

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Church Hill Church of England Junior School

Church Hill Road, Thurmaston LE4 8DE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Leicester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	N/A
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	10 November 2016
Date of last inspection	26 September & 4 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 138930
Headteacher	Shereen Kirk
Inspector's name and number	Marian Driver 116

School context

Church Hill is a junior school with a rising number on roll (313). Those eligible for free school meals (FSM) is below national at 8% and above national for pupil premium (PP) at 23%. The school has a high percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups. It has a growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) support. The school is a member of the Syston and Thurmaston Educational Partnership (STEP) 'Teaching School Alliance'.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Church Hill Junior as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher motivates staff and governors to ensure that Christian values are embedded in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils' understanding and respect for 'those of different faiths and none' is a result of effective religious education (RE) and Christian values teaching.
- A strong team of staff, parents and governors unite to support the school's distinctiveness as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Develop the pupils' understanding of the Christian concept of the Trinity as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Governors to build on the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and RE to clarify the impact that the school's distinctiveness has on learners and the whole community.

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

The caring Christian community at Church Hill Junior, where all are respected and included, shows a community working together in Christian unity. Christian values permeate the school making the roots firmly Christian. The Gospel values of love, forgiveness and peace are promoted in all aspects of school life. As a result of staff training on fifteen Christian values, staff chose the following seven: respect, community, courage, responsibility, fairness, kindness and thankfulness. The chosen seven Christian values are embedded and underpin policies and daily decision making.

Parents of different religions choose to send their children to a school which has strong values and cherishes a community rich in diversity. Being recognised and accepted as part of the 'Church Hill family' gives all pupils confidence to grow and where appropriate, nurtures their faith and develops their understanding and respect of different faiths. Christian values are discussed and modelled by pupils, showing a deep understanding of moral and spiritual awareness. Pupils join from a non-church Church Hill Infant school and settle well due to planned transition. They learn to live out the Christian value of 'love thy neighbour' as a way of life.

Staff create an ethos of harmony and wellbeing in their classrooms. The consistent approach to behaviour for learning results in pupils working well together and making the right choices. Above average attendance and the school's drive for improvement in academic achievement, shows improved end of Key Stage 2 results in 2016. Christian values such as 'trust' and 'perseverance' have an impact on the academic and personal development of EAL and SEND pupils. Vulnerable groups are well supported by extra adults and resources. Staff recruitment and a restructuring of the curriculum have led to disadvantaged pupils making more rapid progress through the year and reducing the difference in attainment from other pupils, especially in mathematics.

Pupils are proud of their school and delight in the variety of enriched and extra curriculum activities offered. Visits to the Cathedral, Jain temple and Gurdwara as well as an Indian culture day enabled both pupils and parents to learn more about the practices of different religions. Pupils use this information to discuss and compare their own religions showing both interest and respect for each other resulting in standards in RE at expected and sometimes above age related expectations. The level of responses given in discussion shows that pupils express themselves in an articulate and confident way. Parents feel that the school's connection with the church is good and say how much their children enjoy going there. A member of the church works with the school choir to enrich their singing. This brings mutual benefit to church and school. The school was delighted when they were asked to sing for the Queen in the cathedral on her jubilee tour of Leicester.

Displays and artefacts in school show that music, art and poetry are high profile, resulting in a depth of emotions and good spiritual awareness. The school invites other schools and the local community to join in with their special open days to share fellowship. Pupils raise money for a wide variety of projects in this and other countries and readily offer to fund raise when they hear of a national disaster. Pupils demonstrate their giving by filling shoe boxes for the Samaritan Purse organisation enabling children in Africa, Europe and Asia to receive exciting gifts. The 'Church Hill Friends' endorse this by paying the shipping donation for each box.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a special time when the 'Church Hill family' come together to gain a greater understanding of values and bible stories. The teaching of values, attitudes and prayer are built up over time leading to a greater awareness of God and the life of Jesus. Collective worship provides a calm space where pupils listen well and become involved. The worship table and focus table in the foyer reflect the colours of the church calendar making links with colours used in church. The use of 'talk for learning' enables pupils to clarify and extend their ideas.

Worship is engaging and interactive, giving pupils a part to play either in contributing or by taking responsibility for the music and operating the computer. They are given opportunities to plan and contribute their own ideas to worship and church services. The vicar takes an active part in regularly leading worship and contributing to RE teaching providing a deeper understanding of the Anglican traditions. Work done recently with pupils enabled them to discuss and answer 'big questions in life'. As a result of exploring the beliefs about the physical and spiritual aspects of death, pupils gave in-depth and well thought out answers.

Pupils have a good understanding of God and say, 'He created the earth and gave life to it.' Pupils have good knowledge of bible stories. They can talk about Jesus as the light of the world. They say that bible stories teach you lessons about life and help you make decisions. They are less confident in their knowledge and understanding of the Christian concept of the Trinity of God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils are confident in their use of personal prayer and contribute their own prayers to a prayer tree in the hall and in the reflection areas offered in their classrooms. Prayers and thoughts for the day are recorded in a class book and used at the end of the morning or the day. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and demonstrate a willingness to pray for someone who is experiencing problems.

Some pupils relate worship at school to worship in their own home and say that it gets bad feelings out of their head and makes them feel better. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and will shortly be contributing their ideas to

develop a school prayer. School staff and pupils regularly monitor the effectiveness of worship which has led to more drama, involvement and singing. As a result of pupil interviews, all teaching staff now lead worship as requested by the pupils. Governors are frequent visitors to the school and attend worship to observe the improvement being made.

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

The committed and passionate headteacher leads a dedicated team of staff and governors, working together as a strong team to ensure that the focus on Christian values defines and frames all that they do. The vision of a Christian community is modelled through the way that adults lead, inspire and shape the whole life vision showing that Christian values are 'life values.' Staff recognise the 'real team atmosphere' where there is great respect and support for all. The headteacher also acts as a mentor sharing good practice with new headteachers of church schools. The improved learning culture in the classroom and the upward trend in academic standards for all has been driven by the energy of the Christian vision statement of 'making a difference' where 'together everyone achieves more'. Christian values underpin all key policies and curriculum areas so that the school wholly embodies the Christian ethos. The school vision and mission statement permeates all areas, demonstrating a caring and nurturing community. Pupils show a high level of respect to adults and peers. Parents acknowledge the changes and interventions made to improve standards and feel satisfied that their children's needs are understood and met. Governors meet RE and collective worship co-ordinators regularly to discuss training and development. They attend worship and contribute to self-evaluation. The experienced RE co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and by taking part in diocesan projects, training and networking, provides strong guidance. RE and collective worship co-ordinators work and train together to promote an enriching, practical curriculum. Their work is enhanced by a detailed improvement plan. Staff welcome the training cascaded to them which motivates and brings about a greater confidence in teaching RE and taking collective worship. Parents feel valued and take an active part in many school activities. They have also contributed by sharing their faith as part of celebrations of religious festivals or curriculum days, giving the pupils a greater awareness of global issues. Parents praise the school church services. They recognise that Church Hill Junior school is a place where children can learn respect for others, making links to Christian values. They find the staff warm, approachable and caring. One parent said, 'They all get on its brilliant!'

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