

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Giles Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Walsall Street, Willenhall, Wolverhampton WV1 3 2ER

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Walsall
Date of inspection	15 June 2017
Date of last inspection	July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 104226
Headteacher	Mark Dakin
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Currently there are 375 pupils on roll in this urban primary school with a large number of ethnic minority groups. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or for whom English is not their first language is average. There is a high proportion of boys. The headteacher has been in post since April 2011. There are many new members of staff in post, which includes the religious education [RE] subject leader.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Giles as a Church of England school are outstanding

- This is an inclusive, yet richly diverse, welcoming and nurturing Christian family community which meets pupils and families at their point of need because God is put first. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence and achieve well.
- There is a mutual and substantial partnership between the school and St Giles Church which enriches the worshipping life of the school and parish.
- Strong leadership and governance is rooted in a strong Christian ethos which ensures prayer and the school's vision and values underpin all school life.
- RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development and to the school's Christian character. As a result, pupils' knowledge deepens and they are able to connect the school's Christian values to the parables of Jesus.

Areas to improve

- Extend the programme of visits and visitors so that pupils meet people of faith in their places of worship more frequently to enrich their spiritual and cultural development.
- Extend the formal monitoring of RE to gather evidence of the impact of new resources in this core subject and to support the RE subject leader.

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

St Giles' Christian foundation is rooted in its core values of forgiveness and reconciliation, agape, compassion and community, equality and service and stewardship. Each of these is linked to a specific parable in the Bible which pupils readily articulate. St Giles has a longstanding Christian presence in the community, with excellent pastoral care for all members of its family. Home/school/church partnerships are deemed to be important because the Golden Rule is at the heart of all the school does. Attendance is good and there have been no exclusions because

every day counts and pupils and parents know that they can't make progress if they are not in school. Vulnerable pupils make good progress because of the targeted tutoring, after school provision at no cost to parents and specialist support, underpinned by equality and inclusion, which is in place. The school's distinctive Christian character is at the heart, resulting in happy and confident learners. Consequently, all pupils make better than expected progress, of which they are really proud. Aspirations have risen in this nurturing family community. Relationships and behaviour are exemplary. Worship and RE make significant contributions to pupils' SMSC development, and pupils encouraged to develop their own personal journey. Christian values are linked to other world religions and charity fundraising helps awareness of diverse communities and cultures. For example, the school's generosity to the work of 'The Good Shepherd' at Harvest and Christmas has resulted in a leading supermarket sending a lorry of food supplies to this worthy cause weekly. Music and sport play an important part in the life of the school, resulting in silver and gold sports awards and RSM achievements. This is because the parable of the talents has a huge impact, where every talent is valued and every day is a new day with fresh challenges. Pupils are excited and challenged by RE, with some pupils saying they are 'intrigued by their next topic and will be fascinated' to see what it is. One pupil said, 'RE challenges me as I learn about other religions and know more about my own faith'. Pupils say they are learning about, and have a good understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith. Pupils at St Giles know the Christian narrative well. They explain incarnation in their own words, as 'when God came down in human form so people can see him and touch him'. They speak of being thankful for the gift of Jesus in bread and wine when celebrating the feast of Corpus Christi. Pupils explore faith by asking questions, such as what heaven is supposed to be like. Whilst pupils can recall visitors from different faith traditions, the school has identified that extending the programme of visits and visitors enables pupils to meet people of faith more frequently to support their spiritual and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils plan, lead and evaluate worship throughout the year, with the worship council having a key role. Consequently, the parish church is now considering having a worship council as they see the importance of the school worship council. Saints days and the Christian calendar are celebrated in school or in St Giles' Church at key times in the church year, such as Ash Wednesday and the feast of Corpus Christi. The parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor, with termly Eucharists taking place. The school is proud to share worship with the parish community on its campus. The altar in the school hall takes pride of place and is well used. Pupils have created an icon of St Giles to be blessed by the Bishop of Lichfield. Year 5 and 6 pupils have visited the cathedral, enriching their experience of worship. There are good links with other churches, including the local Methodist church. Prayer is an important part of daily life, with pupils writing their own prayers. Many of these prayers have been published in a book of prayers, a copy of which is in every class prayer area. Personal spirituality is also developed through music and mediation, with the emphasis on prayer changing the path you take. When pupils are away from school on residential visits, prayers are said round the camp fire at night. Pupils say that worship means 'connecting with Jesus and God, saying sorry if you've done wrong and praying for others as well as being thankful is very important'. Some pupils say they find it 'easier to connect with God in church.' They like it when they plan and lead worship and find this exciting. For some pupils, the prayer garden is 'the most holiest place' in school. They value this quiet space for reflection which is well used with symbolic prayer pebbles. The very youngest nursery children choose prayers from the prayer box to make their day happy and special. Kids Club from a local church help them understand the importance of staying by God's side, reinforcing the school's values and Jesus' teaching about agape and forgiveness in the Bible. Older pupils can link Bible stories with their school's values, such as The Good Samaritan showing agape and the parable of the workers in the vineyard showing equality. They know good knowledge of the church year, including Ascension and Pentecost, citing how the Holy Spirit came down to the disciples and gave them the gift of languages so they were able to spread the words of Jesus around the world'. Pupils are growing in their understanding of Trinity and God as Father, Son and Spirit. They explain, 'God is a father figure. Jesus died on the cross for our salvation and his spirit is still with us. We do everything in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.

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

The school's self-evaluation highlights that well-articulated and promoted Christian values underpin the school's vision, aims and all policy and practice. Very strong visionary leadership and good governance ensures equality and wellbeing have a high priority at St Giles. Consequently, pupils thrive and grow in confidence academically, spiritually and personally. The importance of Christian values underpinning learners' achievements is always discussed at every governing body meeting. The school works closely with the church so they can give vision and hope to pupils and their families. As a result, their future lives are not determined by the postcode where they live and they become good stewards and the best they can be. The school continues to be on a journey to help pupils believe they are worth something. Parents praise the Christian education their children experience, based on loving one another.

Reaching out into the community is seen as a badge of honour. For example, pupils sing for elderly residents. Parents say they see their children model Christian values at home, based on respect for others. The pastoral and worship leader ensures worship is well led. RE has a very high profile and is well resourced. This includes helping pupils to deepen their biblical understanding through the use of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. There are improved outcomes in learning from religion as evidenced in pupils' books over time. As a result, RE and worship meet statutory requirements very well, making a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development. Links with the parish are very good, with the school having a reputation as a learning and spiritual community. There are good links with the diocese, with the school benefitting from training and support. St Giles' senior leaders and governors support all staff in their roles and responsibilities. Hard working staff say they are 'proud to be part of a team and inclusive family where Christian values are consistently upheld and where everyone is respected and valued as individuals, whatever their background, religion or culture'. However, the school has correctly identified the need to extend the monitoring of RE to gather evidence of the impact of new resources and to support the RE subject leader in her role. Above all, St Giles invests heavily in its community, prizing the 'Royal Doulton' approach to investing in lives and the best it can offer to adults and pupils alike, valuing everyone and putting God and worship first. In all these ways, St Giles maintains its excellent contribution and dedication to serving its spiritual community.

SIAMS report June 2017 St Giles CE VC Primary School, Willenhall, Wolverhampton WV13 2ER