

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Augustine's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School	
Hanson Lane Halifax HX1 5PG	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Calderdale
Date of inspection	19 June 2017
Date of last inspection	4 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 107543
Headteacher	Leona Binner
Inspector's name and number	Lorraine Hanson 769

School context

St Augustine's is a smaller than average primary school with 185 pupils on roll. The school is located close to the centre of Halifax. The majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage and an overwhelming majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007. Staffing issues, which are being addressed, have caused some strain on the school during this year.

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

- This is a highly inclusive school, where the Christian family environment promotes care for one another and for people in the community and beyond.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour are nurtured through the Christian ethos of the school and they develop a strong sense of compassion and respect.
- The spirituality of pupils is well developed by a range of opportunities provided through collective worship, religious education and the curriculum, together with the strong links with the church.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are well development through wide-ranging experiences provided by the rich curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
- In 2016 the outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 dipped to well below national average in reading and writing. This is being addressed and the relevant interventions are having noticeable impact.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that there is sufficient focus on the core subjects of reading and writing to enable all pupils to flourish in their academic development.
- Implement a robust system of monitoring and evaluating the distinctiveness of the school as a church school, which includes governors, to promote continued improvement.
- Continue to give focus in collective worship to the Trinity to further develop pupils' understanding and awareness of the significance of this for Christians.

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

St Augustine's is a welcoming, caring and nurturing school with a strong Christian ethos. This ethos is underpinned by distinctive Christian values, which include humility, peace, creation, forgiveness, friendship and trust. The teachings of Jesus are reflected through these values. The teachings of Islam and other major world faiths are also included, which are appropriate to pupils of all faiths and none. The core Christian values are communicated to parents and the wider community through the school website and letters, which addresses a development point from the last inspection. The Christian values are woven through the curriculum, RE and collective worship. They are understood across the school community and impact positively on pupils' behaviour, attitudes and achievements. Pupils are courteous and compassionate. There is a strong family feel in this harmonious, multi-faith school. Older pupils readily support younger ones and relationships across the school are positive. There is a high level of commitment to respect and inclusion, which is appreciated by parents. The enriched curriculum, visits and activities provide a wide range of opportunities which promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils excel and build confidence through the many sporting competitions and activities provided. Pupils show compassion and are motivated through the school ethos to initiate events to raise funds for charities, such as Children in Need, the Rotary Club shoebox appeal and the local food bank. They are keen to contribute to school life as members of the RE committee, school council or sports ambassadors. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is in line with national average. Pupils show understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and respect the diversity and difference within other faith communities. A high proportion of children begin school with skills and abilities below average, or well below average. The progress pupils make through Reception Class, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has improved over recent years and has regularly been at the expected level or above. By the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment in phonics development has caught up with the expected level, including for disadvantaged pupils. The attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 has improved over recent years to 2015, when the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly in-line with average in reading, writing and mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils. There has also been an upward trend in achievement in Key Stage 2, particularly in maths and reading. In 2015 'value added' was broadly in line with the national average, although attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 was still below the national average. Attainment at higher levels is regularly lower than average for all pupils including disadvantaged pupils. Outcomes for different groups has varied over time, although there is no particular trend for any one group. In 2016 the Key Stage 2 SATs results dipped and progress in reading and writing was below average and significantly below average for disadvantaged pupils. The progress of girls in 2016 was well below average in reading and writing, whereas the achievement in maths was broadly average for boys, girls and disadvantaged pupils. In response, the school has focused specific support for pupils, so that they are working in smaller groups. Personalised learning and intervention programmes have been put in place and are having noticeable impact. A member of staff is available at lunch-time in the nurture room to support pupils to develop confidence and independence. There is a focus on developing comprehension skills and guided reading takes place every day. All pupils are involved in the 'reading buddies' scheme, where pairs of pupils from different year groups regularly work together to develop their literacy skills. The school's internal tracking data shows that the majority of pupils are making expected progress.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily collective worship is valued by staff and pupils and is central to the life of the school. Pupils participate with enjoyment, reverence and passion and show a good understanding of Christian teachings, traditions and Christian festivals. Worship impacts positively on pupils' spiritual development, their behaviour and attitudes. The collective worship overview is well planned by the headteacher and the vicar. Themes include Bible stories, readings from the Old and New Testaments, Christian festivals and focus on a Christian value each half term. The current Christian value is 'Trust' and Psalm 31 was used by the vicar to illustrate that we can trust in God for protection and refuge. The teachings of Jesus are regularly included through New Testament stories and Christian values, which set expectations for pupil's behaviour and attitudes. Worship is led by the headteacher, staff, the vicar and by the pupils themselves. With initial guidance from a diocesan adviser and foundation governor, pupils of the RE Committee and Year 6 pupils plan and lead collective worship with growing confidence and independence. This addresses a development point from the last inspection. Anglican liturgy is used in collective worship, for example, the vicar opened worship by saying, 'Peace be with you' and the school replied, 'And also with you'. Time for reflection is a regular feature, together with prayer, drama and the singing of worship songs. Pupils know a wide range of songs such as 'Our God is a Great Big God', which they sing with joy. The Christian symbols of the cross, the Bible and candles are on display on the worship table. The vicar referred to each in turn as he explained the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils' awareness of the Trinity is at an early stage, so they are generally not yet mindful of the significance of this for Christians. Collective worship is usually organised for the whole school, with occasional key stage or class worship. A celebration assembly is held on Fridays, which parents attend. The school hall is used as a church on Sundays by the St Augustine's Church congregation. At Easter, the school focuses on the Stations of the Cross and at Christmas pupils take part in the Nativity, which develops pupils' understanding

of Christian beliefs and traditions. Festivals of other world religions are also celebrated, for example Eids. Personal spirituality is well developed and is nurtured through collective worship and opportunities for reflection and prayer during the school day. There are reflective areas in each classroom. There is a prayer tree in the hall and three prayer jars for pupils to offer their personal prayers. Prayers written by pupils are often offered during collective worship and also during church Sunday services. A pupil commented about prayer, 'It makes me feel calm inside', and another said, 'It makes me feel emotional sometimes, when I pray for people in need'. Governors regularly attend school worship, although they do not write an evaluation. Pupils of the RE committee regularly evaluate collective worship. This has led to improvements, such as moving the prayer tree into the hall where it is more accessible for pupils.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education (RE) is well planned, teaching is good, pupils progress well and find lessons stimulating and interesting. All teachers plan and teach RE, which addresses a development point from the previous inspection. There is a comprehensive action plan and long-term curriculum plan in place, which promotes consistency and improvements. Teachers utilise a range of teaching styles and resources. Parents say their children talk about what they have been learning in RE and collective worship at home, with interest and excitement. The RE curriculum covers Christianity mainly, together with other major world religions including Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. Pupils understand that there are religious beliefs that may differ from their own. A parent commented, 'I like my children coming to a Christian school, as they learn about different beliefs and it will help them to accept differences in life.' Pupils acquire a good level of knowledge of different religions, which enables them to make meaningful comparisons with Christianity, as well as making connections between faith and actions. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson pupils recalled the previous lesson when they compared the Ten Commandments with the Five Pillars of Islam as guidance for a code for living. This was followed up with the story of the Good Samaritan. Through talking with a partner and skilful teacher questioning pupils were able to reflect on what the story told them about making good choices. Pupils readily give examples of how stories from the Bible help them to live their lives. For example, a child commented, 'The story of Noah shows us we should always listen to God'. In a Key Stage 2 lesson pupils discussed how stories from the Quran can be used to inspire Muslims regarding how to live their lives. The RE curriculum is enhanced through visits to Christ Church and to the local mosque. Pupils also sometimes visit other places of worship including a synagogue and a sikh temple. The vicar leads mock baptisms for classes to support the RE curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy the RE Days, which are held every half term and focus on Christian values. Hand to Mouth Ministries lead activities and spiritual reflection, for example on the 'Journey into Creation'. Pupils are confident to talk about their own religion in front of members of their class, who listen with interest and respect. Senior leaders monitor RE through scrutiny of pupil's work, which takes place half termly, together with drop-ins and lesson observations with feedback to staff to promote further improvement. Governors are kept informed through visits to school and meetings with staff and pupils. The pupils of the RE Committee gave a presentation to a Governing Body meeting in the Autumn Term, about their roles and responsibilities, what they are doing in RE and the charitable events they have organised. Pupils answered questions and were able to speak with knowledge and confidence.

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

The headteacher and school leaders have a clear vision for the school as a church school, which is underpinned by Christian values and supported by all staff. Members of the school community articulate the positive impact the Christian values have on pupils and the life of the school. Governors bring a high level of commitment and expertise to their role, they are well informed and active in school. The three development points from the last inspection have been met. The school's Christian ethos is enriched through the strong links with St Augustine's Church. The vicar leads collective worship weekly in school and provides practical, prayerful and pastoral support to members of the school community. Parents, the local church, the diocese and community contribute fully to school life for the benefit of pupils. Formal monitoring and evaluation of distinctive church school aspects is not yet in place. Mutual support and the school's Christian ethos has been supportive during difficult times. School leaders and staff are presently focusing especially on the teaching and learning of reading and writing across the school to raise the academic outcomes for pupils. The school's links with two local schools and links with communities in other countries support the development of pupils' understanding of local and global communities and fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents appreciate what is on offer at St Augustine's for their children. A parent remarked, 'The school has a lovely family feel'. Collective worship and RE are well managed and meet statutory requirements.