

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Loys Church of England Primary Academy

Milthorpe Weedon Lois Towcester NN12 8PP

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Peterborough
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	1 September 2013
Name of multi-academy trust	South Northamptonshire Church of England Multi Academy Trust
Date of inspection	17 October 2017
Date of last inspection	18 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 140102
Executive Headteacher	Robert Hazelgrove
Inspector's name and number	Annette Ray 888

Context

St Loys Church of England Primary Academy is a popular small school in a rural location. The school converted to academy status on 1 September 2013 and is part of the South Northamptonshire Church of England Multi Academy Trust. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those attracting government funding for disadvantaged pupils is below average. The headteacher has been in post for 17 years. From 1 September 2017 the school has opened a preschool provision and now admits pupils from 2 to 11 years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Loys Church of England school are outstanding

- Inspirational religious education (RE) teaching is given a high priority and encourages learners to apply their learning to their own reflections of meaning and purpose.
- There is a deep and mutually beneficial relationship between the school and the parish placing both at the heart of the community.
- The strong leadership ensures school's Christian character has a high profile and shapes the outstanding behaviour, achievement and relationships within the school community.

Areas to improve

- Enhance pupils' understanding of the elements of collective worship by providing more opportunities for them to plan and lead collective worship.
- Further enrich the teaching of RE, for example through the implementation of the Understanding Christianity scheme and develop ways in which the current good practice can be shared more widely.

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

Christian values are deeply embedded in the life of this school. Woven around the school's name the values are described by pupils as 'all the things Jesus would want us to show'. The high profile of the Christian character, which supports the school's approach to all aspects of life, is well supported by parents. They talk about the way the school is inclusive of all and how the children are shown how they might live with Jesus as an example. The school's values of respect and trust create an inclusive atmosphere which directly contributes to high standards academically and attendance which is above national averages. Relationships are of the highest standard and directly related to the school's values. The mutual respect and care displayed by all members of the school support this. The school has a strong and long standing relationship with an orphanage in India which it has directly sponsored for a number of years. This not only helps to develop the understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith but also builds the pupils' understanding and respect for diverse communities. One child spoke about wanting to record aspects of school life, such as worship, and send this to the orphanage so they could share experiences and become more closely linked. This also links to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of the pupils which is strong and well supported through a range of curriculum opportunities. The exciting RE curriculum makes a very significant contribution to the Christian character of the school, engaging and challenging learners. The expert way it is woven through the curriculum also supports the SMSC development of the learners.

Parents value the way the school, through its Christian teaching, develops pupils' resilience. This is evidenced in the way pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education becoming confident in their ability to express thoughts and views, but also in their spiritual development. Parents comment how children bring the teaching from school home, talking about kindness and forgiveness through the example of Jesus.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The whole school community places a great value on the contribution that collective worship makes to its life and the spiritual development of all. Pupils talk confidently about the impact worship makes on their lives. Pupils come to understand the Christian basis of the school's values because worship is well planned, inspirational and engaging for all. There is a strong focus on biblical teaching and the life of Jesus Christ. Worship often begins with a school developed liturgy, the lighting of a candle and sharing of the peace. This creates a feeling that this is a special time for all involved including parents who are regularly invited. Pupils contribute to the services, acting out roles and contributing spontaneous and planned prayers. However as yet they do not often lead full acts of worship. Pupils gain a good understanding of the distinctive features of Anglican worship and key times in the church year because they celebrate key festivals in the local church. Through these experiences and careful planning involving the local clergy, they have a well-developed understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Aspirational worship themes often inspire pupils to work in the service of others. An impressive range of activities has taken place in school often led by the children's own concerns. These range from producing a stole to be worn by the parish priest and a cloth for an altar in the local church, to a toilet twinning project and collecting for recent hurricane victims. Through these experiences the children understand how the Christian faith can be demonstrated and make a difference to their own lives and to the lives of others. For example, one child commented about how through worship he has learnt about 'ways we share God's love around'. Prayer and reflection are key elements in worship and at other times during the school day. Learners confidently contribute spontaneous prayers to worship. Pupils regularly use the prayer spaces and class prayer books. The prayers written in the class books are shared at local church services linking the parishioners and the school.

Monitoring and evaluation of worship is strong and pupil voice often leads this. Pupils talk confidently about recent changes made to the school liturgy. They are very insightful when discussing a change in the wording to better reflect the school ethos. The strong focus on Jesus Christ helps learners to understand his central role in the Christian faith. Pupils and adults appreciate the wide-ranging, thought-provoking and rich experience they have of worship due to the variety of leadership and carefully planned themes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The school's dynamic, creative and Bible-linked curriculum inspires all in the school. Many of the school units skilfully use biblical text alongside other works of literature to inspire, engage and challenge learners. For example, combining with English lessons, the use of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by CS Lewis and the book of Isaiah develop Year 5 and 6 children's understanding of prophecy. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. The use of 'big questions' and teachers' skilful questioning techniques develop higher level thinking skills across all age groups. As a result children develop their own ideas and reflections about beliefs and issues of meaning. They also come to understand the Christian teaching about the school's values and their relevance to their own lives. For example when looking at one of the miracles of Jesus, a Year 1 and 2 class was

asked to link the message to the school's value of trust. Similarly the high profile of RE supports the SMSC development of all pupils and enhances their ability to make links between belief and values systems of a range of faiths. The subject is expertly led. The rigorous and yet supportive monitoring has resulted in effective use of assessments to help learners identify how to improve their work. This has led to pupils' attainment being at least in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus but also allows pupils to make often better than expected progress from their starting points. This leadership also has the vision to realise further improvement and the ambition to support this through outreach work with other schools and the diocese. The school has recently attended 'Understanding Christianity' training and has made plans to further enhance the curriculum to reflect this.

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

The executive headteacher is passionate about how the school strives to offer the best education and life experiences for all, as part of a Christian message that life should be lived to the full. He is supported in this by the whole school community. He describes the school as a community where all actions are based upon mutual respect guided by the Bible. This is supported by members of the school community who speak with passion about the way the Christian values are lived and promoted in this school. Parents speak warmly about their inclusion in the life of the school and the atmosphere of mutual respect; 'living by Jesus's example' is how one parent described the school. The school governors support senior leaders and are passionate about ensuring that the distinctiveness remains strong. They visit the school regularly to ensure the self-evaluation is effective and leads to further improvements. The school is part of a local multi-academy trust which provides support through joint training for staff and support for subject leaders. This has resulted in the sharing of good practice across the schools and the wider sharing of the school's innovative curriculum. Leaders ensure the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. They give high priority to the leadership of both areas providing training resources and support that ensures outstanding practice. The governors' strategic plan identifies opportunities for the development of governors and staff as leaders in church schools by making good use of the support provided through the diocese. The relationship between the school and the parish is mutually supportive. The parish cares about the school and supports it in many ways. The school provides facilities for the church and the wider village community. Events held in school are well attended such as a recent community café where the children shared bread and soup with members of the village. These and other activities support the SMSC development of the learners and contribute to their understanding of being part of the community. The school has recently developed the role of guardians who are members of the community able to bring a variety of skills to the school and provide a forum for pupils and adults to discuss aspects of the school. This group has made a positive contribution to the school's self-evaluation. Good progress has been made since the last inspection on the areas identified for development.

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