

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Stanground St John's Church of England VC Primary School

Chapel Street, Stanground, Peterborough. PE2 9JG	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Ely
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	November 2013
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Academy Trust
Date of inspection	16 January 2017
Date of last inspection	12 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 110819
Headteacher	Sally Williams
Inspector's name and number	Elizabeth Pitcher 448

School context

Stanground St John's is smaller than average with 202 pupils on roll. Following a period of instability, the school converted to academy status with the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT) in November 2013 which led to significant and rapid improvement. The current headteacher took up post in January 2015 and the school was judged good by Ofsted in April 2015. The number of pupils with Pupil Premium funding is above the national average with an increasing and above average number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is also above national average and there is high level social need with an above average deprivation index.

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

- Christian values, firmly rooted in the teaching of Jesus, lie at the heart of everything this school does.
- The school's values help pupils develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, leading to a deep awareness and respect for each other and the wider world.
- Strong Christian leaders nurture positive partnerships with the church and parents within an inclusive family atmosphere, leading to confident pupils, who enjoy learning.
- Prayer plays a significant role in this reflective community, enabling pupils to thoughtfully express their beliefs to a high degree of understanding.

Areas to improve

- To closely monitor the impact of the school mission statement in relation to the outworking of Christian values, so that the extent of impact on pupils' behaviour spiritual development can be evaluated.
- To deepen pupils' spiritual development by increasing their involvement in planning and leading worship.

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

Pupils, especially the vulnerable, make good progress because they feel confident, supported and special. This is reflected in the approach to improved levels of attendance and in no exclusions, as pupils strive to be 'the best you can be' within an inclusive ethos. All members of the school community talk enthusiastically about the motto, Aspire, Empower, Excel, with its underpinning Christian values. These are reflected in actions and high quality of relationships. A pupil comments, 'we are all unique and school is like a family,' because staff work well together to achieve the best for each individual learner, demonstrating the values of love and respect. This leads to happy, well cared for pupils who do well within a cohesive Christian environment which enhances pupils' personal development and well-being.

Spiritual development is a strength of the school. As a result of vibrant displays which tangibly celebrate Christian distinctiveness, religious education (RE) activities and worship, pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their personal spirituality. They eagerly voice their opinions linked to values and biblical teaching and how these practically apply to their daily lives. This leads to positive attitudes and high standards of behaviour.

Pupils show respect for those who are different from themselves, as they recognise that everyone is made in the image of God and are therefore special. This means that new arrivals are quickly absorbed into school routines and settle well into this vibrant Christian community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship (CW) is highly valued by pupils and staff and influences every aspect of school life. Worship offers opportunities for discussion, prayer and reflection. It is inclusive and well planned, incorporating a range of styles and follows the Anglican tradition. Although the headteacher and music leader coordinate worship, it is a shared experience involving class teachers and clergy.

Pupils talk of ways in which what they hear in CW links to the school's Christian values and Bible stories and how these help them in their relationships with others. In the whole-school collective worship observed, the focus on the concept 'empower' is explored through these values in relationship to personal behaviour and attitudes. Pupils show spiritual and moral growth, as they thoughtfully and confidently express their responses to key questions, which helps to shape their actions during the day. They are invited to write down more ideas during the week to encourage a continuous conversation on the theme, to expand Christian teaching. A prayerful, reflective atmosphere is captured in the lighting of a candle, which is understood as representing Jesus, the light of the world. This, together with quiet singing, creates a sense of awe, peace and tranquillity, through which pupils say they are helped to prepare for the day ahead and for learning.

Prayer and reflection spaces around school, known as pods, provide a safe haven for pupils to enjoy quietness amid the busyness of the school routine. One child comments that he goes to the pod when he struggles with behaviour and it makes him feel calmer when he talks to an adult. This significantly contributes to his personal development. Pupils understand that prayer has many purposes related to day to day life. For example, the curate gave a daily blessing during the statutory Key Stage 2 assessment (SATs) week which was conducive to a calmer approach to the tests. Pupils say they enjoy worship when they celebrate Christian festivals on their regular visits to the local church. Parents say they are proud when they see their children taking part in services. One parent comments that she values the school, as a church school, 'even though I am not a believer' because she is welcomed as a part of the St John's school family. Through exploration of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, pupils have developed age appropriate understanding of the Trinity.

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

Although the distinctive Christian character of this school was already in place, the leadership of the current headteacher has created an environment in which everyone matters and where everyone has a voice. This has led to increased confidence of other leaders, which enables them to clearly articulate what it means to be a church school. This serves to promote a shared Christian vision throughout the school community. All levels of leadership reflect this deeply Christian ethos which significantly influences the strategic development of the school with pupils at its heart. This means that self-evaluation processes are well supported by intuitive analysis, underpinned by the school's Christian view of valuing every individual, as special before God. Christian values drive improvement for pupils' good achievement through the

highly supportive programme of nurturing self-esteem and well-being so that pupils can reach their potential.

Leaders have spent a significant amount of time on the motto and values, involving a range of pupils and adults in discussion and reflection before final whole-school agreement. This has led to shared understanding of Christian values, which are mirrored through worship, the curriculum and supportive relationships. Supported by strategic governance, the headteacher has built a cohesive staff team, who work well together in the belief that every child deserves the best life chances. Leaders ensure that pupils have high level awareness of diversity. The school council organises the Children in Need appeal for those less fortunate and compassion is demonstrated in fundraising towards building a school in Ghana. RE provides challenge for pupils to reflect and express their views about world faiths and Christian traditions, including opportunities to explore Christian values of the school. This serves both to enhance the distinctive Christian character of the school and to promote tolerance and respect for those of other religions and cultures represented in the school and the wider world. Parents are very supportive of the school as a Christian community. They value consistent communication and they value that the headteacher knows everyone by name, like a family. Considerable support is provided for parents, who welcome invitations to share aspects of their children's learning.

School leaders and managers benefit from diocesan training and ongoing DEMAT strategic support, which enables the school to be a strong beacon for Christ in the community. Excellent links with the local church and the commitment to working with other church schools promotes strong Christian cohesion, supported by positive partnerships between the church liaison and clergy. Foundation governors support and challenge through monitoring and evaluating collective worship and pupils are actively involved in presenting worship. Both actions meet the development points from the previous inspection. RE and collective worship both meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report January 2017 Stanground St John's VC Primary School, Cambridgeshire. PE2 9JG