

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wigan St Andrew's Church of England Primary School	
Mort Street, Springfield, Wigan WN6 7AU	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Liverpool
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Wigan
Date of inspection	16 November 2017
Date of last inspection	13 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 106449
Headteacher	Wendy Massey
Inspector's name and number	Ann Lock 919

School context

St Andrews is an average sized voluntary aided school. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage, although there are a growing number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average as is the percentage of pupils with a statement for special educational needs or an education health care plan. Ofsted inspected the school in September 2017 and recorded a judgement of good overall. Behaviour was judged to be outstanding. There are close links with the parish of St Andrew's Church.

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

- This is an exciting, vibrant, worshipping community of pupils, staff, governors and parents. High educational and personal aspirations are fostered for all through a strong belief that, 'with God all things are possible'.
- The leadership of the excellence and distinctiveness co-coordinator, supported by a committed headteacher, is inspirational. This ensures that the school has an outstanding Christian character where pupils can thrive academically and personally whatever their background or ability.
- Christian values of friendship, peace, compassion, trust, forgiveness, and thankfulness result in excellent pupil behaviour and considerate attitudes towards one another.
- Children are happy and extremely well cared for by committed staff and governors who live according to the gospel values of love, forgiveness and compassion as taught by Jesus.

Areas to improve

- Embrace the new diocesan syllabus and 'Understanding Christianity' programme to support pupils' deeper understanding of Christianity by encouraging greater levels of discussion, debate, reasoning and independent thinking based on biblical texts. This will also help with a broader understanding of Christianity as a world faith.
- Celebrate the excellent church-school relationship by embarking on the second church-school award. This will further strengthen the liaison between school and church and will enhance the spiritual life of the whole community.

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

The school's excellence and distinctiveness leader is exemplary in encouraging pupils and staff to understand the importance of Christian values. Her inspirational spiritual leadership, supported by the commitment of the headteacher, is significant in developing a community that is growing in faith. The excellence and distinctiveness leader is passionate about her role and extremely supportive of both pupils and staff in their individual spiritual journeys. Prayer is the cornerstone of school life. One staff member said, 'we frequently pray together in the staff room'.

School is very successful in meeting the needs of all its learners, whatever their background or ability. This emanates from the school's biblical motto that 'with God all things are possible'. School has an all-encompassing family atmosphere which is tangible to all who visit, as well as to those who belong to it. There is a very strong emphasis on the importance of developing the Christian character of all learners. This results in a caring, inclusive learning environment which enables all pupils to flourish in a haven of calmness and individual nurturing.

One of the key features of the school is the genuine pastoral support that is offered to all. This is based on biblical principles of compassion and trust. There are numerous examples of parents praising the school for its exceptional help and care in difficult circumstances. One parent said that the support her family received from school was 'above and beyond her expectations'. School has an outstanding nurture room which values every child. The chosen values of friendship, peace, compassion, trust, forgiveness and thankfulness motivate excellent interpersonal relationships at all levels. Consequently, behaviour in school is outstanding, resulting in high levels of personal esteem and consideration of others. Staff work diligently to encourage commendable school attendance which is above the national average. This is based on its Christian belief that each child is valued and special to God. Values are embedded in the daily life of this school and directly impact the achievement of all learners. Progress in all subjects, including religious education, is good. Christian values motivate staff, give confidence to pupils and provide an ethos where everyone tries to do their best. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and the opportunities to explore Christianity around the world. Parents speak about their children's enjoyment of learning about Greek Orthodox Christians. This helps to develop respect for others. Pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of other faith communities which, in turn, leads to positive attitudes about diverse religions and cultures. Pupils express Christian concern for others by generous giving to multiple charities, including those with a local connection, for example, Derian House and The Brick in Wigan. This outward looking mind-set helps to develop the school's Christian character and the pupils' growing understanding of social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. Pupils blossom through a broad range of cultural activities including the school's brass band and choir. However, by far the most popular activity is worship club. This demonstrates the success of the school's Christian ethos and gives the pupils extra opportunities to develop personal spirituality.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is given high priority in the daily rhythm of school life. Pupils say they enjoy worship because it is exciting, engaging and relevant. They experience a broad range of worship through the different seasons of the Church year supported by creative resources, such as godly play. Pupil evaluations on the school website are evidence that worship is meaningful and reflective. It resonates with pupils' needs and helps them in their relationships and behaviour. Pupils say they enjoy learning from bible stories and their chosen Christian values. One pupil said, 'worship is a peaceful time and we can think about how to make the world a better place'.

Pupils delight in attending St Andrew's Church and learning from members of the congregation. Recently, school attended 'experience harvest' in church. Parents were very moved by this event stating that it had had a positive impact on their children at home. All members of the school community are involved in leading worship which helps to enrich the experience for all. A significant proportion of staff and children attend St Andrew's Church on a regular basis which results in a close church-school relationship. The vicar is actively involved in school worship which the school finds encouraging. Pupils relish the opportunity to plan and deliver worship independently through the ever-popular worship club. They organise worship based on stories from the Bible. They compose their own prayers and have a deepening understanding of the Trinity. The whole school can impressively recite the Lord's Prayer using sign language. Every half term there is a theme connected to Christian values and biblical teaching. As a result, pupils' spiritual awareness and understanding is enhanced.

Prayer is a natural feature of the school encouraged throughout the day. One to one prayer requests are regularly made to the excellence and distinctiveness leader by both pupils and staff. This leads to an open spiritual atmosphere where prayer is encouraged and often requested. The monitoring of worship is undertaken regularly by the chair of governors in collaboration with the excellence and distinctiveness leader and the worship club. The views of pupils and adults are all valued and taken into consideration to inform and enhance future planning.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Achievement and progress in religious education is good and equivalent to other core subjects. The excellence and distinctiveness leader ensures that RE is well led through regular book monitoring and discussions with staff. She knows that standards of presentation need to be improved and she is guiding staff how to do this by having exemplar pieces of standardised work. She works closely with senior leaders and ensures that RE has a high profile. The majority of teaching is good with some outstanding lessons. Teachers harness pupil interest and are skilled in using opportunities to reinforce teaching about Christianity. In a Year 3 lesson a misconception about the Holy Spirit was skilfully turned into an opportunity to learn more about the Trinity. There is strong evidence that the teaching of Christianity in RE is helping pupils to a greater understanding of values within a biblical context. Many pupils are able to interpret and reflect on the impact of religion on believers. However, pupils' skills of enquiry and analysis are underdeveloped. RE has a high profile in school indicated by the investment that has been made to provide staff and pupils with creative resources. Assessment is systematic and informs planning on a termly basis.

RE makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners by interpreting issues within a Christian context. For example, pupils can apply Christian values when solving relationship matters. Pupils demonstrate Christian values of care and concern during lessons by helping each other. When a Year 1 pupil asked his peers for help, three pupils readily came to his assistance. An attitude of openness to learn permeates staff development. Many readily access diocesan training to enhance their skill base.

RE provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the similarities of other faith communities. Pupils eagerly talk about friends that they know who have a different faith heritage. School helps them understand different religious ideas and faith based on shared values. This strengthens learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of people from diverse backgrounds.

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

The appointment of an excellence and distinctiveness leader provides the school with a key person in an influential position to ensure that spirituality is at the heart of the school's ethos. This post is the result of the vision of the headteacher who believes in allowing her team to develop their strengths. The excellence and distinctiveness leader promotes a vision rooted in a deep personal faith. She challenges the impact of Christian values on the lives of pupils, resulting in effective learning and equal opportunities. She ensures that RE is well resourced to enable staff to deliver stimulating lessons that provide opportunities for pupils to explore their faith. The school's Christian character is a highly motivating influence which underpins relationships, personal well-being and good academic achievement, as well as tolerance and respect for all.

School leaders possess a thorough understanding of the link between school performance and Christian values. This results in good standards of achievement. Tailored interventions are rapidly implemented if a child requires extra support. Effective use is made of the nurture room facility. This ensures every child's needs are met through Christian love and commitment.

The appointment of a new vicar in 2016 has brought fresh vision to the school by her presence and her involvement with worship. The sense of well-being of the whole community is rooted in the genuinely deep partnership of the school and church. The chair of governors is actively involved in monitoring the distinctiveness of the school. This gives her first-hand experience when reporting to the governing body enabling informed decisions to be made collectively. The governing body have ensured that the school has successfully addressed the focused areas for development since the previous statutory inspection.

The headteacher embraces the Christian vision and enthusiastically encourages all staff to participate in diocesan training. This is helping to shape potential church school leaders.

The impact of a strong Christian vision results in excellent pupil behaviour. Harmonious relationships are at the heart of this school leading to acceptance and inclusivity. The headteacher and staff are fully involved in Liverpool Diocese as well as collaborating with a cluster of twenty local schools, which gives them access to high quality professional development. Parents are extremely positive regarding the welcome and support that they receive from the school. One parent said, 'it's the best school I have ever been into regarding the help that I've been given'. They also add that they are happy to be fully engaged with the promotion of the school's Christian character because it strengthens the local community.