

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Elsecar Holy Trinity Church of England Primary Academy	
Church Street, Elsecar, Barnsley, South Yorkshire. S74 8HS	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Sheffield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	September 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	PRIDE Multi Academy Trust
Date of inspection	12 October 2017
Date of last inspection	10 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	141972
Head of School	Stephen Silverwood
Inspector's name and number	Louise Patterson 310

School context

The school is average in size with 156 pupils on roll with an even gender balance. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and there is a higher than average pupils premium population. There has been a significant turn over in leadership with four head teachers since the last inspection in 2012. There have also been seven teacher appointments in that time. The school was placed into special measures by OFSTED in 2014 and joined the PRIDE Multi Academy Trust in September 2015. The school recently gained English Heritage School Status and Gold Sports Award.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Elsecar Holy Trinity as a Church of England school are good.

- There is a distinctively Christian ethos within the school which is understood and can be articulated by the vast majority of stakeholders. This is having a positive impact on its provision and outcomes for the pupils.
- There are very good relationships throughout the school which are based on Christian values. This results in a very positive and supportive learning environment.
- High quality collective worship, RE and the very strong relationship with the local parish form a solid foundation for the Christian life of the school.
- Pupils are developing into confident, well-behaved and well-rounded individuals in the knowledge that they are loved by God.

Areas to improve

- Develop the role of pupils in the planning and delivery of worship to strengthen their ownership and understanding of what it involves.
- Strengthen pupil appreciation of diverse communities through links with other schools, visitors and visits.
- Embed the range of developments undertaken recently, including the Understanding Christianity materials, to ensure their impact is sustained.

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

The school ethos and treatment of every child as an individual and the quality of the relationships demonstrate that the life and work of the school is firmly rooted in Christian values. The school is making great efforts to encourage

pupils to achieve their God-given potential. Pupils are given opportunities both within the classroom and outside which enable them to reflect and question in a safe and caring environment. Pupils take these opportunities so are becoming more rounded individuals. The recent development of a beautiful outdoor learning space is already having an impact. There has also been the introduction of a small spiritual space for further reflection and prayer, which is clearly well used. The positive results of these developments and the effective Christian ethos of the school are evident in the quality of care and respect for each other and the good behaviour of pupils. Pupils are able to articulate what it means for them to go to a church school, saying such things as, 'we like to reflect and pray to God', 'we all use our own reflection area and the one outside' and 'God is everywhere, especially in our school and our church'. Data confirms that pupil attainment is improving with Key stage 1 results are consistently above national averages. The support and nurture given to all pupils is a reflection of the teachers' and teaching assistants' commitment to the school as a caring, inclusive establishment rooted firmly in Christian values. Pupils are developing into well rounded, caring and morally grounded individuals through the priority placed on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The development of global awareness, enabling pupils to gain a deeper understanding of a range of culturally diverse backgrounds is an area in need of further strengthening to ensure pupils are given a wider world perspective. The development of awareness through the charity work undertaken enables pupils to further understand a range of backgrounds. This includes national charities such as Red Nose Day and local initiatives like Barnsley Hospice and Barnsley Animal Rescue. Pupils thoughtfully and readily gave their bears to Operation Paddington. Pupils are keen to achieve and work hard as a result of the good range of rewards, not only for achievement but also for behaviour and thought for others. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for, which contributes to the above average attendance. There are high expectations for behaviour, care and love, with staff acting as good role models. Staff consistently demonstrate that they care for pupils in the school both in the classroom and outside. This results in pupils who are well behaved and have a positive attitude towards school. They engage readily with the learning process and are generally keen to come to school. Parents speak quite highly of the school as a church school. They say such things as, 'it being a church school really makes a difference', 'it teaches good values' and 'the children really look forward to going to church'. The Christian character of the school is not yet outstanding because some pupils found it difficult to articulate what the distinctively Christian characteristics of the school are, including the Trinity within Holy Trinity, they were not passionate about the spiritual opportunities afforded to them and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to experience diverse communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

The Christian foundation of the school is being well reflected in collective worship and it is enabling both staff and students to develop a sense of community and Christian fellowship. Staff regularly attend worship. There are opportunities for the development of the spiritual dimension within worship with singing, prayer and periods of quiet reflection being in evidence. A pupil commented, 'I really like assemblies because they connect us to God'. The opportunities within worship are taken up with some enthusiasm, with all involved demonstrating a knowledge of some Anglican liturgy. Pupils have an understanding that the teachings of Jesus are taught in worship and lived out through their behaviour towards others and the choices they make. A pupil commented that they 'would like to grow up selfless like Jesus'. These teachings are regularly reinforced through use of appropriate Biblical content. Pupils and staff fully engage with the worship and clearly enjoy the experience.

Prayer is a regular feature of the school day, with pupils having some understanding what prayer is. Grace is said before lunch and also an end of day prayer is said. A pupil commented that 'actually you can pray to God whenever you want'. School worship is clearly well planned and thoughtfully delivered. The very able co-ordinator said that the Christian foundation of the school along with the worship 'is like the glue that holds us all together'. This, alongside the excellent long-term relationship with Rev. Ali Earl from the local parish, seems to have been the case during the difficult times the school has been through in recent years. Pupils and parents agreed that Rev. Ali is an absolute asset to the school, saying that 'she knows everyone', 'she explains things really well' and that 'she is always there for us'. She also contributes to the planning and delivery of very good worship on a regular basis where pupils gain insight into Anglican practice. Major festivals are celebrated in church and parents greatly appreciate being involved in these experiences. However, pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in the planning and delivery of worship and they said that they would welcome the opportunity to both plan and lead worship in the future. They felt that they had a good understanding of what constituted effective worship in school. There is no understanding currently of the concept of the Trinity.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Religious education is making a good contribution to the school as a religious community, enabling pupils to question and discuss in a safe and understanding environment. Pupils are acquiring a secure subject knowledge which is increasingly being applied so that pupils are demonstrating that they are not only learning about religion but also

from religion. Pupils are making progress at least in line with other foundation subjects and are attaining to a similar level. Teaching and learning observed was good with a few outstanding elements. Though no differentiation in lessons is evident currently, the school is aware of this as an issue to be addressed. When questioned, pupils throughout school have an understanding of a range of Christian concepts and some multi-faith content with a degree depth, indicating consistently good teaching. Pupils engage appropriately with the major world faiths alongside the significant Christian input. They are developing an appropriate understanding of world faiths. During a lesson on Sikhism pupils demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the Gurdwara. They were comfortable using a range of appropriate language. The school is committed to the development of the subject and to all practitioners becoming skilled in planning and delivery. To that end they are introducing the Understanding Christianity materials into their scheme of work, which is currently based on the Discovering RE scheme. The pace and level of this has been carefully considered to enable all staff to be confident and competent in both the style and content involved. The highly competent co-ordinator is committed to the subject and ensures that it has a high profile in the curriculum. She is aware of latest developments through regular attendance at courses and training opportunities and therefore has a good grasp of what needs to be done to continue to develop RE within the school.

Marking is generally to a high standard with the use of learning objectives and some feedback for pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy the subject saying that 'we know quite a lot about various faiths', 'it's cool to know about that stuff' and 'it's sometimes a bit complicated but it's interesting and fun'. There is a sense that the subject is making a significant contribution to the school as a religious community.

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

The committed and capable Christian leadership and management of the headteacher and governors makes a significant contribution to the success of this good church school. Stability after a significant period of uncertainty is being positively reflected in many areas of the school, including comments from parents and pupils. The school monitors and reviews its Christian distinctiveness with discussions in the full governing body with reference to reports from the headteacher. This is enhanced by the feedback from governors on their regular visits into school, including local clergy. There is a real sense that everything links back to the Christian foundation of the school. The self-evaluation of the distinctively Christian nature of the school is accurate, demonstrating that the leadership of the school has a clear understanding of where the school is and how it can improve. The areas they have highlighted are entirely appropriate to enable the school's further development. The Christian vision of the school is effectively promoted through the website, school badge and the quality of the relationships in evidence on a daily basis. Public documentation makes it clear that Christianity underpins every aspect of the life of the school resulting in an ethos of compassion and forgiveness. The website gives some indication of the centrality of collective worship and RE to school life stating accurately that the school is a 'vibrant, caring and supportive church school: inspiring and serving the whole community with compassion and forgiveness at its heart'.

Parents speak highly of the school as a church school. They said such things as, 'it really makes a difference it being a church school', 'there are really good relationships in the school' and 'the school teaches good values'. They say that they are kept well informed about their children and that they appreciate the 'open door' policy. They said that they appreciate being asked their opinions and are clear that any issues are acted upon promptly and effectively.

Though the staff team have only been together for a relatively short time, they are all fully committed to and enthusiastically support the Christian vision and ethos of the school. Within this time they have grown together and they have made significant progress, taking increasing responsibilities. There has been the introduction of a wide range of ideas, processes and developments. These are having a positive impact on all involved in the school. There is a real sense of all staff working very well together to enhance the educational experience being given to every child within a Christian framework.

There is a highly effective and mutually supportive relationship with the local parish, especially with Rev. Ali Earl. There are many contacts both formal and informal, enabling pupils to have a clear understanding of the importance of the church in the life of their school. The school, the local church and the community work well together. Rev. Ali is a very familiar figure and her positive presence is greatly appreciated by pupils, staff and parents. This relationship has contributed significantly in maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of the school through difficult times. Since the move to academy status there has been a necessary shift in the governance of the school, however, governors remain effective and are acutely aware of their role as leaders of a church school. They take their role as leaders of a Christian community very seriously. The school feels that it is well supported by the diocese and takes advantage of the training provided by them. This relationship with the local Christian community is having a significant impact on the Christian life of the school.

The school has made some progress in addressing the areas for development from the previous inspection though some remain as areas for further development. The monitoring and evaluation of progress in RE is now effective but there remains further enhancement needed in cultural understanding and pupil involvement in worship. The school is now very well placed to move forward within its Christian foundation.