



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Leonard's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

School Lane
Dunston
Stafford
ST18 9AG

Previous SIAMS grade: Good
Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire
Dates of inspection: 17 March 2016
Date of last inspection: 4 April 2011
School's unique reference number: 124248
Headteacher: Julie Lane
Inspector's name and number: Susan Taylor 688

School context

St Leonard's Church of England VC Primary School has 68 children aged 4-7 years taught in 4 classes. The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium, which is additional funding to give extra support to children in receipt of free school meals or whose parents are in the forces, is well below average. Most families travel to the school from the surrounding area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Leonard's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School as a Church of England school are good.

- The Christian character of the school is very evident on entering the building and within the whole school environment.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils are exemplary.
- A united and enthusiastic staff team ensure that pupils achieve well both academically and in their personal development and well-being.

Areas to improve

- Be more explicit in linking the school's Christian values to the life and teachings of Jesus.
- Revise the planning of collective worship to have a clearer focus on Biblical teaching and core Christian beliefs.
- Empower governors to formally monitor and evaluate the Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school.

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

St Leonard's CE(C) First School is a happy, caring environment where the pupils respect each other. As a result, pupils achieve well academically and in their personal development and are well-prepared for the next stage of their education. Attendance is good because children enjoy school. Behaviour is outstanding and children feel safe and secure. The pupils clearly relate behaviour strategies to the school's Christian values. As one pupil said "we try to follow the commandment to love one another". Pupils are well aware of the procedures in place to report any incidences of unacceptable behaviour and are confident that they are listened to. The school promotes the Christian values of the "fruits of the Spirit". These core values are clearly displayed in the school environment and children know how they relate to their lives in school, at home and in the wider community. They are less secure in explicitly relating these values to the life and teachings of Jesus. Although the cross and school motto of "Learn to love, love to learn" is on the school's website, the values and school's Christian distinctiveness is not so evident. Each classroom has a reflection area and pupils value the opportunity for quiet thinking. The garden and outdoor seated area, with peaceful views over the countryside give pupils opportunities to develop their spirituality through reflection on the wonder of the natural world. The school offers a broad range of extra-curricular activities, with after-school clubs every day as well as a breakfast club. These are well attended by pupils of all ages and make a positive contribution to pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils talk positively about religious education (RE) which contributes to the Christian character of the school especially with respect to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Monitoring by the RE subject leader has shown that the revised RE scheme of work has impacted upon this. Pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically about their learning on the 'Kerygma bus' when this visits the school. The oldest pupils have some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith due to a link with a school in The Gambia. Curriculum coverage of other faiths is limited so that pupils' understanding of difference and diversity between faith communities is still developing.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is highly valued in St Leonard's School. Whole school collective worship takes place three times a week and on the other two days there is class worship. Children are enthusiastic about worship and respond well. Worship provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual development as well as informing their behaviour, attitudes and relationships. Due to having no hall, a classroom is used for whole school collective worship. Pupils are responsible for arranging the room and setting up the worship table which displays artefacts representing Christian traditions and Anglican practice. Pupils understand that the lighting of the candle is "the start of our worship" and represents "the light of Jesus". The spiritual atmosphere of worship is enhanced by music playing on entry and exit. This promotes reflection and some reverence. Responses, prayer and song are central elements to the structure of worship and pupils participate fully in these. Collective worship is delivered by a range of leaders from school, church and the community. This was a development point from the previous inspection, and this now broadens pupils' experiences. Daily worship is planned by the headteacher around Christian values as well as the seasons and festivals of the Christian year. However greater explicit links to Bible stories would ensure a more consistent approach and a broader coverage. Class worship provides greater opportunities for creativity and pupil participation. This is limited in whole school worship due to space. This involvement is, however, valued by the pupils. The children and parents join the church community for major Christian festivals and a special service at the end of the school year. These services are enjoyed by the pupils, promoting their understanding of core Christian beliefs. A Holy Communion service introduced last year had a significant impact upon both pupils and parents and so plans are in place for this to become an annual event. Prayers are said regularly during the school day and

pupils use the quiet areas for prayer and reflection. Prayer boxes in classrooms and a prayer tree give further opportunities for pupils to make prayer personal to their own lives. As one child said “*prayer helps you to get closer to God*”. Worship is monitored by the headteacher, using pupil voice and direct observation of class worship. Although governors sometimes attend worship they have not as yet been involved formally in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship.

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

Christian values are central to the everyday life of St Leonard’s school. Leaders consistently relate the school’s values of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control to behaviour, relationships and learning. Parents are very supportive of the school. They attribute the strengths of the school to its family ethos and Christian values. They say that this has an impact on the development of the pupils in the widest sense. The foundation governor and the newly appointed chair of governors have a clear vision for the school as a church school. Although the church of St Leonard’s is currently in an interregnum, the school has maintained its church links. The previous parish priest was very much part of the school community and supported the school both prayerfully and practically. Pupils visit the church often as part of their religious education (RE) as well as worship at core Christian festivals. There are also links with the neighbouring churches, where a number of parents and families attend ‘messy church’ and a holiday club with the Penkridge team ministry. This, together with “*Open Door*” in Lichfield Cathedral, gives pupils some experience of the Anglican tradition. The school has very close relationships with the local pre-school, with whom they share some facilities and resources and join in school and church events. The village hall is used for physical education (PE) lessons and school productions and so there are strong links with the village community. Pupils confidently relate their many fund raising activities to their values of love and kindness. They support charities such as the foodbank, shoebox appeal, Age UK and Barnardo’s. There is an active elected school council and this gives pupils an opportunity to take some democratic responsibility for their school’s work. The headteacher is the RE subject leader and worship co-ordinator, and in these roles effectively monitors and evaluates RE and worship. Outcomes are reported to the governors. More work needs to be done to delegate the responsibilities of these roles in order to train others for church school leadership. The diocese has effectively supported the school in staff and governor training. The school has completed a self-evaluation document but many areas of school life, which clearly define the school’s distinctiveness, are not included. Governors do not currently formally monitor and evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school.

SIAMS report March 2016 St Leonard’s (VC) First School, Dunston, Stafford, ST18 9AG