



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Etching Hill Church of England voluntary Controlled Primary School</b>	Penk Drive North Etching Hill Rugeley WS15 2XY
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lichfield</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Staffordshire
Date/s of inspection	22 September 2016
Date of last inspection	3 October 2011
School's unique reference number	124292
Headteacher	Marie Smith
Inspector's name and number	Rosemary Woodward 583

### School context

Etching Hill is a popular primary school and nursery in the ex-mining town of Rugeley. Many of its 414 pupils live outside the catchment area, as families choose to travel to attend this school. A large majority are of white British heritage and speak English as their first language. Although very few pupils are supported through additional funding known as the pupil premium, a significant number of pupils come from low income households. There has been a period of stability in school leadership since the previous inspection. The neighbouring parish church has been without a vicar for some time, but is supported by a local team ministry.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Etching Hill CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Strong dedicated leadership from the Headteacher, who works effectively with the staff, church and governors to realise their vision and embed Christian values and relationships in all areas of school life.
- The attractive and vibrant learning space which is used to proclaim the school's Christian character and values and relate them to relevant Bible quotations
- Christian care and nurture makes every child in the school feel special, valued and included, enabling them to succeed very well in all areas of their learning.
- Strong links with the local church which powerfully enrich the school's spiritual life, and extend to embrace and benefit the local community.
- The committed service of the school chaplain which enriches the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
- Effective and well-resourced leadership of religious education (RE) and worship.

### Areas to improve

- Refine planning in order to explore worship themes in more depth across all worship times across several weeks.
- Create opportunities within religious education (RE) lessons to explore the concepts and beliefs at the heart of each faith to an appropriate depth and level of challenge.
- Encourage pupils to take an increasingly active lead in planning and leading prayer, reflection and worship.

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

Etching Hill Primary School is an extremely happy and caring community in which pupils feel valued and secure and are empowered to succeed. The Christian values of faith, fellowship, joy, commitment and thankfulness underpin all areas of life at this school and these are appreciated with a dignified sense of awe and wonder. They are clearly displayed around the school, alongside explicit related Bible verses which deepen awareness of the values' roots in Christian teaching. Pupils can talk confidently about the values' meaning and relevance to themselves. They explain that the school motto 'Together we can. Together we will' means they live and work together as a school and with Jesus' help. This motto is strongly underpinned by a desire to shine as lights for Jesus in the world. The Christian values are modelled very well by staff who are passionate in their role of nurturing their pupils, while offering a fun and challenging curriculum. One pupil described the school's Christian character as 'going through everything like the writing in a stick of rock'. Christian foundations are clear in documentation, the school's website and in the initial induction of new parents. However, there is also an understanding that all are welcome and, while pupils are offered the opportunity to encounter Christian beliefs in Jesus, there is no expectation that they must believe. The school's loving care enables pupils to flourish and strive to achieve their full academic potential, with data confirming that pupils do indeed succeed. Behaviour of pupils is of the highest standard. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are extremely high. The school has very effective strategies for personal, spiritual and emotional development, and pupils are able to articulate how they are all important, unique and special – of value to the school community and to God. There are many good opportunities for pupils to express their care for others through giving and serving in the community. The pupils' opinions are sought in many very positive ways. There are also effective ways of acting on their views, involving the pupils in new initiatives and so enabling their growth as independent spiritual beings. The school environment is used very well to promote spiritual development. Parents explain that the Christian character of the school can be felt as soon as the building is entered and 'teachers don't just teach about Christian care, they model it'. Recent parental questionnaires record very high support for this ethos. RE lessons offer a much valued chance for deeper study of Christianity and other faiths, although planning does not always give time to explore specific areas in sufficient depth, or to enrich lessons with visits to places of worship.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective Worship takes an important place in the life of Etching Hill and has a strong role in developing pupils' personal spirituality. A range of whole school and class worship experiences ensure that the content is relevant and age appropriate. The school's Christian values are regularly referred to within worship, to reinforce their importance and root them within biblical teaching. Individual acts of worship are carefully planned by staff and the church team, who regularly lead worship and whose contribution is appreciated by pupils. However, the variety offered across each week means that long term themes are not always fully developed. Experiences offered range from lively and interactive activities, to those that are more quiet and reflective, although opportunities for pupils to plan and lead are limited at present. The newly formed Christian Council are actively working to explore new areas for involvement. Pupils particularly enjoy singing, and know a wide range of worship songs. They also have a good knowledge of the Bible and many of the stories found within it. School worship is deliberately inclusive of pupils of other faiths or none. Pupils have some understanding of the importance of Jesus for Christians and are very aware of the place of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity and make connections with their local parish church, which is dedicated to the Holy Spirit. Pentecost, which is their 'patronal festival' is a particular time of celebration. Pupils also have a good understanding of other major Christian festivals. Pupils enjoy times of worship in the church, as well as age related sessions with the chaplain on Bible themes from the lectionary. The youngest pupils also enjoy a Godly Play approach which encourages them to wonder about Bible stories for themselves. Older pupils are able to discuss how Easter is linked with resurrection, salvation and hope. The school values the place of prayer and reflection, although as yet opportunities for pupils to share and articulate their own prayers are somewhat limited. Reflection diaries enable pupils to ponder and formulate their own ideas. Older pupils are used in a positive way to help younger ones learn how to use these reflective opportunities. Pupils are encouraged to join in liturgical prayer and responses and particularly value special 'agape', worship when bread and grapes are shared among them. The school has worked hard to introduce work on the worldwide Christian

church since the last inspection. This could be further enhanced by exploring the diversity of Christian worship in the local area.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision for a school in which Christian values and relationships are lived out and underpin all areas of school life. This vision is fully shared and endorsed by the whole staff team and governing body. This reliance on God in carrying out their role is beautifully portrayed by the use of the 'mantle of care' offered at the altar in the welcome service that starts the year. Governors are very active within the life of the school, taking a full role within the school's leadership team. They are involved in the school's self-evaluation process and in strategic planning for its future. Since the previous inspection there have been many positive steps to involve governors in listening to the views of pupils. As a result they can discuss the impact of the school's Christian effectiveness with confidence. All staff are involved in leading worship and embedding the Christian values across the whole curriculum, with excellent guidance from the senior management team. Staff are supported very well and are given good opportunities to develop professionally. The importance given to the Christian ethos of the school is shown by the recent decision to release the RE and worship co-ordinator from class teaching to focus on this aspect of school life. Parents speak extremely highly of the care and support offered, not only to their children, but to their whole family. Parents tell how the school 'goes the extra mile' to support and demonstrate loving care for all the family. Despite the interregnum the church and deanery team continues to work in close partnership with the school, offering strong support through the team ministry and the dedicated contribution of the lay minister who also serves as school chaplain. This relationship is supported by initiatives such as a weekly 'pray, bake, read', which involves the church congregation more closely in the life of the school. Parents recognise and value this strong partnership with the church and explain that Christian support does not end with the school day, but extends to prayer on Sundays, baptism and supportive care. Links with the diocese are strong and staff and governors benefit from appropriate training and resources that are available.

SIAMS report September 2016 Etching Hill CE Primary School, Rugeley WS15 2XY