply embedded.

SIAMS report February 2017 All Saints CE First School, Denstone ST14 5HT