

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Hope Hamilton Church of England Primary School

Sandhills Avenue
North Hamilton
Leicester
LE5 1LU

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Leicester
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	26 September 2017
Date of last inspection	26 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 133962
Headteacher	Jacky Farnell
Inspector's name and number	Carol Price 869

School context

Hope Hamilton is a medium sized city school with 458 pupils on roll. An increase in pupil numbers resulted in the school becoming two form entry in 2015. The school serves a large and growing housing estate consisting of private and social housing. Facilities on the estate are limited and local groups are facilitated by the church, which meets in the school building. Pupils from an ethnic minority background are significantly above national, representing 18 different ethnicities and 28 different languages are spoken. The percentage of special educational needs pupils and those in receipt of pupil premium funding is similar to national. The headteacher has been in post since the school opened in 2004. The school is currently working towards academy conversion.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hope Hamilton as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian ethos is deeply embedded in all aspects of school life and all members of the school community consistently talk about the impact that this has on their daily lives.
- The clear understanding that 'God loves everyone' ensures that learners' understanding and respect for diversity and difference is a strength throughout the school.
- Pupils readily make links between the school's values and biblical teaching, and this has a significant impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Inclusive and engaging collective worship promotes explicit Christian values that impact positively on the behaviour and attitudes of learners.
- Leaders' understanding of the needs of the school community ensure that Hope Hamilton, as a church school, is accessible to all, whatever their culture, belief or ability.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the school continues to develop as a church school as it grows and moves through the conversion to academy trust status by: a) embedding opportunities for learners to plan and lead worship in order to further enhance the impact of worship b) embedding governor monitoring and evaluation so that the school's performance as a church school continues to strengthen.

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

Hope Hamilton is a warm, welcoming and happy school with a caring, nurturing and family ethos. This is overwhelmingly attributed to the school's Christian ethos and belief that 'God loves everyone as an individual so we should love and respect others and love ourselves as God loves us'. This is deeply understood and articulated by all members of the school community. It is strongly reflected in the way staff understand the differing needs of learners and talk about all pupils being unique, resulting in learners achieving good outcomes whatever their background or ability. As a result, parents talk about wanting to send their children to the school because faith is important and their children are 'safe and well looked after'.

Learners impressively explain that 'that no matter who you are, you will be welcome at this school' because 'we are all different, but all equal'. They are confident to talk naturally, and in depth, about their own faith or non-belief, secure in the knowledge that they are valued and respected and that people are interested in them as individuals. This results in an excellent understanding of a wide variety of different faiths, a deep awareness that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith and a strong understanding and respect for diversity and difference. Pupils are therefore interested and excited by RE and place great value on how it helps provide them with guidance on how to live their lives. This, along with the broad and balanced curriculum, contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners.

The use of Christian symbols, visual prompts and displays ensures that there is a clear understanding across the school that this is a church school; nurturing pupils' spiritual awareness that it is God's love that brings everyone together. The school works hard to ensure that the Christian distinctiveness of the school is understood by the whole school community. The school's Christian vision and aims are explicitly publicised on the website and in documentation and the school uses personal interviews and opportunities to directly converse with parents to promote the school's Christian ethos and to gather their opinions. This enables the school to continue to develop as a church school and ensures that the Christian distinctiveness of the school is promoted in a positive way and in a language that is accessible to all. Similarly, the school uses biblical teaching and Bible stories as a scaffold to help pupils develop a clear understanding of the wide range of Christian values covered by the school. This is highly effective in providing all learners with an extensive knowledge of Bible stories and a clear understanding of the distinctively Christian characteristics of the values that are embedded in the daily life of the school. Consequently, pupils readily make links between Christian values and biblical teaching. For example, pupils explained how the story of God's forgiveness for Jonah helped them to forgive others and give them a fresh start. As a result, the behaviour of learners is exemplary.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school is committed to the provision of high quality, inspirational collective worship that enriches the lives of the whole school community. It is clear that worship plays a central part in the life of the school as it enables the school community to worship and pray together. All members see the importance of worship in the life of the school with staff describing it as 'calming' and a 'time to pause and reflect on the school day'. Pupils describe worship as a time to learn about the right thing to do and can freely explain how different biblical stories have shaped their decision making. For example, learners talk about how the story of the Good Samaritan helps them to understand that they should respect, love and get on with everybody. Indeed, during the inspection this was consistently seen in action with pupils being able to play and work well with each other and quickly offer help to pupils in need whatever their age, ability or background. It is further demonstrated in the care and compassion that pupils show to others through charitable social actions, raising funds for a cancer charity and taking part in an annual shoebox appeal.

The school follows the diocesan themes for worship or focuses on Christian values with regular use being made of biblical material and stories from the life of Jesus. This rich experience enables pupils to gain an impressive knowledge of key Christian beliefs. It enhances SMSC development through giving pupils time to reflect on what they learn from biblical messages and provides them with the opportunity to ask the question 'what would God do?' Staff lead worship on a rota basis and the incumbent and church worker lead worship once a week. As a result, worship is consistently and recognisably Christian and children are developing a good understanding of local Anglican practice and Christian festivals. Learners have a solid understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God and can talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They talk about the Holy Spirit being 'everywhere' and show an understanding of the support that this can give to Christians. Pupils are enthusiastic towards worship, they particularly enjoy singing together and the weekly 'Praise Assembly', as well as the many opportunities to participate in activities, such as role play. Provision for pupils to plan and lead their own acts of worship has been welcomed by learners, although this is not yet completely embedded into the programme of worship. The nature and purpose of prayer is clearly understood and a daily part of school life, with many opportunities for pupils to write prayers for class books and collective worship. A fully resourced multi-faith prayer room is highly valued, it is well used by pupils of all faiths and great worth is placed on the opportunity for personal reflection and spiritual development.

Spiritual and personal reflection time is available for staff at the adult prayer group. Staff, governors and pupils are all involved in evaluating collective worship and regular feedback of analysis by the collective worship leader is securing improvement. For example, the expansion of visual stimuli and props as well as the use of talk partners and standing to sing has led to worship being engaging and inclusive for all pupils.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile and is viewed as a core subject in school. The rich curriculum has been well planned by the RE leader to meet the needs of all the learners in school and as such it makes a valuable contribution to the school's Christian character, and pupils' SMSC development. Themes from the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus, 'Understanding Christianity' and 'Harmony and Diversity' have been combined to ensure that pupils develop a thorough understanding and knowledge of Christianity and have the opportunity to learn about the range of different faiths represented in school. Pupils experience this curriculum through a topic led approach with RE themes being linked to other topics being taught in school. Teaching is creative and engaging and requires pupils to apply a range of skills to deepen their learning. Lessons utilise a range of imaginative activities including film clips, art and role play, for example, using a trivial pursuit style game to compare religions and re-enacting a wedding when considering the theme of belonging. As a result, pupils enjoy and are inspired by the subject and they say that they like being able to discuss, debate and question and particularly like finding out about different points of view. Furthermore, pupils learn exceptionally well. They ask 'big' questions such as 'Why does God allow suffering?' and they talk in depth about religious and Christian concepts, for example, their understanding of the Beatitudes and their interpretations of the difference between agnostic, atheist and theist beliefs. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils in each year make rapid progress from their starting points and are working at or above age related expectations in RE because of the very good quality teaching. Although the school is currently reviewing its assessment system in line with changes made to its curriculum, assessment of RE is thorough and informs both planning and teaching. The development of an RE portfolio and regular moderation activities have a highly positive impact on standards. Insightful monitoring and evaluation by the dedicated RE leader ensures that RE teaching and learning is continually improving. Her secure knowledge and clear vision provides encouragement and support to colleagues and she has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in RE. Her effective monitoring ensures children continue to experience a rich, varied and interesting curriculum.

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

Leaders ensure that the promotion of the school's Christian vision based on the words of Jesus in John 13, 'My command is this. Love each other as I have loved you', is made explicit and accessible to all. It is clearly understood across the school and underpins all aspects of the school's work. This deeply Christian vision provides a firm foundation for a harmonious, inclusive school community that clearly celebrates its rich diversity on a daily basis. It guides all decision making and strategic development and enables the school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes wellbeing and develops the whole child. As a result, provision for SMSC development is exemplary and leaders can readily identify the positive impact that the school's Christian vision and values has on learners' behaviour and attitudes. Thus the resolve to develop strong positive relationships and a sense of self-worth in every child has been successful. Additionally, the strong and mutually supportive links with the Hope Hamilton Church, which uses the school building, contributes to the children's experience of being part of a church school community. The vicar is actively involved in the life of the school as a foundation governor and worship leader and regularly supports the teaching of RE. Parents appreciate the inclusive nature of the school community and value the support they receive from the church and school, as well as opportunities to contribute to school life. The deputy head teacher has responsibility for the development of the Christian ethos of the school and this, along with the development of a governor ethos committee, reflects the status that is given to the school's Christian foundation. The leaders for RE and collective worship are enthusiastic and extremely committed and senior leaders ensure that these areas have a high priority in school. They have a clear understanding of the needs of the school and where strengths and areas for improvement lie. This has led to improvements in the amount of work recorded in RE and a widening of opportunities for pupil involvement in worship. As a result, statutory requirements for both areas are fully met. Staff are supported in their professional development and are provided with training opportunities to fulfil their potential for future leadership across church schools. Strategies to involve stakeholders in self-evaluation are well thought through and are continually developing to match the differing needs of groups in school. This can be seen by the different approaches used to gather the opinions of parents. Although this is enabling leaders to have a clear understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness, the involvement of governors in carrying out their own monitoring and evaluation activities in order to challenge leaders is not yet fully embedded. Nevertheless, evaluation does lead to accurate school improvement planning and all issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The school is continuing to grow in size and plans to become part of a multi-academy trust are at an early stage.