

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Matthew's C of E Primary School

Stretton Road, Stretton, WA4 4NT	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Warrington
Name of multi-academy trust / federation [delete as appropriate]	N/A
Date of inspection	24 November
Date of last inspection	December 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary aided 111382
Headteacher	Hazel Fryman
Inspector's name and number	Jean Forward 625

School context

St. Matthew's C of E Primary School is smaller than average. It is in a more affluent area to the south of Warrington. Almost all pupils are White British.

The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average. The number of pupils identified as having additional needs is also below the national average. Attendance is above the national target. At the end of KS2 in 2016, attainment and progress were above the Department for Education floor standard. Attainment was well above both the local authority and national standards. In April 2015, Ofsted judged the school outstanding in all areas.

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

- The outstanding Christian leadership of the headteacher and her vision for the development of the school ensure that the school's Christian ethos is at the heart of daily life.
- The school is extremely successful in creating a loving, caring and inclusive environment rooted in Christian values. This has a direct influence on pupils' well-being, progress and enthusiasm for learning.
- The pupils' outstanding behaviour, care for each other and positive attitudes are rooted in the school's core Christian values.
- The governing body provides outstanding support and challenge through commitment and expertise. This results in strong Christian leadership and strategic self-evaluation of church school distinctiveness.
- The vicar of St. Matthew's church makes an excellent contribution to the worship of the school. This ensures that pupils have a rich experience of worship.

Areas to improve

- Review systems of assessment in religious education (RE), possibly with the support of an externally produced syllabus such as that from the Diocese of Chester, in order to ensure that staff and pupils have an accurate understanding of progress in the subject.
- Extend the evaluation of collective worship to include responses from members of staff. This should enable the school to ensure that worship is creative, inclusive and accessible.

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

A strong commitment to its Christian ethos and the development of the whole child underpins the school's work. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of the school's core Christian values in their daily life. Year group focus values are discussed across the curriculum and in every element of pupils' life in school. Positive relationships across the school community are rooted in a Christ-centred approach and are a key element in the school's success. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is excellent. It is rooted in the Christian ethos and leads to a focus on nurturing every individual and on supporting families. Consequently, pupils display extremely high levels of self-esteem and awareness of others. All members of the community know they are valued and the ethos of Christian trust and respect is clearly evident. Pupils are extremely courteous, friendly and confident. They enjoy being members of the school and eco councils and being involved in the playground buddy system. They understand that these opportunities are an example of Christian service and leadership in the school community. Pupils are able to share concerns with their teachers knowing that these will be addressed in a caring way. A pupil said, 'We feel comfortable and safe in our school.' Parents comment that their children are happy and enthusiastic about learning and school life. They say that their children develop positive attitudes and talk about Christian values at home. Parents ascribe the support they receive to the distinctive Christian character of the school. The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities including Children in Need, Christian Aid and NSPCC. Pupils speak confidently of the importance of showing generosity and compassion to those in need. They understand that this is directly linked to the teaching of Jesus. Quality displays and Christian signs and symbols emphasise the school's distinctiveness and prompt the pupils' spiritual awareness extremely well. Pupils value the classroom reflection areas and are able to explain their importance as a spiritual resource and aid to prayer. The school's strong commitment to widening pupils' knowledge of non-Christian faiths contributes well to cultural knowledge and to positive attitudes. Pupils' attendance is excellent. The school's Christian care for and commitment to every child secure these positive outcomes.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The act of collective worship is central to the life of the school. It is inclusive and inspires pupils and staff. Excellent planning incorporates themes based on Christian values, the Bible, major Christian festivals and saints' days. As a result, pupils are constantly reminded of the ways in which they can lead a life rooted in Jesus and the Bible. The school places God at the centre of all it does and collective worship enables pupils of all ages to understand how the teaching of Jesus guides Christians. The pupils enjoy worship and respond well to questions which explore values and beliefs. They value times of silence and reflection which are an important part of the school's approach to prayer. The staff prayer group strengthens the spiritual life of the school and brings the whole school community before God. Pupils become familiar with Anglican practice through the use of traditional prayers, responses and a clear framework for worship. Pupils understand that worship plays a key part in the life of faith which the school and St. Matthew's church foster. A pupil said, 'We can show respect for God and say thank you for creation.' The parish priest plays an important part in the weekly pattern of worship. He is involved in leading worship and in the planning process. His lively and interesting contributions engage the pupils and ensure that they have a wide knowledge of Bible stories. The school worships in the parish church for major festivals and pupils represent the school on certain Sundays of the year. Parents support these occasions and enjoy being included in the wider worshipping community. They commented on the deeply moving Remembrance Day service which involved pupils from all year groups. The pupils contribute to special acts of worship through prayers, reading, music and drama. They have opportunities to plan and lead worship independently, particularly when they are promoting charitable events. As yet, not all pupils have a clear awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school has systems in place for pupils and parents to evaluate worship. However, staff are not involved in the evaluation process and this limits the opportunities for them to contribute their creative and focused ideas to the planning process.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The school has a strong commitment to developing all aspects of teaching and learning in RE. Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding practice. Standards are comparable to those in other subjects and reflect the good progress children make from starting points. Teachers are well-supported and the school has a range of resources to enhance teaching and learning. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of all learners, using varied activities which engage pupils and develop essential understanding and skills. Pupils are challenged to consider, investigate and reflect. They experience art, drama and extended writing activities. The subject is taught in a creative way with a strong emphasis on developing Christian values. There is a clear balance between learning about religion and opportunities for pupils to think about what their learning means to them. The RE reflection books demonstrate the ways in which pupils are asked to think more deeply. Pupils are enthusiastic and say that they enjoy their learning. Evidence of prior learning and thinking skills was demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson about

Advent. All pupils respond confidently when asked to express their opinions and when answering challenging questions. This was particularly evident in a Year 4 lesson when children were exploring worship and their understanding of the church. The collaborative discussion and the sharing of ideas and opinions make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. A pupil commented, 'I enjoy the stories we read and the interesting activities we do.' Guest speakers and visits to places of worship make an excellent contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of non-Christian faiths. The well-informed and committed senior leadership team monitors teaching and learning through observations, book scrutiny and cross-checking of standards. This ensures increasingly high expectations in teaching and learning. The school's assessment activities and recording of attainment and progress are under review. In most year groups, marking guides pupils and invites them to answer questions to extend their understanding.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear and strong vision for the school based on Christian principles and values. This includes taking every opportunity to promote the school's distinctive Christian character which guides the school community and enables everyone to do their best. Staff and governors are committed to fostering all aspects of pupils' development and well-being through Christian care and love. In doing so, they recognise the importance of creating a Christian ethos which supports effective learning and the promotion of equal opportunities. The headteacher believes the school 'opens the door for pupils to experience God'. The school knows its pupils and their families extremely well and meets individual needs through a culture of Christian nurturing and support. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian qualities of the school and speak highly of the respect with which they and their children are treated. The school and church work together on many events and this strengthens the school's involvement in the wider community. Governors have a clear understanding of their strategic role. They ask informed questions and provide a high level of challenge. They attend relevant training through the diocese in order to develop their knowledge and understanding. Action plans for RE and worship are included in the school's development planning and are reviewed by the church distinctiveness committee. These plans recognise the progress made and set challenging targets and strategies for further improvement. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. As a result, aspects of church school development are of the highest priority. The school's Christian ethos is a thread which draws together every element of leadership and management within the school. The school is outward looking and attends diocesan cluster meetings in order to share good practice with other schools. A strong partnership with the diocese through discussion and training has resulted in the highly effective development of all aspects of church school distinctiveness. These initiatives strengthen the school's resolve to provide the very best education for its pupils.

SIAMS report November 2016 St. Matthew's C of E Primary School Stretton WA4 4NT