



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Anne's Church of England (VC) Primary School

St Anne's Vale  
Brown Edge, Stoke-on-Trent  
ST6 8TA

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 12 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 9 December 2010

School's unique reference number: 124238

Headteacher: Val Hall

Inspector's name and number: Helen Gilbert 633

#### School context

St Anne's Church of England Primary is a popular one-form entry school situated in the semi-rural setting of Brown Edge, just outside Stoke-on-Trent. The leadership team, vicar and a number of governors have changed since the last SIAS Inspection. The school has very close links with the local parish church, the diocese and other Christian denominations. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is average. The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding or from ethnic minority groups is below average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Anne's as a Church of England school are good

- The care, dedication and strong leadership of the head teacher has ensured that both staff and pupils are able to develop and be successful and that standards are rising.
- The commitment to living out the Christian values of love, kindness, joy, peace, patience, faithfulness, self-control, perseverance and forgiveness supports both pupils' spiritual and moral development and their understanding of the Christian faith.
- The Governing Body provides a very high level of support for the school.
- The relationships with the parish church, the diocese and other Christian groups are very strong.

#### Areas to improve

- Improve pupils' understanding of the teachings of Jesus through parables so that they can readily apply them to their own lives.
- Provide further opportunities for spiritual development by involving pupils in the creation of an outdoor area for quiet reflection.
- Involve pupils, staff and governors in more systematic evaluation of the impact of worship on the spiritual development of pupils.

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

The Christian character of the school is clearly evident. The website, prospectus and displays throughout the school reflect the school's Christian values of love, kindness, joy, peace, patience, faithfulness, self-control, perseverance and forgiveness and these are linked to the fruits of the spirit through daily collective worship. As a result pupils speak readily about what it means to belong to a Christian school and affirm that these values influence their attitudes, behaviour and relationships. They understand that the school has a special relationship with the church and see the church as a special and safe place where they can worship God. They believe they are special and know that they are cared for and that adults in the school will always support and help them. The head teacher firmly believes that it is her responsibility as a Christian leader to know her pupils well and to ensure that all children achieve the best they can. Within this environment attendance is very good, pupils thrive and standards are rising. This is reflected in rising scores in the Year 1 phonics check, Year 2 assessments in Reading and Writing and Year 6 assessments in Reading, Writing and Maths which are all above national averages. However, the school is not complacent and has identified the next step as improving the attainment of higher ability pupils and the proficiency of all pupils in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Parents are very positive about the school, describing it as 'inclusive,' friendly and welcoming,' and 'very caring', and say that as a result pupils 'flourish'. Parents and carers of pupils with additional needs are particularly appreciative of the work of the school to support their children. Pupils are very enthusiastic about religious education (RE), see it as an important area of learning and say that teachers make these lessons fun. As a result RE, together with visits to the parish church, makes a significant contribution to their developing understanding of key Christian traditions and practices such as baptism and communion. Pupils also have some awareness of some of the festivals of other faith groups. However, their understanding of the beliefs and practices of other faiths needs further development. Children have numerous opportunities to raise money for a range of charities and see this as important, but do not yet readily link such activity to the teachings of Jesus.

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

Worship has a central place in the school day and pupils and staff participate enthusiastically. This term there is a focus on the fruits of the spirit and this is helping pupils to relate the school's core Christian values to the teaching of the bible and to link these to their daily lives. As a result they say that worship influences their relationships and helps them to exercise forgiveness, resolve arguments, show kindness and help and support each other. Pupils readily talk about the successes and achievements of their peers. Since the last SIAS inspection children have taken a greater role in planning and leading worship and every class prepares an act of worship each term. These are well attended by parents and families. Pupils also participate in worship regularly through songs and bringing prayers they have written to the whole school. They do this with confidence. As a result both formal and informal prayer has a central place in worship and is valued by pupils. They are able to talk about different aspects of prayer. They appreciate the prayer basket where they can place their personal written prayers, which will then be offered to God on their behalf. The head teacher plays a leading role in worship and each Monday introduces the theme for the week, which is then followed up by other worship leaders. This is consolidated through classroom worship each Friday, which enables pupils of all ages to lead alongside staff and also to reflect on the week's worship and record their responses in their reflection books. Worship often includes bible stories from both the old and new testament and pupils can recall a number of these stories. However, their understanding of the parables of Jesus and the application of these to their own lives still needs further development. At Christmas and Easter pupils participate in special services in the church and these are well attended by families. Anglican traditions are honoured through worship and as a result pupils are aware of the liturgical colours and the rites of baptism and communion. Most pupils have a good understanding of the significance of the Christmas and Easter stories. Some older pupils are also able to talk about the significance of Lent and link this time with the time Jesus spent in

the desert. The school is introducing pupils to the concept of the Trinity of God as father, son and holy spirit. However, pupils' understanding of the significance of Advent and Pentecost has yet to be developed. Worship leaders from a range of Christian groups further enriches the worship experience of pupils giving them an understanding that within Christianity there is a range of worship forms. Evaluation of the impact of worship for pupils is still informal and this is an area for development.

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

All members of the school community pay tribute to the strong leadership of the head teacher and the care she demonstrates towards all her pupils. Her determination to improve the quality of teaching and the whole learning experience of pupils has resulted in the school moving from satisfactory to good in the OFSTED Inspection in 2012. Immediately following this she put in place strategies to ensure that the school continued to pursue excellence. These included involvement in a teacher training initiative. She develops her staff at all levels and allows them to develop their own leadership skills. As a result the new deputy head, appointed since the last SIAS inspection, is able to model good subject leadership and lead the teaching training programme, as well as being an exemplar of excellent classroom practice. The recently appointed RE co-ordinator has been well supported and encouraged to develop her role. Her enthusiasm is infectious and through her support staff are developing the confidence and skills to teach RE in a way that is exciting and engaging for pupils. Investment in and support for all staff ensures that retention is good and this ensures continuity. The Governing Body is very active and supportive and is well led by the Chair of Governors. Recruitment of new governors has ensured a good mix of skills and experience. Since the last SIAS inspection Governors have ensured good financial stability for the school and secured the building of an extension. They are well informed by the head teacher and deputy head and work effectively through their committees. They know their school well and are proud of the progress the school has made. Whilst they hold the head teacher in very high regard they are not afraid to ask important questions. They are involved in reviewing the progress of the school and say that since the last inspection the Christian character has become more central to all that the school does. However, the involvement of governors in evaluating the impact of worship and RE for pupils is an area for development. As a result of the supportive culture within the school there is a range of past staff and helpers who still return as volunteers and this is a significant benefit to the school. Pupils also have a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills in variety of roles such as School Councillors, Librarians, Class Monitors, Team Captains, Playground Leaders and Reading Partners.

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