

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Elisabeth's CE Primary School

St Elisabeth's Way, Reddish, Stockport, SK5 6BL

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Manchester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Stockport
Date of inspection	30 March 2017
Date of last inspection	February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 106110
Headteacher	Shirley Tootell
Inspector's name and number	Gillian Rhodes 657

School context

St Elisabeth's is a one and a half form entry primary school with nursery. Pupils are mainly White British. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average. The school is situated in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils receiving pupil premium funding is above the national average. The percentage of pupils receiving support for special educational needs or disabilities is above national average. Since the last Inspection, the school building has been extended. There have been few staffing or senior leadership changes but staff numbers are increasing to accommodate increasing numbers of pupils on roll.

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

- Distinctively Christian values underpin all aspects of school life and create a culture of mutual respect. As a result, pupils' conduct is excellent and positive relationships nurture all groups in the school community.
- The headteacher and all school leaders demonstrate and diligently promote a vision for the development of the school and its pupils rooted in Christian values of respect, service and love.
- Strong, well-established links and partnerships are of substantial mutual benefit to the school, its pupils and their families, the church and the local community.
- The distinctive Christian ethos of the school is the basis for all policy and practice. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding is developed across the whole curriculum.

Areas to improve

- Further develop pupils' spirituality by deepening understanding of God as Three-in-one, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of the diversity of Christianity both in the community and across the wider world.

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

St Elisabeth's is truly a Christian school for all. Outstanding behaviour and relationships are rooted in explicitly identified Christian values of respect, tolerance, forgiveness and love. Deeply embedded Christian values underpin all aspects of school life and inform all decision making. Mutual respect amongst all groups in the school family ensures the inclusive character of the school. The calm, well-ordered atmosphere provides a secure basis for pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is good from starting points which are generally well below national age expected standards. Attainment in reading is identified as a key target for improvement. Measures taken quickly to address this issue are having a positive influence on pupil performance.

Attendance at St Elisabeth's is in line with national figures and an ethos of Christian support and service to others underpins the school's compassionate response to any isolated issues. The school supports vulnerable children through its policy of welcoming and successfully nurturing pupils excluded from other schools.

Spiritual development is effectively promoted through a specific SMSC policy. Opportunities for pupils to be still and reflect are provided in collective worship, religious education (RE) and across the curriculum. Pupils develop moral, social and cultural awareness through a wide range of experiences. Through Forest School and an allotment, pupils celebrate the wonders of creation and learn about caring for the world. The multi-faith One Voice music project effectively promotes pupils' awareness of belief as a way of life across diverse cultures. Parents spoke of the strong moral compass their children develop. A parent explained, 'They learn tolerance and respect. People praise their behaviour wherever they go, including out of school.'

RE at St Elisabeth's is interesting and challenging and underpins the Christian character of the school. Values across a range of faiths are discussed to broaden pupils' understanding. In a Year 6 lesson on charity, pupils considered open-ended questions on the impact of charitable giving. Their ideas were extended by considering things which money cannot buy. Pupils' responses included values such as love, trust and happiness. In Reception, children learned about Easter and the concept of rebirth and new life through a range of carefully planned fun activities inside and outdoors.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and an important part of every day. Themes are carefully planned and based on Christian values and biblical material. Christian festivals are celebrated and traditions such as Lenten challenges are highlighted. Pupils are encouraged to reflect and relate themes to their own lives. Easter worship themes related to forgiveness and hope and pupils reflected on times when they had forgiven or been forgiven. Worship is inclusive and engages all pupils. They learn about the festivals and traditions of religions other than Christianity and visiting speakers help them understand both diversity and shared values. A parent explained that as a result, 'Our children are respectful and tolerant of each other.'

Pupils understand the importance and purpose of prayer and describe how it punctuates the school day. They take pride in the lunchtime and home-time prayers which they have written and which are used daily. A Year 5 school councillor explained, 'Prayer is talking to God and saying thank you.' Reflection areas in all classrooms provide focal points for class worship. They help pupils understand prayer as sharing thoughts and concerns with God.

The lighting of a candle at the start welcomes God into worship. The importance of Jesus Christ to Christians is understood by pupils. Through worship and RE they have good knowledge of Jesus' life and teachings. Several pupils highlighted the story of Jesus calming the storm as their favourite. They explained that it helped them to feel calm. In worship, prayers are said and reference is made to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, pupils do not yet have a deep understanding of God as Three-in-one.

Pupils enjoy contributing to worship and take responsibility for different aspects. Older pupils lead worship in school and in church. The vicar of St Elisabeth's church works closely with the school and is involved in leading and planning for worship. The recent Lenten Experience in the church involved pupils, staff, clergy and lay members of the church. A variety of activities developed pupils' understanding of the Christian values of forgiveness and hope. Representatives of Christian organisations, community and theatre groups extend the range of experiences offered to pupils. Opportunities to consider the diversity of Christianity locally and across the world are not yet fully developed.

Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is thorough and systematic. Feedback on worship is gathered from all groups in the school community. Pupils complete reflection responses to worship and an evaluation book is used by parents to express their thoughts. Collated feedback highlights the positive responses of pupils, parents and staff who emphasise the 'calm, reflective atmosphere'. As a result of this feedback, worship planning includes explicit

links to the school's core Christian values in order to deepen spiritual and moral understanding across the whole school family.

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

School leaders live out and model a vision for St Elisabeth's school and pupils which is rooted in an ethos of shared Christian values and unity. The school's jigsaw logo emphasises how all groups in the school community fit together and derive strength from each other. Governors describe how the school cares for and nurtures all pupils and their families irrespective of circumstances, background or faith. Leaders, including governors, have a thorough understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness as a church school. Evidence in action plans, policies and documentation demonstrates the continuous aspirational drive of leaders to serve the best interests of the pupils and their families.

The whole school curriculum is informed by a distinctive Christian vision embodied by the headteacher and shared by all members of staff. Team work and mutual support ensure that all feel valued and supported. A member of staff explained, 'Staff work together to make a great school so everyone can achieve their goals.' Christian values and SMSC development are included in all aspects of the curriculum and in wider school life and pupil experiences. Consequently behaviour and attitudes across the whole school family are positive.

Links and partnerships between the school, families, the church and the local community are a strength. The school has the Leading Parent Partnership Award. This accreditation emphasises that the school is 'a welcoming, communicative and friendly place for parents and carers'. Workshops on issues such as e-safety support parents who are quick to say that they feel supported, informed and respected.

The school works closely with its neighbouring church. The vicar is a visible presence in the school and has a highly valued pastoral role in its community. The school in turn has a pastoral role in the local community and is often the first port of call for families at difficult times. The vicar describes the school's Christian ethos of service as 'part of its DNA'. This is lived out in involvement in community appeals at harvest time, in Remembrance commemorations and in the local Re:dish community support project. School events are held in church at key times in the year and pupils and families are involved in regular activities such as Messy Church. As a result, pupils see the church and school as two integral parts of one community.

School involvement in local events is well established and vibrant. Pupils learn about local history and community life through involvement in local projects and celebrations. Current projects in music and photography broaden pupils' horizons and support their cultural development. The headteacher and governors ensure that St Elisabeth's is a school at the heart of its community.

St Elisabeth's has strong links with the diocese. School staff attend diocesan professional development courses and diocesan staff regularly visit the school. Leadership of worship and RE is given high priority and these aspects are generously resourced. School staff are well supported in their roles and in their career development. In the words of a member of staff, the school gives pupils and staff 'the opportunity to work to the best of our ability and to achieve our potential'.

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