

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Standish St Wilfrid's Church of England Primary Academy

Rectory Lane, Standish, Wigan, WN6 0XB	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	01 July 2013
Name of multi-academy trust	Learning Together Trust
Date of inspection	18 January 2018
Date of last inspection	June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 139883
Headteacher	Stuart Colothan
Inspector's name and number	Jo Williams 863

School context

St Wilfrid's Church of England Primary Academy is a larger than average primary school with a rising number on roll, currently standing at 567 pupils. The school became an academy in July 2013. Since April 2015 it has been the lead school in the 'Learning Together Trust'. As a result, the existing headteacher has taken on a senior role within the Trust and a new headteacher was appointed in 2015. St Wilfrid's Academy primarily serves its immediate community, drawing pupils from a variety of backgrounds. The number of pupils with special educational needs or entitled to free school meals is below that of the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Wilfrid's Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- St Wilfrid's Christian character permeates through all aspects of school life and has a significant impact on the wellbeing of the whole school community.
- Strong Christian leadership drives the school's vision developing every child to 'achieve and believe'.
- Highly effective relationships across the school create a safe and nurturing environment in this church academy.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is of a consistently high quality resulting in excellent pupil outcomes in the subject.
- Collective worship is vibrant and engaging and supports pupils' growing spirituality in this Christian community.

Areas to improve

- Enrich pupils' experience of Christianity through a greater understanding of its significance as a multicultural worldwide faith.
- Deepen pupils' spiritual development by extending outdoor reflection and prayer spaces.

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

The strong Christian character of the school has a considerable positive impact on the daily lives of its pupils. A governor explained that the school, 'doesn't trot out faith on rote because it is an integral part of everyday life'. The school environment embodies the Christian foundation. Large boards reinforce key messages. These are displayed as an attractive banner in the key stage hall, declaring, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' (Philippians 4:13). This results in pupils taking ownership of these key biblical texts to support them in their daily lives. Likewise, nine core Christian values, such as joy and forgiveness thoroughly embed the distinctive character. This is key in securing sustained academic success and excellent attendance. Parents recognise the direct link between the school's Christian character and pupil attainment, describing it as being a '100% connection'. Pupils' attainment is, and has consistently been above the national average, over several years, in all core subjects across the school. The children's eagerness in attending school was expressed by a parent. They stated, 'we feel wanted by the school team, the children feel the same'. Many success stories illustrate how the school's strong Christian ethos ensures achievement for all its pupils. These examples are often moving due to the challenges some pupils may face and how they are helped in overcoming them. The school has been effective in responding to areas for development from the previous inspection. This is reflected by parents' deep understanding of the Christian nature of the school. Activities around Christian values, visitors to the school and a well-planned curriculum all contribute effectively to pupils' depth of understanding. This is particularly evident in their heightened spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Positive relationships and behaviour are a strength of the school. These are modelled by the whole staff team and teachers speak of feeling genuinely supported. In turn, pupils feel hugely valued and cherished. One pupil commented, 'teachers are really kind and they help us to be kind and respectful. It is good for us to make other people smile'. The school is very proactive in developing pupils' respect for diverse communities. A recent visit from a Ugandan youth choir had a significant impact across the school community, enriching pupils' understanding of diversity. For example, it is significant that pupils continue to make pertinent connections. Whilst leading worship a pupil commented, 'although we are from different cultures to our friends in Uganda, we are all God's children and serve Jesus together'. Key visitors in RE lessons also support pupils' deep respect for diversity. Pupils express their enjoyment in learning about the Hajj from a local imam, and Islam in daily life from a Muslim parent. Whilst this is good, the school has also identified the importance of enriching pupils' experience of the global dimension of Christianity. RE also plays an important role in underpinning the Christian character of the school, emphasising biblical teaching and focusing on big questions. Christian values, such as forgiveness and joy, are also very prominent in all areas of the curriculum but particularly evident in RE.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is crucial to the daily life of the school, 'setting the tone for the day'. Worship is extremely exciting and interactive and is consequently highly valued by the whole school community. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of worship which supports their spiritual development. Staff describe worship as a special time that is both moving and uplifting. Worship has a considerable impact on the lives of the wider school community. Parents speak of how their children share aspects of worship at home by 'being enthusiastic about God'. Significant thought is put into the planning of worship to ensure that it is deeply rooted in the Christian faith and that it is relevant to the school community. For example, when celebrating the Christian value of joy, the pupils were thrilled to see images of a local park celebrating God's creation. Likewise, every worship is securely founded in biblical teaching. Pupils leading worship shared, with confidence, six gospel verses reflecting the Christian value of joy. Worship is dynamic through contrasting elements, from joyous hymn singing to quiet reflection. The rector explained that, alongside pupils experiencing awe and wonder, there is 'a stillness that pupils create for themselves in which they are meaningfully prayerful'. Prayer is cherished across the school and has a profound impact on pupils' individual spiritual development and personal wellbeing. Pupils have frequent occasions to pray and reflect throughout the school day, with well used reflection areas around the school building. Reflection areas are imaginative in finding different routes to engage in prayer and thought, from holding crosses to prayer scrolls. However, currently the school's outdoor areas do not offer the same opportunities to reflect. The school acknowledges this is an area for development. Worship is effective in facilitating pupils' deepening understanding of The Holy Trinity. Likewise, pupils have a sound knowledge of church traditions and key events in the Christian year. Worship is exceptionally well led by clergy, staff and pupils. Detailed planning of themes include core Christian values and key Christian festivals. There are a variety of different ways in which the school community effectively evaluates worship. This is carefully monitored and impacts on the planning of future worship. More frequent worship now takes place in church as a result of pupil feedback. One pupil explained, 'we're on a journey with God and church is part of our school'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile in the wider school curriculum. Pupils are excited and challenged by RE, and consequently they enjoy the subject immensely. Standards in RE are as high as other core subjects. One pupil commented, 'RE is very important in our curriculum. The standards should be the same (as other subjects) no matter what.' The school employs a 'big questions' approach to great effect. As a result, pupils are confident in using a range of high level skills to gain a deep understanding of the subject. Pupil discussions around RE topics demonstrate both a well-developed biblical knowledge and high levels of thoughtful reasoning. The teaching of RE is consistently delivered at an excellent level. Photographs and pupils' books display the variety of highly engaging activities undertaken in RE lessons. Effective assessment of RE reflects pupils' high levels of attainment in the subject. The curriculum is exceedingly effective in deepening pupils' understanding of world religions and in particular Christianity. This is because the subject is led and managed with rigour. Exceptionally robust systems are in place to monitor both the quality of RE teaching and pupil progress in the subject. The RE leader's thorough approach secures positive future developments in the RE. She explained the importance of securing improvement in RE because, 'it is not just a learning journey for pupils. They are on a spiritual journey'. Likewise, the school leadership is fully committed to maintaining RE as a significant element of the wider curriculum. As a result of the school's proactive and innovative approach to RE, they were selected by the local diocese to trial their new RE syllabus.

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

The newly formed multi-academy trust maintains firm Christian foundations which extend beyond the school. The trust is well supported with key representatives from the diocese and the school is a beacon of Christian distinctiveness across the trust. The school takes a lead in sharing good practice and provides outstanding support for partner schools. The school's vision is deeply rooted in the Christian faith and challenges the school community to 'achieve, believe and care'. This 'ABC vision' is clearly shared with all by the school's leadership and underpinned by highly visible and relevant biblical texts. As a result, the strong Christian character of the school is reinforced. Likewise, the Christian vision impacts on consistently high academic standards across the curriculum. It embraces the wellbeing of every pupil and secures excellent progress for all. Consequently, all agreed that, 'everybody flourishes' and a governor attributed this to 'the school's Christ centredness'. The wider leadership team knows its school exceptionally well. There is rigour in self-evaluation and robust strategies to secure improvements. This results in highly effective strategic planning for sustained school development. RE is very well led, resourced and managed and collective worship is inspiring. Both have a high profile in the school and meet statutory requirements. The school is fully committed to developing its staff, particularly for future leadership roles. Several staff are currently undertaking training for Christian leadership in church schools. The headteacher has also been nurtured in his role through support structures within the school. The school benefits from a plethora of highly effective partnerships. For example, it has extremely strong links with the local church and works closely with the diocese. Several parents spoke of a joy they felt in rediscovering church as a result of their children attending the school. Examples of mutually beneficial partnerships, such as a local residential home and the Pearl of Africa choir, demonstrate experiences that are both rich and reciprocal. For example, pupils fundraised to support the Ugandan schools attended by the choir. Likewise, the choir's visit gave pupils a valuable insight into their life in Africa, sharing their cultural heritage and traditions. The school lives and breathes its Christian vision. This was summarised by the rector. He said, 'everyone appreciates that they are part of a faith community; sharing concerns and celebrating with one another but also with God.'

SIAMS report January 2018 St Wilfrid's Church of England Primary Academy, Standish, Wigan, WN6 0XB