

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Davenham Church of England Primary School

Charles Avenue, Davenham, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 8JW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cheshire
Date of inspection	26 January 2018
Date of last inspection	November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VA 111387
Headteacher	Joanne Hyslop
Inspector's name and number	Ann Aspden 858

School context

Davenham Church of England Primary School serves Davenham village and the surrounding area. The school is consistently oversubscribed. In recent years, the number on role has increased and 2 new classrooms have been built. The majority of the 313 pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below the national average. The headteacher, who was previously deputy headteacher, has been in post since September 2016. The school has links with St Wilfrid's Church, Davenham.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Davenham as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher provide a cornerstone for the success and excellence of this deeply Christian school.
- The school's vision 'Working together, playing together, serving God and serving others' and excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development result in exceptional standards of pupils' behaviour and attitude.
- Clear and distinctive Christian values, such as respect and forgiveness, guide all aspects of school life so that the pupils feel secure and loved.
- All members of the school community place great value on collective worship. Its impact is wide-ranging and inspirational.
- Religious education (RE) makes an outstanding contribution to the school's distinctiveness and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth.
- Very strong links exist between the school, families, the church and the community resulting in a harmonious and vibrant worshipping community where God's love is shared widely.

Areas to improve

- Complete the review and development of the school's vision by involving the whole school family in order to further affirm the school's strong Christian distinctiveness.
- Develop RE through the implementation of the 'Understanding Christianity' project so that it continues to play a major role in enhancing the Christian character of the school.

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

A very clear and distinctive Christian ethos guides all aspects of school life. As a result, all pupils see themselves as God's children and confidently express their faith and belief that Jesus is at the heart of their school and their lives. They flourish because of what everyone sees as the 'golden thread of Christianity' that runs through the life of the school. From an early age, pupils travel on a spiritual journey with Jesus and readily articulate the impact that learning about Him has on their lives. Consequently, the SMSC development of pupils is of a very high standard. Parents value the way in which pupils are nurtured and appreciate the Christian warmth that they and their children experience daily, particularly those who join the school from other communities and those whose children have special educational needs. One grandparent commented, 'We have felt so reassured by the loving care that has been shown to our grandchildren, it has been beyond normal expectations.' Past pupils are drawn back to what they see as their first Christian family.

Visitors are immersed in the school's Christian vision from the moment they enter the building. The school uses the creative arts to promote a strong Christian message of hope, love and salvation. This is evident throughout the school in the form of high quality pupils' art work such as each year group's Creation display which reflect the vision and are a key feature of the way in which Christianity is celebrated. Standards of attainment are very high with pupils making excellent progress from their starting points. The school's strong and firmly established Christian character is closely linked to this success.

Although the school has a high percentage of pupils from a White British background, those of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds make a conscious decision to choose the school and speak highly of the respect that the school has for them. All pupils talk about Christian values, such as respect and hope, as being 'what Jesus did and what we do in our own lives', as one of them put it. Relationships in the school reflect these values. The Fruits of the Spirit which are lived out and understood by all members of the school family are clearly demonstrated through the children's excellent behaviour.

RE teaching is a strength of the school and is taught to a very high standard in a way that excites and inspires children. Pupils are very respectful of other faiths and have a good understanding of diversity. However, they are not yet fully aware of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and this is an area that the school has identified to develop in the future.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship at Davenham reflects the school's strong Christian distinctiveness and is a vital feature of the school's daily life. It is highly inclusive and meticulously planned so that all members of the school community enjoy a varied, sincere and spiritual experience. As a result, both pupils and staff participate with energy and passion, using Makaton signing very effectively when they sing and pray. They take away ideas and thoughts which make a significant impact on their spiritual growth and daily lives.

Acts of worship are very closely linked to explicit Christian values, the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Bible and the traditions of the Church of England. A range of leaders including staff, pupils and members of St Wilfrid's church are involved in leading collective worship. All are firmly committed to ensuring that high levels of spiritual and moral reflection are an intrinsic part of every act of worship. The development of the pupils' worship group has given them great confidence and pride in their ability to research, plan and lead acts of worship. They lead by Christian example wearing their specially designed purple T-Shirts with pride so that they are clearly seen by others as a source of help and support. One pupil said 'We are God's messengers in school. We are here to spread his word and act like Jesus.' High quality acts of worship which include children's prayers and their choice of hymns, effectively promote the secure Christian ethos and have a strong focus on the life of Jesus. Pupils are confident in expressing their thoughts and beliefs through creative activities including art and music, both during worship and in the classrooms and outdoor reflection area. Consequently, they speak confidently about the central role that Jesus Christ plays in worship, the Christian faith and their own lives. At the same time, they speak with clarity about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Parents say that worship is a celebration and that it actively promotes the Christian message with a clear focus on love and friendship. They are delighted to join their children for worship because it makes them feel part of the school Christian family. Reflection areas for both pupils and adults contribute greatly to the development of their own personal faith journey. They use them spontaneously to write their own prayers and as places where they can reflect and pray. Pupils in the Reception class believe that we pray to God 'To tell him we miss him' and 'To ask Him to look after the poorest people and keep our family safe'. School action plans for the development of collective worship focus on further extending opportunities for outdoor prayer and reflection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education is seen as a core subject and has a very high profile. It is led with ambition, expertise and passion. This results in excellent standards of attainment with pupils making very good progress. A highly effective system of monitoring, evaluating and assessment has been successfully developed and is firmly embedded. Pupils speak in detail about their own achievements in RE. A creative and imaginative approach to RE teaching results in lessons which pupils say are fun and challenging. Key questions are effectively used so that pupils use higher level skills to great effect as was the case in a Key Stage 2 lesson when pupils explored the theme of Salvation through the story of Zacchaeus. Pupils demonstrated their understanding of Christian compassion and forgiveness by relating the story to their own lives. One child said 'Jesus could see the good in Zacchaeus. He wasn't a sinner; he had love in his heart. He just needed Jesus to have a little chat with him.'

RE teaching frequently prompts pupils to reflect openly on their own faith. One pupil said, 'RE is my favourite subject because I can look at the deep meanings in the Bible. Now I feel I understand how Jesus sacrificed himself just for us and for the forgiveness of our sins.' As a result of RE teaching that is often outstanding, pupils have an impressive understanding of the key aspects of Christianity and other faiths. This is demonstrated through the RE displays, working walls, pupils' books and class scrap books which provide evidence of the depth of pupils' understanding and the quality of teaching. Diversity is recognised and celebrated as was the case during the highly successful Harmony week. One pupil commented that 'Harmony week showed us that we are all loved and even though we are different, there are so many things that make us the same.' Pupils talk knowledgeably about holy books and faith traditions, identifying many similarities between Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The balance achieved between learning about and learning from religion is excellent. The teaching of RE goes hand in hand with the teaching of Christian values and pupils talk about the difference it makes in their lives. One pupil said 'In RE I have learnt how Jesus changed people's lives, taught them to be good and to care for one another. This is how we should live our lives, too.' The school recognises that implementation of the Understanding Christianity project will ensure that the current high standards are sustained.

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

Strong and purposeful Christian leadership and the pursuit of excellence secure the highest levels of personal development for all members of the school community. The tireless drive of senior leaders ensures that the school's Christian distinctiveness is strong and bold and that the entire curriculum is firmly based on a distinctive Christian ethos. Senior leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's performance based on effective and insightful self-evaluation and can speak with great confidence about standards. They are committed to driving the school forward with energy and enthusiasm and to ensuring that the school is Christ centred where pupils grow and learn with God.

All of the areas for development from the last inspection have been successfully and thoroughly addressed. Leadership of RE and collective worship is excellent and results in highly effective practice throughout the school. Professional development is a key feature of school life and, as a result, high quality Christian leadership has been secured at all levels. Teamwork, coaching and excellent in-service training prepare staff well for current and future leadership roles in church schools. Some members of staff have progressed in their careers as a result of professional development provided by the diocese. Senior leaders are ambitious for the school and are eager to share their expertise and experiences with other schools.

The positive and clear links between the school and the parish, with the headteacher and the vicar to the fore, are empowered and flourish through the commitment of both communities. The use of the school for weekend Church with a Difference services demonstrates leaders' determination to bring ministry into school. The partnership with the local community frequently results in very successful improvement projects linked to pupils' progress and the needs of all learners such as the building of the outdoor reflection area. Other examples include the money raised for disadvantaged children by the school council in partnership with the Friends of Davenham School. Global links are equally strong as a result of the work that the pupils are eager to pursue in the service of others through charities such as Christian Aid and Sal's Shoes. The wellbeing of both adults and pupils is of an extremely high priority with leaders living out the school's vision in a practical and hands-on way. Families and members of staff value the frequent acts of kindness and compassion shown by the headteacher and other leaders. Parents comment on the strength of the school's Christian message and its influence on their family lives. One parent said, with reference to the poem Footprints in the Sand, 'My son came home asking if I would carry him in the same way as Jesus does. He went on to explain it beautifully.' One new parent said 'Nothing is too much for the staff here. I can't get over how much love and care they show. That's why I chose Davenham.'