

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

Stanford in the Vale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
High Street Stanford in the Vale Oxon SN7 8LH	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Oxford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Date of inspection	11 June 2018
Date of last inspection	11 July 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 123159
Headteacher	Amanda Willis
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598

## School context

This is a smaller than average school in a rural village context. Most children are White British. A significant group of pupils are drawn from out of the official catchment area. The school serves some forces families. Pupils attracting additional pupil premium support is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with a special educational need and/or disability (SEND) is well below the national average. The school has experienced a number of temporary staff changes in recent years due to statutory maternity leave.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stanford in the Vale as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The understanding of pupils and staff as unique children of God results in the all-round flourishing of each pupil and in highly effective professional development for all staff.
- The headteacher's dedicated and compassionate Christian leadership ensures this school's care for pupils, families and staff is exemplary.

- The deeply embedded Christian values of the school shape its character so that a confident and extremely inclusive Christian community is created that is most hospitable and where pupils of all backgrounds are respected and welcomed.
- The impact of the parish priest in governance, pastoral care and curriculum support is exemplary and together with the wider school leadership has a hugely positive impact on community cohesion and care.

#### Areas to improve

- Work with the diocese to develop a theologically based understanding of the school's vision so that it is evident in all school documentation and clearly explained in ways appropriate to different stakeholders.
- Build upon recent training to develop a theologically based provision map that draws on effective current practices and explains to staff, pupils and parents the Christian underpinning and the methods and opportunities used to develop spirituality at the school.
- Demonstrate the impact of the school's Christian Character on standards in religious education (RE) and the humanities so challenge for all pupils in learning tasks is consistently high and their learning is both creative and deep.

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

Through ongoing development and focussed Christian leadership, the school has maintained its outstanding distinctive character and effectiveness as a church school. The school clearly operates as a distinctly Christian community and is deeply hospitable to all as a consequence. The school's Christian character has a high profile because it is extremely important to this school community. This has supported the relatively fluid staff in recent times to maintain the school's way of working effectively. Underpinning the highly effective work of the school and the very positive relationships at all levels is a raft of well embedded Christian values. These Christian values include hope, forgiveness and trust, for example. The school's primary focus is to fully develop the potential of each person as a child of God. Consequently, the school works hard to ensure wide opportunities to develop skills and talents within and beyond the curriculum. Examples of this include singing at Dorchester Abbey and the Sweet Shack Enterprise Project. The school has wide, high quality provision for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally (SMSC). This provision results in confident, interesting and socially aware pupils who generally act out of a sense of compassion and integrity. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to develop an understanding of spirituality. However, a clear understanding at all levels of the school community is not yet fully established which for some people limits a clear understanding of how to promote spiritual development. Overall, standards of attainment and progress at the school are good, arising out of the school's careful teaching and tracking to ensure pupils achieve their God-given potential. The curriculum is

creative and interesting and prospers the school's Christian values. An example of this is exploring hope and care through a Fairtrade project which included a visit to the local Coop store to see Fairtrade in action. The curriculum has a distinct focus on care for the creation which is promoting an increasing appreciation of God as Creator. This work is admirably extended through forest schools work and involvement in Royal Horticultural Society events at The Grange. Care for others is developed through well considered charitable endeavours such as the recent UNICEF big sleep over. These topics and activities develop an ethic of care and results in thoughtful pupils. However, an active involvement and a determined advocacy for specific causes is not yet evident amongst the pupils limiting the impact of their efforts. RE clearly shapes the character of this school. Pupils are greatly excited by the subject and have most positive attitudes towards it. RE makes an important contribution to widening pupils' cultural knowledge, for example, through visits to Oxford's Jericho Synagogue and Oxford (Quaker) Friends' Meeting House. Through RE, pupils widen their knowledge of diverse communities and explore the big questions of life. This results in pupils that can express themselves clearly with respect and who are able to honour difference. However, challenge in some learning tasks is not always as carefully matched to pupils as it should be. This limits the depth of learning in some RE topics. Although, RE promotes an awareness of the diversity of faiths, pupils' understanding of Christianity and Anglicanism as multicultural is not as strong as it could be. The school has made significant progress over the last year to improve the attendance of its most vulnerable pupils. In securing good attendance, the school works from a position of Christian care and challenge to ensure children and families are really well supported.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship has improved greatly since the last inspection with the school acting carefully upon the development points. This has resulted in collective worship that is much more varied and includes the pupils more fully in its leadership. Pupils are clearly more engaged when actively involved and articulate they would like even greater opportunity to lead. Despite significant progress, pupils' understanding of the component parts of an act of worship is still not as strong as it might be which sometimes limits their capacity to build high quality acts of worship for themselves. Pupils' understanding of the Christian year has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils joyfully take part in a range of festivals at church and in school. They utilise liturgical colours informed by the clear hall display to mark the seasons of the church's year. As a consequence, pupils develop a sense of the rhythm of faith in life. The most recent Christmas service was written about in a national newspaper, with the commentator describing the spiritual impact it had upon her as significant. The words and forms of worship in school mirror that in Saint Denys' Church. This develops pupils' liturgical literacy and enables them to participate comfortably and with integrity in worship both in church and school. The skilled staff coordinator for collective worship ensures that the planning involves a range of people including staff, pupils, the popular parish priest and the very well-considered 'Open the Book' team. Together they ensure that the pupils' knowledge of the Bible, of the person of Jesus and of the Trinity are developed well in engaging and varied ways which the pupils greatly appreciate. Pupils' awareness of the life of Jesus is especially strong as a result of biblically based provision.

However, knowledge of worldwide Anglicanism and multicultural Christianity is underdeveloped in collective worship themes, limiting pupils' full appreciation of the Christian tradition. Themes in collective worship make clear links with the school values and help pupils to apply them in everyday life. Examples include pupils readily rearticulating the accounts of Jesus healing the blind man and calming the storm in a discussion of the Christian value of trust. A periodic focus on inspirational people such as Paralympian Nick Vujicic helps pupils to have high aspirations and to reach for their own potential wherever that lies. Prayer and reflection have developed well since the last inspection with pupils and staff particularly valuing opportunities to be still. This adds greatly to spiritual development in school. Further opportunities such as the popular prayer space tents and the Bubble-to-Heaven prayer machine gives pupils further opportunity to utilise prayer within the rhythm of their daily life. The collective worship coordinator and governors ensure that statutory requirements are met. They also ensure that there is an effective system of self-review involving a range of stakeholders so that this aspect of school life is ever improving.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding. The Christian leadership at all levels of the school results in extremely positive relationships within and beyond the school. The headteacher secures an ethos where everyone is seen as a child of God and worthy of exemplary care. This forms the heart of the school's work and vision. However, the wider application of this vision and its theological underpinning is not yet understood fully by all stakeholders or is as explicit in school systems and documentation, such as the school's four key drivers, as it might be. This sometimes limits the impact of the vision. The headteacher consistently models the Christian values of the school and exercises a deeply considerate leadership approach. As a result, wellbeing of staff and pupils is central and a key strength of this school. An example of this is the school's emergent work in mental health which ensures everyone has someone to talk to if needed. Arising from its exemplary Christian care, the school responds well to the needs of all groups. It is especially responsive to the particular needs of forces families. The school utilises its resources well to ensure both inclusion and pupil progress. The headteacher sets high expectations for all encouraging everyone to work towards their God-given potential. Staff and governors monitor and evaluate effectively and track pupil progress and social needs with care so that everyone has a clear grasp of each pupil's needs. Whilst there was a significant dip in attainment and progress of year 2 and year 6 pupils last year, the general pattern is one of high attainment and progress in English and maths. Governors and staff have in place robust improvement plans that are already responding to the attainment dip. However, challenge for higher attaining pupils in RE and the humanities is not always as strong as it should be occasionally limiting the depth of their learning. High standards extend to staff too. The school is effective in ensuring staff professional development and in preparing staff as future school leaders. Highly productive links with the diocese and the church schools within the Springline partnership of schools ensures challenge and support for the leaders of this church school. Further the school benefits from the non-church schools of the partnership, for example, in developing inclusion with Fitzwaryn Special School. These links have been formative in this school retaining its outstanding practice and in improving its areas for development. The parish priest is exemplary in his work with the school in governance, pastoral care (for

example skills in working with bereaved children), in curriculum and in leading worship. With the headteacher he is key to ensuring that the caring ethos of the school extends to the community too. Consequently, the school with the church plays a hugely significant part in community cohesion. Governors are well led by the chair of governors. Together they monitor and evaluate bringing about demonstrable improvement of the church school aspects. Governors ensure statutory requirements in RE and collective worship are met with positive outcomes. They are effective in supporting the leadership of the enthusiastic and highly competent RE and collective worship leader. The leader ensures RE and collective worship inspire staff and pupils alike and significantly shapes the school ethos. Governors ensure the school has a Christian values based curriculum that engages pupils and therefore shapes positive and respectful attitudes. Through the curriculum and the school's Christian values, the school leaders secure the vision for the all-round development of each child as a child of God. This curriculum has a clear impact upon pupils' SMSC development. The curriculum results in well-rounded pupils who demonstrate a sense of empathy and respect for others as well as a strong sense of their own inherent worth. Parents rightly speak well of this school. They recognise that in this place of Christian nurture their children learn to behave in a most considerate and respectful way. They see their children shine with a well-placed pride as their talents are identified and enabled to flourish to the full.

SIAMS report June 2018 Stanford in the Vale CE VC Primary School Oxfordshire SN7 8LH