

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Alban's Church of England Primary School

St Albans Road, West Leigh, Havant, PO9 2JX

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Portsmouth
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hampshire
Date/s of inspection	7 February 2018
Date of last inspection	27 February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 116362
Headteacher	Nicola Hordell
Inspector's name and number	Richard Blackmore 857

School context

St Alban's Church of England Primary School is a voluntary aided primary school in West Leigh, close to Havant. The school is an average-sized primary school. Children come from a predominantly White British background and come from a large geographical area across the Deanery of Havant. The number who are eligible to receive free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The headteacher has been in post since January 2014. The school works in collaboration with other schools in the county of Hampshire.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Albans Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership at all levels articulates and promotes an exceptionally clear vision for the school rooted in Christian values.
- Collective worship provides outstanding opportunities for celebration and expression, leading to profound spiritual development.
- The quality of nurturing care that the school provides is very effectively supporting children, their families, staff and wider community groups.
- Children are developing into confident, thoughtful and highly reflective young people who show complete respect for diverse communities.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that monitoring focuses even more precisely on children's learning, knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

St Alban's is a very happy and caring Christian community where children and parents feel highly valued and special. The school has identified a set of four core Christian values of love, hope, compassion and thankfulness. These values permeate all aspects of daily life of the school, resulting in an exceptionally strong Christian ethos for children and their families to thrive in. The strong emphasis on these values has given the children a deep sense of responsibility for their own actions and learning. The school's very detailed tracking of children builds on their own understanding of their learning, including for those who are more vulnerable. This shows that the school has an

outstanding awareness of all pupils and has a very positive effect in children's achievement across the curriculum. One parent described the school's help as 'spot on'. The school's religious education provides many opportunities for children to develop their expressive and social skills. It also ably supports the school's commitment to the core values and strongly promotes the children's understanding of diversity and of other faiths across the world. Children also recognise diversity in their own community and value it. They like the fact that there are children from a range of faiths and of no faith. Children enjoy the interesting differences other faiths and beliefs bring to their school. They can talk knowledgeably about other faith groups in the local community and have a clear picture of Christianity as a world faith. The school is further supporting their understanding about world religions through a creative curriculum approach, visits and visitors. This is helping children to appreciate the global perspective of religion and in particular Christianity. Consequently, levels of knowledge in religious education (RE) are high and the progress that children make in RE is exceptionally fast. Children have an outstanding range of social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences from which to draw and they talk convincingly about how their rich experiences help them understand how the world works. A clear direction is set by the staff and children alike. For example, the 'Pollinator Promise Team' has a clear and important 'mission'. This is to attract pollinating insects to the school grounds and ensure that the school community is aware of the important role that bees and butterflies play in the production of 80% of Britain's crops. To highlight this the team have planted a thousand snowdrops in the school grounds but have also targeted local and national companies. Children are assuming roles of responsibility very maturely to develop their leadership skills. For example, children expertly led part of the collective worship during the inspection, demonstrating how to outwardly show each other one of the school's values, thankfulness. The student council is involved in significant decision making across the school, including decisions on a variety of policies and which charities to support. As a result, children support a wide range of charities, including Christian Aid, for whom they recently raised £142. These initiatives help children to appreciate that they have social responsibility both locally and globally, which is based in Christian mission to others. Children can link discussions in RE lessons with messages received in acts of worship and further link these with their everyday lives. For example, children have an extensive knowledge of Bible stories and use the messages they carry to reflect philosophically upon their own behaviour and how they play and work with other children. Relationships at all levels are excellent. This is because of the genuine and meaningful opportunities to work and worship together. Links with parents are very strong because of the numerous times that they can be part of school life and the informative communications and meetings that help them to understand the school's work. For example, how early reading skills are taught. Parents appreciate the way that children support each other and collaborate in their learning and the way that values impact on their children at home as well as in school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily collective worship is central to the life of the school. It reinforces the school's values extremely well because it is rooted in the life and actions of Jesus and how everyone can follow his example. Collective worship is delivered by a range of children, staff and visitors. Children are totally absorbed in worship and participate thoughtfully and enthusiastically. They are instrumental in evaluating, planning and leading worship for the whole community. For example, the monitoring of worship is undertaken very well with children making detailed notes on what went well and what could be improved. Pupils sing with great enthusiasm and have strong views about which songs they particularly like. One of the children said that 'You Shall Go Out With Joy' was a particular favourite. Parents also say that their children enjoy the opportunities to sing a range of songs. One parent said, 'My daughter sings them at home and taught them to me'. Prayer is central to all worship. It is often led by the children and is often linked to and shared through the school's values, the Lord's Prayer and other examples from biblical teaching. Children express with great emotion how it can help them at difficult times in their lives. One child spoke movingly saying, 'It's a comfort to know God is there'. Children can talk about how they pray and talk about what they pray for. This in turn influences families and creates a dialogue between home and school, strengthening relationships further. The head teacher and clergy work together to ensure prayers are linked to worship themes that are highly relevant to the lives of children. Close attention is paid to following the Anglican pattern of worship and the liturgical calendar. Children can identify accurately and thoughtfully speak of the importance of different elements of worship, such as responses, quiet reflection and prayer. Children understand the impact of these aspects as seen in their impressive knowledge of key Christian beliefs. Clear links with the school's values, together with the use of regular liturgical calendar, allow participants in worship to develop a secure understanding of Jesus Christ and to explore fully and grasp the life of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Formal worship is linked in terms of themes to relevant and stimulating displays throughout the school, helping to promote personal spiritual growth.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The teaching of RE is given a high priority and children make outstanding progress as a result of its high calibre. Feedback from children and evaluation of their work shows that the subject is treated equally to other key subjects. RE makes very tangible links to spiritual teaching and children make many connections and apply what they learn in lessons to their own lives. The subject knowledge of the teachers is very evident and is leading to outstanding outcomes in learning. RE books illustrated that children had been engaged in a wide range of high quality, broad and well balanced learning experiences and that these were having a significant impact on children's understanding. Teachers use creative approaches in their lessons and tackle challenging issues. For example, in a lesson observed during the inspection, the children were investigating the reasons behind global and local concerns, including why some people have no home. The leader of RE and has very good subject knowledge. She leads the teachers well in promoting the subject through outstanding display, links to worship and the use of the wider curriculum. Governors have evaluated RE informally by observing lessons, with support from the subject leader and they have undertaken a book scrutiny. From this they have a clear and accurate view of standards, progress and the school's assessment policy. RE is a major part of whole school's incisive strategic planning process and is included in the well-thought through and structured self-evaluation. Children respond very well in lessons and clearly value the subject because teaching is consistently strong. Children show very good involvement in the wide variety of lessons, which includes enquiry based learning, sharing of ideas and moments of reflection. The school records accurately children's very positive achievement in each child's 'Journey in RE'. These important portfolios capture and evidence the rapid progress and development children make in the full and wide range of aspects of RE. The curriculum is very effective because teaching is varied and there are rich opportunities provided for children to discuss and debate their faith and experiences at a deep level. Children bring a wide range of experiences from other cultures which are much valued, celebrated and used exceptionally well to enhance understanding. Standards in RE are in line or above standards in other subjects.

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

The headteacher and other leaders provide exceptionally strong leadership. They are very effective in permeating the Christian ethos throughout all corners of the school. The headteacher's clear Christian vision for the school has ensured that the school's distinctive Christian character is continually being strengthened. This vision is fully understood and supported by all members of the school community because the school's Christian values are understood, regularly used and acted upon. This has helped all members of the school to feel ownership of these values. The commitment and dedication of the headteacher and senior staff, together with the governing body are seen in the way that the vision, high ambition for children and the importance of the core values are clearly and continually articulated and manifested in practice throughout the whole school. This means that academic achievement and personal growth are developed rapidly. Leaders, including governors, have a very accurate picture of its strengths and areas that need further development. Initiatives introduced, even those that are more recent are monitored very thoroughly to ensure that they become firmly embedded. The high level of checks by leaders also feeds directly into the ongoing process of the school's improvement. Occasionally, monitoring by leaders is not focused sufficiently on what pupils learn and the knowledge, skills and understanding that they acquire in RE. Governors are effectively engaged in school self-evaluation as an integral part of the senior leadership team. Parents appreciate the positive impact of the school's continually developing approach to furthering their children's academic and personal development. The RE leader is fairly new in post but very effective and enthusiastic in her role to improve the effectiveness of RE and also in furthering the school's Christian distinctiveness. For example, she has a very sharp picture of pupils' current achievement and uses this very well to plan with teachers the pupils' future learning experiences. The RE leader has ensured the planning and delivery of RE is firmly in place. As a result, the high quality religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The wise and calm leadership of the headteacher has inspired confidence for staff to develop and test out their leadership skills. This has led to staff striking a highly successful balance and blend between rigorous evaluation of achievement data and the recognition of the importance of pupils' personal skills. This has laid the groundwork for future leadership because senior and more junior staff understand the balance between the outcomes in different aspects of pupils' development. The school's relationships with the wider church community are very highly developed. They have outstanding links with the parish church and the vicar and other foundation governors who are influential on the governing body, greatly enhance the leadership of the school as a church school. Parents speak clearly about how they value their relationships and feel that they help the school to constantly evolve and adapt to pupils' needs and with wider experiences of prayer, worship and RE teaching. The school's partnership with the diocese is also strong and has helped the school to shape its daily practice and its longer-term aspirations. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.