

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Trefonen Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane
Trefonen
Oswestry
Shropshire. SY10 9DY

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Shropshire
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date of inspection	8 December 2016
Date of last inspection	22 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	123507
Headteacher	Cathy Dunleavy
Inspector's name and number	Marianne Phillips 586

School context

Trefonen is a smaller than average primary school set in the heart of the village, from which it takes its name. There are 138 pupils on roll. Many of them travel considerable distances in order to attend the school. The vast majority, 98.1%, are from white British backgrounds. The percentages of pupils supported by pupil premium funding (PPF) is below average. The number of pupils judged to have special educational needs is above average. There are close links with the church of All Saints. The incumbent has strongly supported the school since her appointment 3 years ago.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Trefonen as a Church of England school are good

- The shared understanding that everyone is a unique child of God, learning in the love of God.
- The sense of 'community' underpinned by core Christian values that influence daily life.
- Strong relationships that reflect the love and care shown by each member of the school family in their interactions with each other and the community they serve.
- The partnership between school leaders, church and governors and the commitment to drive school improvement through Christian distinctiveness and Christian teaching.

Areas to improve

- Continue to identify ways to help pupils learn about other faiths and to reflect on common issues and celebrate diversity within the world's different faith communities.
- Ensure the reflection areas are interactive settings to encourage prayer, spirituality and opportunities for pupils to lead.
- Create a 'spiritual focus group' to investigate the school family's understanding of 'spirituality' and to engage in planning and leading all aspects of worship.

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

This church school is central to the life of the community it serves. The nurturing care of children is at the heart of all that it does. This is guided by core Christian values that shape the strong relationships that bind the school family together. The headteacher has led the school since September 2005. She provides spiritual guidance through her roles as religious education (RE) and collective worship coordinator, embedding the belief that “everyone is a unique child of God, learning in the love of God”. Pupils spoken to during the inspection are proud that they belong to a church school and are able to share their growing understanding of Jesus as the son of God. They are keen to take responsibility in supporting their friends and others. They regularly and enthusiastically organise and participate in fund raising events, such as cake sales, harvest collections for the local food bank and dressing up for ‘Children in Need’. Their behaviour is excellent, guided by the spirit of “reconciliation and respect”, two of their core values. Attendance is also high as they want to come to school and “enjoy all the activities provided through their lessons and clubs”, during and after school. The “worship workshops” is one example of a club that is run fortnightly by the Christian worker or the vicar of All Saints church. These workshops focus on drama and other activities, such as “the nice name tags game”. They illustrate the many strong links, between school and church that are supporting children in their relationships with each other through listening to stories from the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. RE has a high profile in the curriculum and is one of the lessons all pupil groups say they enjoy, because “it helps us find out about other religions and our teachers encourage us to share our opinions about what we are learning”. School leaders are aware of the need for their pupils to develop an understanding of their place in a changing world. They work creatively to establish links with visitors from other faith communities and with other schools. Pupils in year 3 and year 4 regularly ‘skype’ pupils from America. They also use technology to enable their pupils to take, virtual visits to mosques to experience other places of worship. Last year’s year 6 pupils attended a ‘Global Goals Network Conference’, and plans are in place for the current year 6 to explore similar activities. This is an on-going priority for school leaders, to ensure pupils are developing an awareness and understanding of other faiths and cultures’ belief and practice.

The drive to raise standards takes into account pupils’ needs through “individual targeted profiles”, established for each child as they enter the school. The success of the strategies employed, such as the “No Worries Group, Rocket Learners and Superflex Training” are establishing a growing and positive reputation within the local and wider community. Numbers of pupils involved are rising and some pupils and their parents travel considerable distances to attend school because of this. Parent questionnaires are very positive about the nurturing support provided by the school. Although, the vast majority choose the school because of its successes, they are reassured by the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) teaching that their children receive through the school’s Christian heritage. Daily acts of worship led by a wide range of Christians and visiting leaders contribute well to the SMSC development of all groups of pupils, regardless of background, faith or no faith. There are strong links between RE, worship and SMSC.

The vast majority of pupils enter the school with skills above national expectations. There is, however, a larger than average group of pupils judged to have special educational needs and who are supported through planned support from skilled teachers and a team of teaching assistants. The latter also provide additional support for the smaller numbers of pupils eligible for PPF, to enable them to achieve well. This has consistently resulted in all pupils attaining standards in line or above national expectations.

The Christian distinctiveness of the school is clear. A range of Christian artefacts, displays and banners continuously remind visitors and all members of the school family of the school’s Christian foundation. The embedded focus on core values, reflected through the life of Christ, provides pupils with a clear understanding of right and wrong and the need to respect others. This prepares them successfully for their next school and their future lives as young citizens of Britain.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship (CW) is a key part of the daily life of the school. Most pupils enjoy worship and all of those pupils spoken to during the inspection were particularly enthusiastic about the times they are encouraged to participate in worship, leading prayer or acting out stories from the Bible. Worship records confirm that experiences offered are varied, focus on the core value of the month and consider links with other subjects such as Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and RE. All staff, including senior leaders, the vicar, Christian worker and the headteacher regularly lead worship. The school has invited people of the Sikh community to share their faith and experiences with pupils in the past. The headteacher would like to develop this practice on a regular basis, with visitors of all faiths and cultures welcomed to school as part of the school’s priority to develop pupils’ global perspective of faith and belief. Pupils are also encouraged to lead key stage 2 celebration and class worship. School leaders plan to extend pupils’ leadership roles through creating a ‘spiritual focus group’ to explore the meaning of ‘spirituality’ and to develop other ways of encouraging leadership of whole school worship. Prayer, led by pupils, was a feature of the act of worship led by the vicar of All Saints Church during the inspection. This act of worship

welcomed Advent through the lighting of the first 2 candles on the wreath, and used Christ, as the 'Prince of Peace' to highlight the focused core value. Singing, prayer, stories and reflection illustrate how pupils are learning, on a daily basis, about the Anglican tradition. The 'fun' of purposefully generating 'noise' through chatter and musical discord created an effective contrast to the "peaceful time of reflection and prayer" which closed the worship. Pupils and staff engage fully in worship. Prayer underpins daily life and is used to thank God in preparation for food at lunchtime and for the experiences of the day before pupils leave. Reflection areas have been created in each classroom to provide a focus for prayer. In a few classes, pupils use these areas well, generating prayers and "Happy Thoughts" which are shared by the 'Prayer or Assembly Monitors'. School leaders are considering ways the reflection areas can provide the focus for interaction, personal response, prayer, spiritual development and leadership of pupils more consistently on a daily basis. Parents, governors and other stakeholders are encouraged to attend worship to celebrate important services in the church and school calendar. These are normally held in church, which offers more space for larger numbers to attend. The views of parents and pupils are gathered regularly to ensure worship is enjoyable and supportive of the spiritual development and needs of all. Views are very positive and reflect the way the school's worship is appreciated as a key part of school life.

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

The headteacher is a strong, spiritual leader who knows the school well. The senior leadership team and all staff share the belief that "each child is unique and special" and are proud that pupils are enabled to flourish "in a loving and joyful Christian environment". The headteacher has encouraged a strong relationship with the church since her appointment, and this has strengthened over the past 3 years. The church financially supports the work of the Christian worker, some school visits and resources for worship. The Vicar of All Saints is also a foundation governor. She and other foundation and link governors take their roles as strategic leaders seriously. The "Annual Work Plan" supports them, by providing a "rolling programme of school evaluation" which commences at the start of the academic year and is sustained through termly meetings. Meetings are held with staff, school leaders and 'pupil focus groups' to gather evidence and monitor the impact of the work the school undertakes. The views of parents are gathered, formally, through annual questionnaires and informally through the school activities they attend. As a result, governors are knowledgeable about the school strengths, including the pupils and the community they serve. The partnership between school, church and governors is a strength. There is a shared commitment to drive school improvement through a sustained focus on the school's Christian distinctiveness and core values. This is underpinned by performance management targets. The headteacher, as RE and CW leader, appreciates the training and guidance offered through the links with the diocese. RE is taught following the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus supplemented by 'Discovery RE' resources. Further training sessions are planned to introduce the school to the 'Understanding Christianity' approaches in the new year. Leaders track the attainment of pupils carefully, using 'Classroom Monitor' to ensure their needs are met. These systems and structures are used effectively to target intervention and support to enable all groups to succeed. The developmental points from the previous inspection have been addressed.

Parents appreciate the way they are welcomed by the school. They are encouraged to share their views regularly and feel they have 'a voice' in the school's decision making processes. Those parents spoken to on the day of the inspection confirm the school's high reputation as held in the local and wider community. The Christian care and respect lived out in the relationships between all members of the school family, is making a difference through positively influencing the lives of their individual families.

SIAMS report December 2016 Trefonen CE (VC) Primary, Trefonen, Oswestry SY10 9DY