

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Stretton Church of England Academy

Stretton Avenue, Willenhall, Coventry CV3 3AE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Coventry
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Coventry
Name of multi-academy trust / federation [delete as appropriate]	Coventry Multi Academy Trust
Date of inspection	27 January 2017
Date of last inspection	April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 139384
Headteacher / Executive Headteacher	Susan Samra / Sarah Bates
Inspector's name and number	Marianne Phillips 586

School context

This smaller than average primary school has 199 pupils on roll. It became an Academy in April 2013. It is one of the schools in the Coventry Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). 45% of pupils come from ethnic minority groups and 32% of these have English as an additional language, both above national average. 61% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding (PPF) and 34% of pupils are judged to have special educational needs (SEN), both groups well above national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stretton Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong faith witness by the school leaders, staff and governors drives the distinctiveness of this church school and unites all faith groups into a school family.
- The passionate commitment of all school leaders, staff and link governors is to 'grow' and inspire the pupils to achieve as children of God.
- The caring commitment displayed by all pupils towards their peers and adults is reflected through 'living out' the Christian values and personal qualities which underpin and guide daily life.
- The strong links with the church of St John the Divine and the diocese have supported and guided the school on its journey to become an outstanding church school.

Areas to improve

- Formalise the monitoring procedures undertaken by governors, pupils and parents, particularly in relation to worship, developing a range of tools and strategies to ensure quality and to further drive the distinctiveness of the school.
- Build on the existing responsibilities and contributions made by pupils in collective worship developing structures and strategies to support and encourage them as worship leaders.

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

Stretton Academy is an outstanding school where all individuals, making up its school family, are encouraged to 'Achieve, Believe, Succeed'. Christian and personal qualities underpin relationships and 'the work of the school forming the foundation for all we do'. These have been developed with the help of the pupils and they link closely with the positive behavioural strategies which result in exemplary behaviour from all pupils regardless of background or ability. The school proclaims its Christian status through symbols, such as the wide variety of crosses, areas of reflection in each classroom and the peace garden, where the 'Litany of Reconciliation' is displayed. This records, in the pupils' words, their commitment to 'being at peace and building bridges with each other and the world'. It has been developed from their involvement with the 'Cross of Nails' initiative. Pupils of all faiths, backgrounds and abilities, when questioned, are very positive about their learning, the teachers and adults who support them and the respect for their friends and peers. All pupils are encouraged to have 'a voice' and to be 'Stretton ambassadors for their classes and the school'. As pupils questioned shared, 'Christian values are not just for Christians...they are for everyone and help us to live in peace and reconciliation'. Also, 'they help us to grow, learn and be a better person...with so much war in the world we need to make friends with others from different faiths and to feel close to God'. They feel safe and protected and respond well to the challenges to earn 'golden tokens' to be 'lunchtime VIPs', 'attendance champions' or just to make 'good choices to earn raffle tickets'. They meet regularly with school leaders to share their views and have 'a voice' in the decisions that are made. These embedded practices encourage the children to own, understand and 'live out' the values daily. As a result, there is a sense of harmony and all pupils, regardless of faith and individual need, thrive. Attendance is 96% which meets national standards. The headteacher is committed to driving the 'values' structure and the distinctiveness of the school. Her own personal faith and her very close partnership with the executive headteacher (EHT) and the MAT guides the spiritual character of the school, creating a team, united in their purpose. Parents are very positive about the links with the church and appreciate the clear focus on Christian values and religious education (RE). They share, 'our children come from a very diverse community. The inclusive nature of the school and the teaching of RE helps our children to understand and respect other faiths and backgrounds.' RE is very popular and virtually all pupils say they enjoy the subject. Visitors and visits enrich the curriculum as part of the pupils' 'core entitlement to enjoy life in all its fullness' and to extend their understanding of a range of religions. There are many clubs on offer weekly. One example is the 'divine club' run by the vicar and ministry team from St John the Divine and the learning mentor from the school. Prayer and reflection are encouraged in the club and through daily worship. Pupils are being taught to pray and use a range of strategies such as 'prayer hands' to focus and 'talk to God'.

Children enter the school displaying skills that are well below national expectations. There is a large team of teaching assistants that work in partnership with teachers to support the high percentage of pupils eligible for extra funding from the government. These vulnerable youngsters, those judged to have SEN and any individuals who are displaying additional needs are assessed and monitored by specialists to ensure the support is appropriate and effective. The 'Nest' is an example where pupils with extreme needs can spend time in a 'family setting' with 'nurture assistants' to build confidence and experience success in settings they might find challenging. Parents praised the way, 'the school focuses on individual need but they don't single out individuals to make them feel different...they encourage and care'. The difference the targeted interventions and quality teaching and learning experiences make is evidenced by the consistent improvement of pupils, regardless of background or ability. The school has been on an 'incredible journey' initially having been judged as 'inadequate' to then be judged as 'outstanding in 2015'. The school leaders are certain that, 'the core Christian values underpinned every decision made and guided them in the most challenging times on the journey'. Current attainment data evidences that the high standards have been sustained and the experiences offered by the school curriculum provide wide ranging skills enriching the 'whole child'. So pupils leave the school displaying appropriate levels of attainment and skills, meeting or exceeding national standards, to help them as young citizens of the future. In the words of one child, 'it is important we belong to a church school where every faith is appreciated. We are taught values and challenged to learn...it helps us understand the world and to teach our parents what we have learned'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The spiritually enriched act of worship, encourages a sense of 'awe and wonder' through visual, musical and spoken experiences. This centrality of worship reflects the importance leaders place on the whole school community coming together to praise God. Three lighted candles, representing the Trinity open the worship and all pupils and staff sing enthusiastically praising God. The headteacher encourages spontaneous prayer from pupils and develops a sense of fun through the activities shared. 'Perseverance' underpins the efforts of staff and pupils to 'keep going' during the challenges set. As a result, the act of worship engages all staff and pupils present. Beautiful singing and signing, individual pupil prayers, biblical stories, personal witness and times to reflect and pray, make worship experiences memorable and inspirationally uplifting. Pupils confirm how important prayer is to them. This is evidenced by the wide range of prayers displayed in the hall and around the school. School leaders are considering

ways to retain these as evidence of the spiritual journey made by the pupils from the time they enter school to the time they leave. Pupils engage fully with worship and have on-going involvement in a range of settings in school and in church. The school plans to develop their leadership roles by appointing some of them as 'worship leaders' to plan and deliver worship to further drive the school's distinctiveness. There are regular visits from the vicar of St John the Divine and the family link worker who is part of the ministry team. They work closely with the RE leader and learning mentor building very close links between the school and church. Parents are encouraged to walk and attend church with their children to celebrate Harvest, Christmas, Easter and other aspects of the Christian calendar. There is a rota for classes to attend services fortnightly, where they can participate in the Eucharist. This is, one of the experiences, helping them to develop an understanding of the Trinity. Strong links also have been built between the school and the diocese through the chaplaincy support provided during the drive to improve. The EHT and the diocesan minister have worked together closely to develop a plan for worship to help pupils understand concepts such as the Trinity and The Lord's Prayer. The vicar leads fortnightly worship in the church where participation in the Eucharist also helps pupils understand the importance of this act as part of the worship experiences. As a result, pupils are growing in knowledge and understanding of Jesus, the Trinity and of Anglican tradition. Foundation governors regularly meet with pupils to gather their views about worship and RE as part of their role. Ways to formalise the monitoring undertaken by governors and other stakeholders is a priority for school leaders. The forest school is another example of a creative way the school supports the spiritual development pupils. It encourages pupils to view the world as God's creation and to appreciate these wonders through reflection.

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

There is a strong working partnership between the EHT and the headteacher which has strengthened through their changing roles over the past 5 years. They are united in their purpose to drive the Christian distinctiveness of this church school. In their daily interactions with others they affirm the Christian and personal qualities values which underpin the life and relationships of the school. Their loving care and commitment builds a sense of family and provides nurturing care, which encourages all. Parents and pupils confirm the difference teachers make in their lives, saying, 'Our children want to make their teachers proud.' Leaders know their school and its strengths. They have, through clear focus effectively transformed the school since they were appointed. They confirm they have raised standards and driven improvement through the focus on Christian values as a guide for the decisions made and the actions taken. They set high expectations for all pupils regardless of faith, background or ability. The quality of teaching and learning has been improved through the appointment of key skilled staff and the introduction of systems which build consistency. Approaches to behaviour, attendance and marking are three areas which reflect this. Self-evaluation is used effectively to target support. Consequently, standards of achievement reflect this. They are a 'listening school' and respect the opinions of all stakeholders. Where appropriate, their views are acted on, to shape decisions. Parents are offered workshops to engage them as partners in their child's learning journey from the time they enter school. This is particularly true in Early Years where the focus on phonics has been one of the priorities. Governors monitor the effectiveness of the school through their meetings and take their link roles very seriously. Links with the church are strong, strengthened through the regular services and visits shared. The vicar as well as leading worship is involved with aspects of RE. As a result, RE is led and taught effectively and standards in the subject are in line with other core subjects. The subject follows diocesan guidance and statutory requirements. The close links between RE and worship provide a strong foundation for pupils helping to shape their daily lives. The school is well supported by the MAT, the diocese and the local authority to drive standards and Christian distinctiveness. It provides professional development and training to encourage all staff as future leaders. The development points from the previous inspection have been met. The school holds a high status within the community and it is making a difference to the lives of the children and families it serves.

SIAMS report January 2017 Stretton CE Academy Willenhall Coventry CV3 3AE