

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dawley Church of England Primary Academy

Doseley Road North Dawley Telford TF4 3AL

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Diocese | Lichfield |
| Previous SIAS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Telford & Wrekin |
| Name of multi-school trust | Church of England Central Education Trust |
| Date of inspection | 2 March 2012 |
| Date of last inspection | 9 March 2017 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Aided 142785 |
| Headteacher | Nicholas Andrews |
| Inspector's name and number | Reverend Alison M. Morris 759 |

School context

Dawley Church of England Primary Academy is a smaller than average primary school. There are 209 pupils on roll aged from 3-11 years. It serves the area of Dawley and the surrounding area of Telford which has high levels of deprivation. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disability is above the national average, as is the percentage of disadvantaged pupils. The most recent Ofsted inspection in December 2015 judged the school as 'requiring improvement'. The headteacher was appointed in February 2016. The school converted to an academy under the Church of England Central Education multi academy trust in May 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dawley Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are good

- Committed leadership by the headteacher is effectively promoting the distinctive Christian vision and identity which is based on Christian values.
- Effective pastoral care and intervention strategies are overcoming barriers to learning, so that pupils can realise their potential within a safe and stimulating Christian community.
- Embedded Christian values are seen particularly in the behaviour of the pupils and their relationships with peers and staff.

Areas to improve

- Broaden the experience and understanding by pupils of the different lifestyles and traditions that exist within the multi faith communities in this country.
- Building upon established practice embed even further the new religious education (RE) scheme of work interwoven with the 'Understanding Christianity' project to raise progress and attainment within the RE subject area.
- Ensure that governors continue the critical self-evaluation process through appropriate training and succession planning, so that monitoring of church school development remains highly effective during the transition to the new local governing body.

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

Through determination and commitment by senior leaders and governors the Christian distinctiveness, character and ethos are now immediately apparent. They are being successfully embedded into all aspects of this happy and caring Christian community. All stakeholders have worked together to identify a shared vision and agree a set of core Christian values. These explicit values, which are rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, have a significant impact upon pupils' lives. They are embodied in the motto, 'Enriching Learning, Enriching Life' which, combined with the new school logo of God's caring hands, emphasises the acceptance of God and that all pupils are valued as unique children of God. The newly formed Academy Fellowship Council, with its set of four core values with an expressed biblical basis, contributes substantially to the Christian ethos. Pupils benefit from a safe and nurturing environment where personal and inclusive learning is developing and where pupils have high expectations. Pupils' progress is improving, but the school acknowledges that attainment still needs to improve. The effective identification of pupils who may be underachieving is leading to the use of more focussed intervention strategies such as the use of the Forest School curriculum. This is complemented with the effective use of pupil passports which record pupils' needs. Purposeful pastoral care and welfare provision strongly contribute to successful intervention. Pupils are provided with activities to take responsibility and to make independent choices as illustrated in the Leadership Log. They are encouraged to think about others and to participate in charitable work such as the Prince's Trust. The 'Dawley Mindset' is impacting positively upon pupils' attitudes. For example one pupil said, 'it is about 'taking risks....not giving up'. As a result, improvements in behaviour and attitudes to learning are clearly evident. Pupils are polite and respectful. They are keen to attend school, to do well and take pride in their work and school. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development is nourished through Christian values and is partly promoted in RE as well as embedded in the school's ethos. Some older pupils understand what it means to be a pupil at a church school and make the link to Christian teaching in the Bible. RE provides some ways for pupils to understand the beliefs, practices and value systems of other faiths that are studied such as Islam. However, creating planned opportunities to meet people of other faiths is an important next step. Enthusiastic and committed staff model core Christian values in their relationships. This enhances pupils' learning. Classrooms have Christian symbols and reflection areas which, when used, make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Focused and orderly displays, plus artefacts in the foyer visually express the school's Christian distinctiveness and encourage discussion. As a result, a peaceful and purposeful atmosphere is promoting a learning environment which has the capacity to raise attainment for all pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily worship is distinctively Christian and evokes a sense of gathering with a strong focus on the person of Jesus Christ. It is supported with biblical material and a strong emphasis on the Trinity. The daily act of worship is important in the life of the school and forms the main element of the school Christian's distinctiveness. Worship is inclusive, spiritual, accessible and reverent in its delivery. This helps pupils to understand the love of God, reflect on their everyday lives and beliefs and reinforces the impact of Christian values. Worship, through its moral messages, influences the pupils' actions and behaviour, creating a good learning environment. Pupils are keen to sing and pray within this distinctive spiritual atmosphere. This makes a good contribution to spiritual development through reinforcing Christian values. During worship, a range of experiences such as prayer, silence and music energise and stimulate pupils' attention. Visual images and symbols are also used well to encourage awe and wonder and to encourage spirituality. Quiet times are built into worship to allow for pupils to be still and to reflect in an atmosphere of peace. Attitudes to worship are very good because meaningful experiences, which are appropriate and significant to pupils' needs, age, development and interests, capture their attention. Worship is well planned using Christian values and beliefs supplemented with additional themes from biblical material and which follow most of the Christian festivals. Some purposeful pupil involvement takes place, but the school is aware of the need to develop this further. Prayer is an important part of school life. Prayer spaces and reflection areas are appropriately used around the school and encourage pupils' personal spirituality. Pupils understand that prayer has a purpose and is important in the life of a worshipping community. They also use other prayers at lunchtime and at the end of the day, including the Lord's prayer. Key Christian festivals such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas are always celebrated in Holy Trinity church, which reinforces the link between the church and school. Additional activities such as Messy Church and Open the Book enhance worship experiences in both school and church. Many Anglican traditions and practices are used in worship but knowledge of Christian diversity across the Anglican Communion is a next step for development. Pupils also visit Lichfield Cathedral, which fosters pupils' understanding of their relationship within the diocese. Evaluating the impact of collective worship on pupils to inform future planning is being developed, but needs to be further embedded so that high quality worship can be ensured. This evaluation needs to be more rigorous and consistently applied by staff and governors. Governors do correctly identify this area for development and are eager to ensure that the quality of worship offered remains substantial, engaging and relevant to pupils' lives and their personal spiritual development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The development of the RE is evolving with improved staff resourcing which is beginning to show effective practice in the classroom. The school acknowledges that a key priority is to continue integrating the delivery of the RE curriculum with the new Telford & Wrekin agreed syllabus and the 'Understanding Christianity' project. This is enabling effective learning with a strong focus on Christian values and beliefs, whilst also developing an understanding of other faiths including Sikhism. It is also helping to provide some positive and affirming experience within the classroom. As a result, RE is showing some impact on pupils SMSC development and the school's Christian character. Methods of teaching and learning are varied, age appropriate and effective, enabling pupils to contribute enthusiastically in lessons. Some lesson strategies help pupils to explore ideas and to learn about and learn from RE. Creative use of costumes and artefacts such as Palm Crosses helps to focus pupils' attention on the meaning of Palm Sunday. Some pupils show the ability to question and reflect on the beliefs of world faiths, including Christianity. For example, an effective lesson on the Stations of the Cross showed how pupils discussed in groups about who was responsible for Jesus's death. One pupil said, 'Jesus wanted to share the word of God and teach us about him.' Pupils also respond eagerly to the imaginative planned lessons. For example, pupils could reflect sensitively on the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus at the Last Supper. Pupils enjoy RE and feel energised and recognise its influence on their own lives. Parents are also keen to report on their child's enthusiasm for RE and for their growing knowledge and understanding of religious diversity. Giving pupils planned opportunities to meet people of faith is an important next step. The joint subject leadership of RE shows the potential of a vision that directly support the school's aims. Some areas for development are being identified so that standards in both teaching and learning can be raised. Clear expectations for pupils' learning are also being developed, but it is too early to see their impact. Statutory requirements for RE are met. There is now some effective assessment through monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders. For example, books are scrutinised and monitoring of standards are developing. However, a more formal and robust monitoring schedule of work in RE by staff and governors is important for future development. A significant development from the last inspection is that a gifted and talented register for RE has been established successfully to motivate pupils' aspirations and higher attainment.

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

A clear and consistent vision by the headteacher, combined with strong strategic direction from governance has contributed significantly to improvements within the school. Commitment and resilience have brought stability to the vision and staffing of this school. Governors and school leaders have worked with energy to develop an explicit Christian vision with a revised mission statement that is based on distinctive Christian values. As a result, the Christian identity of this academy is emerging along with a strong sense of Christian belonging. The 'Dawley Mindset' and entitlement is permeating and transforming the community through building pupils' confidence, self-esteem and self-belief. The school acknowledges that this will take time to embed fully. However, the appointment of new staff has also brought clear direction to the daily running of this school. This has had a positive impact upon how the vision is promoted and how Christian values are now being lived out in the community. Improved relationships between the school and the local community are showing how Christian values can galvanise a community and raise self-esteem across generations. This is enhancing pupils' learning and impacting positively upon the links between home and school. Parents feel welcomed, valued and part of the Christian family. They feel confident about the school and know their children are happy in their learning. Parents value the church link and are appreciative of the Christian distinctiveness. They say that the school is very supportive of their requests. Issues are dealt with quickly and efficiently. The chair and governors are particularly supportive of the strategic drive to improve academic progress and have clear priorities. Accurate self-evaluation on the school's progress and reflection by experienced and skilled governors impacts well upon the strategic direction. The Raising Improvement Plan represents a significant step forward in school improvement. It shows how leaders and governors plan strategically, and have an honest and challenging view of the future needs of this school. However, there is a need to ensure continuity of effective self-evaluation during the transition of governance to the local governing body. Careful succession planning and appropriate training will enable this to take place. Effective partnerships exist with the diocese, multi-agencies and the wider community which helps to meet pupils' needs. Substantial links with Holy Trinity Church and parish clergy have contributed significantly towards the church school development. The ongoing work of the governors makes a distinctive Christian difference, but a more formal and robust monitoring schedule for this and collective worship is the key for future development. Also, a greater understanding of Anglicanism needs to be developed further. Pupils are starting to think globally and to be culturally aware of their wider responsibilities within a multi-faith and multi-cultural society. The school acknowledges that a link with a different cultural area will provide activities for pupils to encounter the lifestyles of different faiths. Current emerging practice and strategies include a visit to the Mosque and topic work on British Values focussing attention on attitudes and respect of those members of our society with different faiths and beliefs.