

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Augustine's VA Junior School

Palmerston Road
Peterborough
PE2 9DH

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Ely
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Peterborough
Date of inspection	16 March 2017
Date of last inspection	16 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VA Junior 110853
Headteacher	Nicola Pierce
Inspector's name and number	Pat George 845

School context

St. Augustine's is a 235 pupil Junior school in the centre of Peterborough. The headteacher has been in post since October 2015. The school context has changed since the last inspection with a rising number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds; currently 49% have English as an additional language. There is a high proportion of boys across the school, with girls only 36% of the current Year 6. The school has higher than national percentages of vulnerable pupils, 20% SEND and 49% eligible for pupil premium. The majority of pupils join the school in year 3 from a non-denominational infant school.

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

- Christian values and the vision are embedded in the daily life of the school. This supports the development of pupils' personal spirituality and enables the school to be an inclusive, supportive and welcoming Christian community whilst showing sensitivity to children and families from other cultures and faiths. This in turn has a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils
- Collective worship is an integral part of school day. It supports pupils to relate biblical material and Christian teaching to their daily lives and the school core values.
- Leadership, including governors, has a strong commitment to the vision and Christian values and therefore a significant impact on school improvement.

Areas to improve

- To develop the partnership with the church so that worship in school and church is a shared experience, planned and led by clergy, adults from other Christian denominations, staff and pupils.
- To continue to develop pupil understanding of the Trinity as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit so that they can more fully understand and articulate the role of the Trinity in worship.
- To continue to enhance and develop pupil spirituality through ongoing development of prayer/spiritual spaces inside and outside so pupils have the same opportunities throughout different times of the day to be calm, reflect and to pray in a special place if they wish.

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

The school vision is based on the wisdom of God. This is interpreted for pupils and the wider community as 'Wisdom, Strive, Challenge and Enjoy'. There is a new school vision prayer around these key words. The whole school community was involved in developing the values. These are prominent on the website and in the weekly newsletter to parents. The ten school core values which include forgiveness, agape (love), justice and peace are displayed around the school with symbols developed by the incumbent to support pupil understanding of each value. Pupils can explain the symbols. Consequently, the Christian values are explicit and deeply embedded in the daily life of the school and have a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils can relate forgiveness to the parable of the prodigal son and to the Easter story. The school has robust systems in place to meet the needs of individuals, including more vulnerable pupils and families. The inclusive ethos enables not just academic but social and emotional needs to be met. This together with their enjoyment of learning and school life ensures attendance is above national expectations. Vulnerable groups are, in most cases, making progress in line with their peers. Attainment this year is expected to rise. Year 3 pupils are well supported to develop their knowledge and understanding of the daily life of a church school.

Pupils feel their school is special because it's not just a place to learn, they have worship and talk to God. They are very clear that bullying does not happen and that they all help and support each other and they enjoy being a buddy to new children. Parents are very positive about the school and speak of it as caring and nurturing. They spoke about the difference they can see in their children at home as well as school as they now go to a church school and appreciate the impact the values have on their children's attitudes. One parent spoke of her child having a candle at home to help them when they need to be calm, another of her child explaining, "it's worship not assembly". They feel welcome to worship and story cafes and parents from different ethnic groups contribute to special events in school for example through food. Parents feel their children absorb and apply what they learn about values and see the school's changing multi-cultural community as a positive.

Values and worship themes are linked to the broader curriculum, supporting pupils to live out the values. They are articulate about the values and how they influence their behaviour, both inside and outside of school. They explain how the school council and praise pals contribute to school life in different ways and that the eco group is about looking after God's world. They appreciate the stars of the week certificates for showing values and doing your best. Pupils are confident about Christianity as a worldwide faith, speaking of how Christians in India, the Philippines and Ethiopia celebrate Christmas. The school has good links with a school in Gambia, strengthened through a pen pal system and celebrated through display.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship plays a major role in the life of the school and the whole community value its contribution to their community. Planning is done by the senior leadership team and themes are linked to the values, Bible stories and the church year. The 'wonder wall' in the hall supports the themes and can link to RE through a big question. Currently these are "What do I know about Lent?" and "How could we plan to teach the world about God?" Worship is led by a variety of adults in school and occasionally by other adults from different Christian denominations and the incumbent. Praise pals lead worship but opportunities for them to plan independently are not yet well established. Governors are regular visitors to worship and consequently have a good understanding of worship in school. The core values are reinforced through worship and pupils have opportunities to respond through talking partners and questions. They can discuss the Bible stories from worship, "Noah is about courage, love and hope, the crucifixion is about self-sacrifice". Pupils feel worship helps them understand what is important and how to behave. Worship makes their school a praying school. Their spirituality is enhanced by music, prayer and pictures as well as focus objects. Worship follows the Anglican gather, engage, respond, send format. Children light the candle, they can explain its significance in worship. They lead the liturgical greeting and the sending by passing the peace. Consequently, worship has a lasting impact and parents speak of their children talking about worship at home. Pupils visit the church for worship, however they are uncertain about the role of the incumbent in this. Therefore, the incumbent leading regular worship for the children has been identified as a priority.

Pupils value prayer and reflection and have a good understanding of reasons to pray, a letter from your heart to God, saying sorry, asking for help and forgiveness. They speak of how prayer spaces enable them to feel closer to God, to be calm and quiet. They write and share their own prayers in worship, the prayer tree and as part of a published book of prayers. Pupils have a good understanding of the Trinity as a three, God the father, Jesus the son and the Holy Spirit. However, the understanding of the place of the Trinity in worship is less well developed. They spoke of God being everywhere and up above, Jesus guides and is the light and the Holy Spirit welcomes you into God's world and is there when you pray as a warmth. Children can use analogies to explain the Trinity. Worship is

well led and monitoring takes place. Governors and staff and pupils via the praise pals provide feedback, however, the system for evaluating the impact of this on school development is underdeveloped.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils are enthusiastic about religious education (RE) and clearly enjoy lessons. They speak of sharing their personal experiences of religion and things they learn. One pupil commented that as a Hindu she didn't know anything about Christianity until she came to this school.

School uses the Peterborough agreed syllabus and interprets this in its planning. RE teaching is based on key big questions. An example in Year 5 and 6 is "Is there a God?" This is supported by themed questions in lessons, an example in a year 3 and 4 lesson was "Is justice the same as forgiveness?" Pupils learn about religion and from religion and have opportunities to link this to the world around them and their daily lives. Pupils are given time to reflect, answer deep questions and share their views and thinking. The input of RE into the distinctively Christian character of the school and its impact on SMSC is clearly evidenced by pupils. They can discuss similarities between different religions, for example holy books. School welcomes and effectively supports its pupils from other faiths and they make a rich contribution to RE. Pupils can make links between RE, Bible stories and collective worship. The school recently took part in an inter-faith week at Peterborough Cathedral. The school utilises the resource of different faiths' places of worship in the local area.

RE teaching is consistently good. The enthusiasm and knowledge of the RE subject leader has a positive impact on the status and quality of RE including ongoing development of its links to other curriculum areas and worship. The subject leader monitors regularly through lesson observations and drop-ins and feedback to governors. All staff have had internal training and additional professional development from the diocese. Standards in RE are broadly in line with national with the percentage of above expectations improving for each year group. Evidence from lesson observations and work scrutiny shows pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Vulnerable groups of pupils make progress commensurate with their peers. Assessment in RE is well established and is part of the school tracking system. Areas under development include opportunities for discussion and explanation and the impact was clear in lessons. Marking in RE is mainly comments with some examples of pupil response which are beginning to impact positively on learning. Two teaching assistants have developed faith books with the Year 5 and 6 pupils to provide them with opportunities to share faith and ideas. This extends their understanding both of Anglican practice, for example the stations of the cross, and different religions as well as enabling them to think about what's important for them by linking RE, worship and values. Pupils' ability to make links between RE and values gives them a good understanding of and respect for diversity within their school and the wider community.

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

The strong vision for the school is shared by all stakeholders, all of whom uphold the Christian values and articulate the Christian ethos. This ensures that pupil SMSC is a priority and the impact across the school is evident in relationships. Self-evaluation as a church school is in place and there is section for church school distinctiveness in the school improvement plan. The Christian character committee leads on the strategic development of the school as a church school. From the self-evaluation came an action plan covering leadership, collective worship, RE and Christian character. There is a review cycle in place. Induction of new governors includes Christian character.

The governing body spoke of the spirit of the school as a major factor in the school's clear focus on the whole child. They feel that it is the Christian values that encourage the behaviour and respect for others in school, developing confidence in individuals which has a positive influence on standards, attitudes to learning and attendance. They value the school's willingness to explore and develop what it means to be a church school. Governors are committed to staff development to enhance Christian distinctiveness including sharing training. The Christian character committee monitors the distinctive Christian character. However, pupils are not yet a part of this. The focus of the incumbent in the last year has been on supporting adults to deepen their understanding of Christian faith and in developing the vision and values.

Leaders feel that worship allows children to grow and develop their own ideas. School has effective links with other church schools and the diocese and supports diocesan training and professional development. Strong leadership has ensured the areas of development from the last inspection have been met and that the school has an ongoing vision for its development as a church school.