

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address	Old Church Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 0BE		
Date of inspection	23 May 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Birmingham	URN	134476

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

St Peter's is a primary school with 452 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Many pupils speak English as an additional language and 38 different first languages are spoken. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is just below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school converted from VC to VA status in 2017. At the start of this academic year the school significantly expanded its nursery provision.

The school's Christian vision

At St Peter's we aim to create a Christian community whereby we live in harmony before God and provide a warm, safe and caring environment in which to learn and grow. Our vision is based on 1 Peter 3 verse 8: 'Finally all of you be like minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.'

Key findings

- The links with St Peter's Church are very strong and enable pupils and staff to regularly worship in a setting that inspires and supports their spiritual growth.
- The school's shared Christian values and motto have been in place for many years. Their influence has been strengthened recently, by the vision statement, with its biblical foundation, that effectively shapes relationships and underpins the daily life of the school.
- There is a real sense of community, despite the school's split site structure, that is built on mutual care, understanding and respect for the rich blend of faiths, cultures and backgrounds that are united as a 'faith family'.
- All leaders are committed to driving the school's Christian foundation explicitly and passionately through their active support of each individual child and family and their Christian compassion and care. Structures, such as the link roles of governors are in place to support school improvement, but regular contact with staff and pupils to gather information in their monitoring role is limited.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils across the school reflect the teachings of Jesus through their desire to care for others, their charitable giving and their enthusiasm to be fully involved in the life of the school, particularly in worship. The ethos committee has begun to strengthen this aspect of school life.

Areas for development

- Governors to engage in gathering first hand information from regular, timetabled visits to determine the effectiveness of the school's vision and values to further drive the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- Plan and facilitate greater pupil involvement in worship harnessing their desire to lead and support the spiritual life of the school, helping to develop their understanding of the school's vision and values.
- Embed the recently introduced approaches for planning, delivering and assessing RE to build staff confidence and consistency and to sustain the high quality provision underpinning the school's vision.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The school's motto, 'Through the teachings of God we Love Others Value Everyone' was introduced many years ago. It, together with the agreed Christian values of 'Respect, Honesty, Forgiveness and Love of God and one another', have provided clear guidance for living together as a school family. The vision statement, based on 1 Peter 3 verse 8, although recently introduced, further strengthens and shapes relationships ensuring they are, 'loving sympathetic, compassionate and caring'. Consequently, there is a real sense of community built on mutual care, understanding and respect, mirroring its biblical foundation. A child friendly version of the vision, displayed around the school, effectively reminds all to live in harmony, following Jesus' example. As a result, pupils strongly feel the school is helping them to grow as caring young citizens. The ethos committee spoke enthusiastically about talking to children in the reception classes. 'We talked about our Christian values and helped them understand how they help us work and play together.' They would like to do more mentoring of their younger peers. 'When we do something to help our school we feel we are an important part of it.' This responsible attitude of all pupils is reflected in their excellent standards of behaviour. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and are enthusiastic about their learning. Consequently, attendance is high.

The headteacher and her leadership team provide strong spiritual direction for the school. They ensure pupils' needs are understood and nurtured as befits unique children of God. With a focus on 'the whole child' leaders live out their vision, displaying passionate commitment to the families they serve. They are effectively supported by staff who are empowered to share this passion. Training builds skills and expertise and an understanding of being part of a church school. Partnerships with other schools, the diocese and the local authority are strong and supportive. Systems, policies and structures reflect the school's Christian vision guiding individual choices. Expectations set are consistently high and inclusive. As a result, all children are encouraged to aspire, grow and flourish. For example, the 'Mike Lloyd Award' is celebrated annually. Two pupils receive the award for consistently living out the vision and values in their contribution to school life.

The headteacher works closely with parents and the community creating an atmosphere where diversity and difference are celebrated. She has introduced a 'parents' forum' and a range of strategies to ensure communication is effective and supportive. The school family is richly diverse drawing from a wide range of cultures and faiths. The majority of pupils enter the school displaying skills below national expectations, so at the start of this academic year the school significantly expanded its nursery provision. From these low starting points, parents feel, their children's learning journey is well supported. The school knows its children and targets support early to address need. Monitoring by school leaders is rigorous and pupils' progress is tracked through termly pupil progress meetings. Consequently, by the time they leave the school pupils' attainment is above national averages. Writing is an example where leaders have targeted resources, consultancy and training with excellent outcomes. As a result, pupils of all abilities flourish and become skilled in the writing process. Governors have link roles and receive a very detailed report from the headteacher and subject leaders at each meeting. Although they are invited to visit and meet with subject leaders on a regular basis, contact is currently limited.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. These broaden pupils' experiences and develop pupils' understanding of the world beyond their school. No Outsiders and Go-Givers Schemes are two examples where pupils are challenged to understand social and cultural issues. They are guided to resist stereotyping and treat all God's children with dignity and respect. Pupils, reflecting their care and sympathy for others less fortunate than themselves, actively engage in charitable events. The school and the church work closely together to raise funds. For example, towards the Link to Hope shoebox appeal.

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. It is well planned to follow themes, which consistently reinforce the agreed vision and values. All staff can experience leading worship. Christian teaching and Anglican tradition, including 'sharing the Peace' and 'sending', feature. Time for prayer and reflection is offered in all acts of worship, signalled by the lighting of a candle. Links with the St Peter's Church are very strong. Fortnightly services, led by the vicar are enjoyed by pupils, staff and parents. Pupils enjoy attending church and are sustained spiritually through their worship experiences. The ethos committee supports the headteacher in leading worship regularly. All pupils questioned are keen to engage as leaders of worship. Worship is currently in whole school or key stage settings. Leaders are keen to develop pupil leaders in smaller settings, such as class worship. This was recently trialled successfully. Worship is currently evaluated informally to ensure quality is consistently supporting the spiritual life of the school. Pupils' experiences and understanding of worship are broadened by visitors from nearby St John's and other Christian groups. Prayer spaces have been developed in classrooms and the school environment to further foster pupils' prayerfulness. Leaders are exploring ways of retaining pupils' prayers and reflections as a record of their spiritual growth and development.

RE is strongly led, effectively delivered by all teachers and meets statutory requirements. Christianity is the major world religion, guided by the school's Christian vision and values. The RE curriculum was recently reviewed. As a result, Understanding Christianity has been introduced. Also the Sandwell Agreed Syllabus ensures pupils develop effectively their knowledge of other world religions. Close links with the diocese and RE networks ensure quality in RE provision and resourcing. Pupils explore 'Big Questions' such as, 'What is important to God and why?', 'What is the impact of the Pentecost on Christians today?' They cooperate well and share their thinking about religions across the world. Consequently, RE is effective for pupils of all ages and backgrounds to explore such big ideas and reflect upon them. Assessment systems were introduced in January. Pupils' achievements are recorded using the school's Insight system in line with other core subjects. School leaders are embedding these changes through training and support to ensure staff confidence. In addition, to build consistency and ensure high quality provision is sustained, underpinned by the school's Christian vision.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is consistently good, even though the new planning approaches have only recently been introduced. Teachers are growing in confidence through the in-school training and regular monitoring undertaken by the RE leader. She observes lessons, carries out regular book scrutiny and holds pupil conferences to gather views on the subject. She uses insight gained to help teachers improve. She often plans and teaches alongside staff, setting high expectations through the quality teaching she demonstrates. As a result RE is creative, challenging and enables pupils to develop a good understanding of Christianity and other world religions. Marking is consistent and thorough. Teaching assistants work in partnership with teachers to share feedback with the pupils they are supporting. Assessment procedures, recently introduced are ensuring outcomes in RE are in line with other core subjects.

Headteacher	Evelyn Murphy
Inspector's name and number	Marianne Phillips