

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Simon and St Jude Church of England Primary School			
Address	Alexander Avenue, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire. LE9 7AH		
Date of inspection	23 May 2019	Status of school	Primary Academy in Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust inspected as voluntary controlled.
Diocese	Leicester	URN	I39200

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

St Simon and St Jude is a primary school with 187 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school is a member of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust (DLAT). Ofsted currently rates the school as Requiring Improvement. The school was rebranded in September 2018 and the current head has been in post since September 2017.

The school's Christian vision

'Living and learning in the eyes of God'

Show me your way, LORD. Teach me your path. Psalm 25:4

At our school we have high aspirations for all our community: to grow, to be well-rounded and confident with a strong sense of self-worth. We teach children to love to learn and learn to love, respectfully and inclusively.

Key findings

- There is a real sense of solidarity throughout the whole school community following the recent change of name and creation of the new school vision firmly rooted in the Bible, giving a solid foundation on which to build. All stakeholders recently participated in creating the vision and contributing to the mosaic. This has led to a sense of ownership and all members of the school community communicating the Biblical basis of the new vision with clarity and understanding.
- The articulation and visibility of the Christian vision evidences the commitment of the school's leaders to further develop the Christian character of the school.
- Strong, often innovative, support given for vulnerable pupils ensures that all are recognised as being unique and enables each individual to flourish.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to develop deep spiritual thinking in school but meaningful and mutually beneficial links with local churches are encouraging pupils and adults to ask questions about the Christian faith.

Areas for development

- Leaders and governors to ensure that there is an ongoing process which evaluates the effectiveness of the school as a church school as it continues its journey as St Simon and St Jude.
- To raise aspirations through encouraging pupils to engage in social and ethical action beyond the school community, developing companion links with the world church and schools internationally.
- To develop religious literacy and deeper spiritual thinking, to enable the school family to be inspired to engage in personal prayer and reflection.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The school's biblically rooted, deeply held and widely understood vision is not yet firmly embedded but unquestionably gives the school a solid foundation on which to build. Following several years of turbulence, school leaders re-evaluated the direction of their school, not because they had to, but to give the school a clear Christian vision for the future. The name of the school was changed in September 2018 so it was no longer known as 'Weavers' but clearly reflected the name of the local church, St Simon and St Jude. All of the school family was involved in the revitalisation process, voting on which Bible verse and values to underpin the vision which reflect the high aspirations for each member of the community. Children's images were used to contribute to the new logo and staff speak passionately about St Jude being known for helping people in challenging circumstances. This school hasn't just been rebranded it is as if it has been reborn. This unashamedly Christian vision is highly visible throughout the school and is being incorporated into documentation as policies are reviewed. It is clearly evident that each member of the school community is proud of the school's original Christian heritage and speaks enthusiastically about how this new found vision is enabling everyone to contribute to its renewal.

Despite their difficult journey, staff morale is remarkably high. There is strong sense of support and staff speak passionately of the headteacher setting an example by not being afraid to join in and being an excellent role model. They speak of a calmness and serenity and the strong wellbeing support they receive. Joint staff projects such as 'Covert Comrade' and '#you've been mugged' contribute to the positive welfare of all staff. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the broad curriculum offered by the school. Vulnerable pupils, of which the school has many, are innovatively supported by resources and initiatives provided through the 'Beehive'. This is an area of the school which has been developed specifically to provide specialist emotional and behavioural support for pupils, whilst also supporting academic achievement enabling pupils to make good progress. There are effective systems in place for the early identification of issues connected to mental health and well being. School leaders access relevant support for pupils through referral to appropriate agencies. Standards of behaviour are good and pupils speak of God seeing everything. Each pupil is treated as an individual because staff are unwavering in their belief that each child is special in 'the eyes of God'. Pupils are aware that they are all unique and understand that everyone has their own opinions, for example about faith, but speak with maturity about respecting and welcoming everyone.

Standards of attainment are below national averages but progress measures are increasing. Leaders clearly recognise where improvements need to be made and make courageous decisions to ensure that each child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The school is part of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust (DLAT) and this strong partnership is increasingly leading to improvements in pupils' achievements through intensive regular monitoring and support. It is also evident that despite its prominence within the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) the school's vision is distinctively its own. Governors pray that God will give them wisdom to make the right decisions at the start of their meetings and regularly monitor the Christian character of the school. However, this lacks a more strategic and evaluative approach to enable the school to develop the growing capability it has to flourish as a Church of England school.

Leaders at the school have been, quite rightly, focussed on ensuring that the school has strong foundations on which to build. They have already identified that pupils now need to see themselves as part of a wider world in order to raise their aspirations through the development of meaningful global partnerships. There is a lack of opportunities for pupils to do something to support other countries and challenge what is happening in the world such as plastic pollution in the oceans. They want to 'save the world'. The school's use of 'Understanding Christianity' in RE has helped pupils understand Christian concepts and speak about Biblical texts. Staff have been well trained to use this resource demonstrating a commitment by the RE coordinator, to ensure it is delivered effectively by school staff. Good practice is evident in teaching religious education and pupils understand the importance of studying world religions. Pupils have visited different places of worship giving a meaningful understanding of different faiths.

Partnerships within the community are a strength of the school. The strong, mutually beneficial links with the church of St Simon and St Jude are enabling the Christian vision to become more established and deeply rooted.

A Lent Club took place in school for parents and children telling the Easter story through 'The Greatest Showman.' This intertwining between all local churches and the school is enabling the needy in the community to access a food bank and counselling services. Parents speak of new relationships with school staff and everything in school being based around the values of faith which leads to them being treated with compassion and respect. They comment on the headteacher driving and strengthening the clearer direction within the school. Parents attend joint monthly services on a Monday afternoon at the church followed by a valuable time of sharing and fellowship afterwards. Staff assist at church events in their own time.

Themes for collective worship currently focus on the key Christian values in school and times of worship are led by a range of school staff building on the theme throughout the week. These times together are described by the local vicar as being at lot more about worship and not just a performance. Pupils participate enthusiastically and sing particularly well, accompanied by a pianist who contributes to and inspires a real sense of worship. The diversity of local clergy leading worship invites the school family to express themselves in a range of devotional experiences reflecting varying traditions. Pupils talk of writing prayers and prayer being part of the culture of the school. They describe prayer spaces readily available around school and some children do use these with direction. However, they are unable to articulate how they use prayer readily in their own lives, especially in informal contexts and how worship opportunities contribute to their own spiritual development.

In the words of a member of staff, 'St Simon and St Jude is a different school. It has Christ at its heart. We are on a journey but what a privilege it has been to be part of that journey'.

Headteacher	Becky Dolby-Molson
Inspector's name and number	Joy Hardy 944