



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Saighton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Saighton Lane
Chester
CH3 6EG

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire West and Chester

Dates of inspection: 23rd June 2016

Date of last inspection: April 2011

School's unique reference number: 111350

Headteacher: Mavis Sellers

Inspector's name and number: Christine J Buckley 525

School context

Saighton Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average primary school situated on the Duke of Westminster's estate. Most of the children are white British. The proportion of children with special educational needs or who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is well below average. A much higher proportion of children than usual join the school in year groups other than reception.

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

- The passionate Christian leadership by the headteacher and her team model faith in action that the children are able to emulate.
- A strong Christian ethos and environment supports the well-being and spiritual development of the children so that they are confident and secure in God's love.
- A shared faith language enables children and staff to talk about their own spiritual journey.
- Collective worship (CW) has a positive impact on the prayer life of children so that they can pray in any place at any time and know that God is present with them.

Areas to improve

- Formalize the evaluation of the school as a church school to include all stakeholders and to ensure that all future development is in line with National Society guidelines.

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

The Christian ethos of caring and kindness pervades the life of the school and together with the environment supports the well-being of the children. Everyone in the school community knows that the school's core Christian values of love, kindness, respect and forgiveness are the foundation of school life. These are reflected in the displays, acts of worship and behaviour and all can relate these to the teaching of Jesus. All children achieve and attain in line with or better than national averages. This is evidence that the school is fulfilling their mission statement of 'achieving excellence within a Christian environment'. The Christian character of the school is evident across the curriculum and the spiritual and moral element is one of the main drivers of the creative curriculum. This has addressed the area to improve from the last inspection. Through this approach children are supported in their spiritual development. They talk of making informed choices in the light of the teaching of Jesus. As faith is discussed across the curriculum there is a shared language in which children can talk openly about faith with the knowledge that their ideas and opinions will be valued. Excellent relationships between children and staff create a happy atmosphere where all ages work and play in Christian love and support. Cooperative learning and a buddy system where older children are responsible for younger children facilitate a strong sense of friendship and care for one another. This gives the older children responsibility and supports high self-esteem. As one child noted, 'I am important to them and it has helped me to become more mature'. Children are encouraged in their good behaviour by thinking about Jesus' teaching especially on forgiveness. As a result, children think about what Jesus might do in a given situation. The children talk of being able to forgive one another because God always forgives them. They also talk of their respect for others of a different faith which has grown as they have gained knowledge and understanding through religious education (RE). Children show the Christian value of compassion as they initiate projects to raise money for local and global causes.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily worship is central to the life of the school. Staff and children speak about the sense of belonging and specialness that it creates and parents say that worship is important in the life of the school. Worship has a strong focus on the teaching of Jesus which results in children having a wealth of Bible knowledge and Christian values. They are able to talk about Bible stories and their general meaning as well as what they mean to them personally. The ability to do this is encouraged by the times of reflection that are evident in each act of worship. Children take an active part and lead the worship with liturgy and prayer. This and worship held in church support the understanding of Anglican liturgy. Worship supports spiritual development and through this children learn to pray. The school prayer and the Lord's prayer are used regularly. Prayer is embedded into the life of the school and children are keen to pray and use opportunities in classrooms and around the school. These include areas of reflection in the classrooms where children use different methods to pray. For example holding a pebble while praying and then placing the pebble in a bowl of water. Outdoors there are designated quiet areas and a special prayer space that encourages children to spend time thinking about God and praying in some way. Older children take responsibility for the prayer space providing new prompts for prayer and activities that support reflection on Christian values. A child testified that before coming to this school she had no faith. She said, 'I now believe in God and know that He is there for me and I can talk to him anytime'. This understanding of being able to pray anywhere at anytime is common. There is a clear understanding of the Church year and major Christian festivals that are held in the local churches. Children benefit from different leaders of worship including the local vicar, and an 'Open the book' team who present the Biblical teaching in fun and creative ways. This gives the children a breadth of worship experience including humorous stories as well as times of quiet and awe. Worship is planned well with some input from the local clergy. Some evaluation of worship takes place but it does not include all stakeholders on a regular basis.

However, some improvements have been implemented as a result of evaluation by staff.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is taught effectively with creativity and originality so that children enjoy the subject. RE is taught well and teaching is good or outstanding. Children are very proud of their special hardbacked books used for RE. This is an indication that RE is regarded as very important in school as it is the only subject to have these special books that record their work throughout school. Attainment is in line with other core subjects and assessment is thorough and ongoing. Monitoring by the subject leader and headteacher has led to improvements since the last inspection. However, marking is not consistently focused on the learning objectives. The subject leader is knowledgeable and with one of the foundation governors has recently attended training on the new syllabus. After discussion with staff and governors she has implemented the new scheme of work with an enquiry based approach. This enables children to devise their own questions and challenges their presuppositions. It helps children to develop high level skills of enquiry, analysis and reflection. They are able to make links between different faiths and consider the big questions of life. Learning in RE is always related to Christian values and planning ensures that Christianity is a major focus. In this way RE supports the knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. It also gives children an understanding that it is a multicultural world faith. They express their understanding of the central elements of the Christian faith with an understanding that music and other customs may be different in other parts of the world.

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

The headteacher gives passionate Christian leadership to the school and welcomes parents and children into a loving ethos. All members of the school community understand and know the mission statement. It has been reviewed since the last inspection with the involvement of parents. The effect of this is to enhance their understanding of the Christian foundation of the school and the importance of worship. This is evidenced by data from the annual questionnaire to parents. All the children worked with an artist in residence to design a huge banner which is proudly displayed in the school hall. This is often used by children to encourage them to do all things to please God. The school website and other communication methods similarly state clearly the Christian foundation of the school. However, as the governors noted, it is much more than this as the school lives out Christian faith in all that it does. Worship and RE have a high profile in the school and responsibility for these is taken by the headteacher and the senior leadership team. Staff and governors access training from the diocese regarding the church status of the school which enables them to have highly effective practice in their approach to a Christian learning environment. Links with the diocese are strong and parents can access news from the diocese and local church through the school website. The cathedral is used as a resource for both RE teaching and to attend worship supporting both understanding and personal faith. The links with the local churches through the vicar and governors prove mutually beneficial as the vicar has a ready congregation and the families talk of 'their churches'. Children are confident to take part in services and concerts held in church and news from school and churches is available in both locations. Staff and governors have evaluated RE and worship this year and staff often discuss matters during their weekly meetings. However, no systems are in place to ensure evaluation of all aspects of the school's church school status. There are strong links which ground the school in the local community.

SIAMS report June 2016 Saughton Church of England Primary School, Chester CH3 6EG