

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Halam Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Turnpike, Halam, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG22 8AE

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding	
Diocese	Southwell & Nottingham	
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding	
Local authority	Nottinghamshire	
Date of inspection	29 June 2018	
Date of last inspection	21 May 2013	
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled	122761
Headteacher	Caroline Aldrich	
Inspector's name and number	Sheila Grice (165)	

School context

Halam Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school with just over 100 pupils on role. Pupils come from Halam, Edingley and the smaller surrounding villages. There are four classes in school with mixed age classes. The vast majority of pupils are White British, and no pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs or entitled to free school meals is below average but the percentage of pupils with a statement or education health care plan is currently above the national average. Attendance is above the national average and there are few cases of persistent absence. The school has extensive links with its community, including the two Anglican churches of St Giles' and St Michael's. The headteacher has been in post since September 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Halam Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher's passion, commitment and drive in developing the school's Christian character, is well supported by all members of the school community ensuring every child is valued, loved and respected.
- Christian values, based on the teachings of Jesus, are deeply embedded and they shape the life and ethos of the school. This impacts significantly on the very high standards of behaviour, positive attitudes and high-quality relationships within the whole school community.
- Inspirational acts of worship which are always interactive and regularly led by children, engage and inspire the whole school community.
- Opportunities provided through Religious Education (RE) teaching and across the curriculum powerfully impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Areas to improve

- Increase opportunities for children to plan and lead acts of worship, using a variety of settings, so that their ownership of worship is further enhanced.

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

This school is exceptional at nurturing, encouraging and challenging learners so that they achieve their very best. On entry into Reception levels of attainment are in line with age related expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well above expected levels. This is testament to the school's focus on a holistic approach which meets the needs of every child. The Christian vision, 'Life in all its fullness' is deeply engrained in all aspects of school life. The wealth of high quality displays bears colourful testimony to the importance given to the school's Christian character. Staff 'go the extra mile' to ensure the needs of all children are met, whether academic or social and pastoral care is exceptional. Children have a very good understanding of five basic Christian values, which include take care, integrity, perseverance, aspire and kindness and they can clearly relate these to the Bible and their own lives. Using the Terrific Friday assemblies to recognise children displaying values in action reinforces teaching of these Christian values. Staff and governors are united in the active promotion of the importance of the school's distinctively Christian character. This is evident through the school's genuine love and care shown to every child, their family and all staff members. Children's behaviour and their attitudes towards learning are both excellent with staff and parents attributing this to the strong Christian ethos within school. The strong focus on SMSC underpinning curriculum provision and supporting pupils to make links in their learning and their spirituality, embeds the Christian ethos daily. Class SMSC big books provide a stunning record of children's experiences. This alongside the school's inclusive approach to meeting all pupils' needs ensures a welcoming school which embraces and celebrates diversity and demonstrates a distinctively Christian approach which actively enables barriers to children's learning to be addressed. RE teaching is given an extremely high priority, consequently it contributes significantly towards the children's SMSC development. The inspirational RE leader has comprehensively implemented 'Understanding Christianity' with the result that staff and children speak very enthusiastically about RE. Children display a very good understanding of other cultures and faiths and show a remarkable level of tolerance and respect for all. The older children value the school's links with Muttendere in Zambia, which deepens their understanding of Christianity as a world faith. Children speak confidently about Jesus, 'who is an inspiration to us and a good example to follow'. Interactive reflection corners in each classroom are well used providing space for children to 'think about God and just be still and have some peace and quiet'. Children understand the importance of being charitable and the frequent opportunities to raise money for others deepens their understanding of the need to take care of others. Pupil voice is strong with children encouraged to take on responsibility through community involvement and becoming eco warriors.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

High quality collective worship, which enriches the lives of both adults and children, is clearly at the heart of this school community. There is a strong focus on Biblical teaching, consequently children are developing a good understanding of Bible stories and the importance of Jesus to Christians. As one child explained, 'Bible stories help us to know how Jesus lived and how we should live.' The attitude of children towards collective worship is very positive because they are actively engaged, and it supports their spiritual development. There is an agreed structure in worship which enables all children to be fully involved and familiar with what is happening. The gathering of children with their class crosses and the lighting of a candle, prayer, singing, reflection time and lively interaction form an integral part of all worship. The reflection time, 'I wonder' helps children to apply what they have been learning or just to be calm and still. The Lord's Prayer, with actions, is sung regularly and children talk animatedly about the use of 'PASTA' prayers, Praise, Ask, Sorry, Thanks, Amen. They understand the value of prayer and reflection on their lives and they seek out opportunities to pray as part of their own spiritual journey. An act of worship shared on the day of the inspection saw the Worship Group leading worship on the Feasts of St Peter and St Paul. The choice of song, 'I have a song to sing', really encapsulated the school's ethos, beginning with a child singing a solo and gradually building to include the whole school community. Staff value and appreciate collective worship, particularly when it's led by children. Regular visitors including Father Matthew, visitors from Riverside Christian Fellowship and other local leaders, enable the children to have rich, varied experiences, which enhance worship. There are frequent opportunities for children to lead worship and they do so with increasing confidence. However, opportunities for children to plan worship are underdeveloped. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian, due to detailed, thoughtful planning by the collective worship and RE leaders. As a result, children are developing a good understanding of the Christian calendar and Christian values, related to Bible stories. Older children are developing an understanding of the Trinity through a range of activities including discrete teaching, making a triquetra, artwork focussed on the Holy Spirit and celebrating Ascension Day. Parents value the opportunity to share in worship and class assemblies and termly services in the church are very well attended. The leaders for collective worship and RE have been instrumental in ensuring that it is continually improving. Annual questionnaires on worship, completed by all classes, staff, governors and parents effectively gather the views of all stakeholders. For example, monitoring showed that children wanted to be more involved in leading worship and

each class now leads worship each half term. Pupil voice is strong, and the Worship Group are proud of their role in school, promoting collective worship.

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

This school is very effective at enabling all to flourish. The drive, passion and commitment of the headteacher has a significant impact on the whole school community. Consequently, the Christian ethos pervades all aspects of school life because it is so deeply embedded and 'underpins' all decision making. Children are exceptionally well cared for within a 'family' atmosphere based on Christian love and respect. This is a very happy school where relationships are extremely strong, and children feel safe and secure. Children of all faiths, and none, feel valued and respected by staff and children alike. Leaders are focussed on school improvement. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have been instrumental in securing changes, particularly in ensuring the needs of all children can be met so that they can live 'life in all its fullness'. Governors are fully involved in the role of monitoring and evaluation and this ensures that the school's Christian character is central to all decision making. The foundation governor in particular is actively involved in regular monitoring of RE and collective worship. Evaluations are reported back through staff meetings and the curriculum and children's committee of governors and staff. Agreed improvements are then fed into the school development plan which ensures improvements are continually being made. Parents speak very positively about the benefits of their children attending a church school and they value the keen sense of community and family which encourages their children to 'be kind and considerate of each other'. They appreciate the way children are challenged and nurtured so that they gain confidence and think deeply about life issues. Links with St Michael's church are good, despite there being no full time incumbent in post. The whole school community speaks enthusiastically about very positive relationships with the parish and the impact of this can be seen both in school and in church. Father Matthew is a regular visitor and provides valuable support for the headteacher and staff. Legal requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met. Full advantage is taken of training for both leaders and governors. The strong links with the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham has ensured new initiatives and developments contribute to further strengthening the school's Christian character. All the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and the school is well placed to continue to thrive as a church school.