

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

### St Lucia's Church of England Primary School

Upton Magna, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. SY4 4TZ	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lichfield</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Shropshire
Date of inspection	30 April 2017
Date of last inspection	18 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Voluntary Controlled 123508
Headteacher	Sarah Woolley
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598

#### School context

St Lucia's is a small and popular village school of 100 pupils in rural Shropshire. Most pupils are White British. Pupils eligible for government pupil premium funding due to disadvantage is well below the national average. The number of pupils with a special educational need and/or disability is just below the national average. The church has a temporary interim priest in role following the recent retirement of a long-standing incumbent.

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

- The school sees itself as part of the family of God from which its great care of children and staff stems and which results in very positive relations at the school.
- Mutual church-school links are productive, significantly supporting children's spiritual experiences and community cohesion.
- The impact of religious education (RE), collective worship and provision for spiritual development results in pupils' respect, confidence and openness to explore issues of faith and life.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure all staff and governors are trained to use the SIAMS school improvement framework and evaluate against the SIAMS framework at each full governors' meeting so that it is used rigorously as a self-evaluation and school improvement tool.
- Revise the school's mission statement and policies, making clear the explicit Christian values of the school and how these underpin the conscious decision making and workings of all aspects of school life.
- Deepen pupils' learning in religious education (RE), for example, by using the Understanding Christianity resource and applying similar rigour to planning, teaching and assessment in units of study for the other focus faith traditions studied at the school.

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

The school's Christian character is evident in the positive relationships within school and in the great care for children and staff that the school prospers. The headteacher models this care and ensures the uniqueness of all pupils is recognised. She develops a sense of the school as being the family of God. The school has a clear, consistent commitment to the value of individuals and their nurture within the school. Consequently, pupils' behaviour, confidence and respect develop well. One child said, 'This school is welcoming and I feel safe here...I like the calm'. The key reason this school is not yet outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners is that the school's Christian values are not explicit. Consequently, their impact upon the children and the life of the school is insufficient. As the Christian values are not explicit, pupils find it hard to articulate the links between the values and biblical teachings including the life of Jesus. They are not yet making strong links between the school's core Christian values of caring, tolerance, respect and forgiveness and their behaviour and attitudes. This limits the impact of the Christian character of the school on meeting the needs of all learners and is a barrier to the development of the church school ethos. Attendance at the school is above national expectations due to the caring and effective procedures that are in place to deal with absence. School leaders work hard to ensure that the academic progress of all children is rising and that attainment is above the national average. Their impact arises from analytical self-evaluation with regard to standards alongside the school's dedication to meeting the needs of individual learners. Children's spiritual development is a strength overall. This is due to much quality teaching and provision in collective worship, RE and through wider opportunities in the arts such as Ukefest and Windspiration as well as a result of productive links with St Lucia's church. Empathy is developed well through a careful consideration of one another, through community lunches with the elderly and in charitable endeavours such as Odd-Sock-Day for the Downs syndrome support charity. Opportunities for reflection are given in worship and at other times in the school day, such as in forest school sessions, resulting in pupils appreciating time for quiet. This represents progress since the last inspection. However, the school's distinctly Christian values have a limited impact on spiritual development because they are not explicitly expressed. Learners, especially at Key Stage 2, talk positively about RE and can often link their learning in Christianity to bible teachings. RE has a clear impact on developing pupils' confidence and openness to explore faith. Pupils have a broad knowledge of world faiths but not a deep knowledge. One child said of RE, 'I wish we had chance to explore things deeper.' It is clear, however, that RE is making a most positive contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth of pupils because it develops within the children a respect and openness to explore issues of faith and life with confidence. Pupils' awareness and understanding of Christianity as a diverse worldwide faith is at an early stages and is being developed, for example, through the recent visit to the Greek Orthodox Church. A respect for multi-cultural diversity is advanced, for example, through links with an Ethiopian school, French breakfasts and visits to the Gudwara in Wolverhampton. This further enhances pupils' openness to questions of life and faith which is a strength of the school.

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

Pupils unanimously describe how they enjoy collective worship because it makes a positive impact upon their sense of wellbeing through its welcoming and inclusive approach. Both pupils and staff value collective worship as a time to reflect and pause and to be together in the presence of God. They are particularly engaged with collective worship when led by the deanery open-the-book team and when acts of worship are active and vibrant. These positive experiences support pupils' growing biblical knowledge and awareness of Jesus and the Trinity. Pupils have increasing opportunity to lead collective worship which is developing their appreciation of its purpose. However, collective worship is not yet outstanding because planning and provision does not support pupils sufficiently in making the connection between the school's Christian values, biblical example and their own behaviour and moral choices. School leaders and governors monitor provision and seek out evaluations to ensure collective worship continues to improve. However, the use of the school improvement framework (SIAMS) to make objective evaluations against a standard is at an early stage which means development is not as focussed as it might be. Leaders ensure collective worship is meeting statutory requirements. The coordinator for collective worship engages others in the planning process including the local church and the deanery open-the-book team. As a result, provision is coherent and progressive supporting an awareness by children, staff and parents of worship as central to the Christian experience. Prayer is a positive feature of collective worship and of the school day, for example basket prayers which are also taken to the church. Consequently, children are beginning to really value prayer as a personal support and this contributes to their spiritual growth. Anglican practice is developing through the strong links with St Lucia's parish church. These links include participating in the Easter and Pentecost Experience days and through the continuing positive impact of the recently retired priest as well as the interim priest and deanery worker. The school is pro-active in the use of the church for key school times such as Leavers' Day and the main Christian festivals as well as developing activities such as the Lenten acts prayer tree. These opportunities help pupils, parents and staff to gain a sense of the seasons of the Christian year and the place of festival and school life within the church's annual rhythm.

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

Leadership and management are good because the headteacher is successful in leading the whole school community in creating a Christian ethos that has meaning and purpose for most members. The headteacher's compassionate commitment and care is commendable and results in positive relations at all levels. This care extends to seeking the opinions of the children and acting upon them. The headteacher secures the wellbeing of all staff and children which stems from her Christian example. Family members also report how well the school supports them showing strong connections between home and school. The Christian ethos that is prospered is the foundation for the children's achievements both academically and in their personal development. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because recent developments and the school's Christian values are not fully embedded and explicit in the school's mission statement and policies. As a result, they do not impact on decision making and the working of the school as fully as they could. Governors are competent and conscientious. They sensitively make bold decisions for the long-term good of the school. Governors hold the school to account through link governors working with school leaders and monitoring provision and outcomes. They are aware of the church school improvement framework (SIAMS) but are still to use this strategically to nuance evaluations and decision making. This sometimes limits a focussed approach to school improvement and slows the pace of developments. However, the effective Christian leadership of the headteacher does ensure that the school continues to make some progress in developing its distinctive Christian character. Leaders have made appropriate progress against most development points from the last inspection, for example, in developing reflection as part of the forest schools work. The development of reflection opportunities at the school has supported pupils' spiritual growth greatly. These developments are still being embedded. The school supports the leader of collective worship and RE most effectively and ensures RE is well resourced, demonstrating the significance of RE and collective worship to school life. The coordinator has a clear assessment of her areas of responsibility. She has a vision and enthusiasm for improvement and is already bringing about positive change, for example through the trialling of the 'Developing Christianity' resource which is further improving the rigour of RE teaching and deepening learning. School leaders ensure the school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. The school is pro-active in developing staff professionally, for example, through quality diocesan training and allowing the diocese to utilise the skills of the headteacher to support newly appointed headteachers. These opportunities enhance their skills and make for effective succession planning. Parents rightly speak well of the school resulting in part from effective communications with them. The productive links with St Lucia's church are mutually supportive. They are formative to this school's understanding of itself as a Christian community. School and church work in partnership and together have a significant impact upon community cohesion and a local sense of belonging.

SIAMS report March 2017 St Lucia's Church of England Primary School Upton Magna SY4 4TZ