

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Tilston Parochial Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Tilston SY14 7HB

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Chester

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Cheshire West and Chester

Date of inspection

18 May 2017

Date of last inspection

April 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary controlled 111284

Headteacher

Richard Harley

Inspector's name and number

Jean Forward 625

School context

Tilston Parochial C of E Primary School is below average in size and is situated in a rural area south of Chester. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Although the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average, there has been a gradual increase in recent years. The percentage of those identified as having additional needs is below the national average. The school is at the heart of the village community and has very strong links with the parish church.

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

- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher and his commitment to the development of the school ensures that church school distinctiveness and the Christian ethos are central in the continuous striving for further improvement.
- The school creates a loving, secure and inclusive environment rooted in Christian values. This has a direct influence on pupils' well-being, confidence and positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is rooted in the school's Christian ethos and commitment to Christian values. As a result, pupils become increasingly self-assured and articulate. They develop an understanding of faith and awareness of the wider world and its needs.
- Worship is central to the school's daily life. It sets Christian values in their biblical context and has a positive influence on the spiritual development of the whole school family.

Areas to improve

- Further develop pupils' spirituality by providing explicit opportunities to deepen their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Establish a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating collective worship to involve all members of the school community and inform future development.

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

The school demonstrates a strong level of commitment to its Christian ethos and the development of every child. High expectations and encouragement are directly linked to the Christian life experienced by all members of the school community. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of Christian values in their daily life and understand that these are rooted in the life of Jesus. As a result, the positive relationships across the community are clearly Christ-centred. Pupils' SMSC development is a key element in the school's work and ensures that individual needs are being met through a balanced and creative curriculum. Pupils have access to a range of additional activities which broaden their experience and develop teamwork and social skills. As a result pupils flourish, feel safe and develop high levels of self-esteem. Their behaviour for learning is outstanding. There is no fear of failure or of making mistakes, so that the pupils are able to give of their best. From starting points that are broadly in line with age-related expectations, pupils make good progress and many reach standards in reading, writing and maths that are above average at the end of Year 6. Department for Education performance data and the school's own tracking system confirm this. All members of the community know they are valued and the ethos of Christian respect and care is clearly evident. Pupils enjoy a number of roles through which they can demonstrate growing confidence, care for one another and a sense of responsibility. They understand that being members of the children's committee, Y6 worship leaders team, buddies and playground leaders enable them to demonstrate Christian values in action.

The school supports a range of charities including Christian Aid, Children in Need and the foodbank in Whitchurch. Pupils understand the importance of showing generosity to those in need. They are able to share their concerns with staff knowing that these will be addressed in a caring way. A pupil said, 'Our teachers are very kind. Everyone is friendly.' Pupils are happy and enthusiastic about learning and school life. This is affirmed by parents who also say that the school's emphasis on Christian values has a positive influence on their children's respect for and loyalty towards one another. Displays, Christian symbols and artefacts emphasise the school's Christian character and support the pupils' spiritual awareness extremely well. Work with a local artist who is a member of the St. Mary's congregation explores pupils' spiritual ideas and makes a significant contribution to the Christian environment. The school widens pupils' knowledge of non-Christian faiths and the worldwide nature of Christianity through Religious Education (RE). This contributes well to cultural knowledge and to positive attitudes. RE is taught in a creative and stimulating way and pupils say that they enjoy being able to share ideas and opinions with their teachers and with one another. The school's Christian care for and commitment to every pupil and family secure extremely positive outcomes and are at the heart of the school's work.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

All members of the school community recognise the importance of collective worship and the central part it plays in the life of the school. The headteacher is the school's worship co-ordinator and he ensures that planning is rooted in biblical teaching and an understanding of the life and work of Jesus. Pupils enjoy worship and participate enthusiastically whilst maintaining a due sense of reverence. A pupil said, 'Worship helps us to understand God and Christian values.'

Acts of worship follow a clear pattern which gives the children a sense of liturgical structure and familiarity. Anglican responses for gathering and dismissal are used every day. Worship themes are planned carefully using the Roots and Fruits material and include biblical teaching, major festivals and Christian values. Each half term's theme ensures that pupils are able to link the values to biblical teaching and daily life. The headteacher, members of the teaching staff and the parish priest of St. Mary's lead worship. The pupils enjoy these varied experiences which broaden their understanding of Christian teaching and Anglican tradition.

Prayer and reflection have a central role in all worship. Pupils understand the importance of silence and that prayer is a way of talking and being close to God. Their awareness of the meaning and purpose of prayer is developed further through the classroom reflection areas. Pupils are involved in worship through music, drama and reading, especially when celebrating major festivals in the church. The Year 6 worship leaders plan and lead worship on a regular basis and with increasing independence. Older pupils have some understanding of the Trinitarian nature of Christianity. Currently, there are no formal arrangements for all sections of the school community to monitor and evaluate worship.

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

The highly effective Christian leadership of the headteacher drives everything the school does to develop and promote its Christian distinctiveness. Staff and governors give their full support to the development of the Christian ethos. They recently worked together on a self-review of church school distinctiveness, strengthening everyone's understanding of the school's Christian mission. As a result, the school provides a caring Christian environment in

which the individual uniqueness of pupils enables them to thrive.

The headteacher and governing body have a clear and strong vision for the school based on Christian principles and values. This is rooted in a determination that the school will serve every pupil and family and that all will be made welcome as children of God. Members of the governing body bring dedication, expertise and support to their role. They ask informed questions and provide an excellent level of challenge. The school's strategic development plan contains actions for the development of church school distinctiveness. A governor commented that these provide 'good discussion and debate' when considering church school matters. Staff are committed to fostering all areas of pupils' development and well-being through Christian care and love. In doing so, they recognise the importance of creating a Christian ethos which supports effective learning and equal opportunities. This demonstrates the way in which the school puts faith into action.

Parents speak of the support and welcome they receive from all members of the staff team and stress that relationships are extremely positive. A parent said, 'Staff are very approachable, open and honest. They know the children extremely well.' Parents are encouraged to be involved in the daily life of the school. They contribute in many ways, including being members of the parents' committee which meets with staff to discuss the work of the school. As a result, they feel valued and part of the school's daily life. The partnership between the school and St. Mary's church is extremely strong. They work together on a number of events which strengthen the school's involvement in the life of the church and wider village community. Holiday clubs and the Trekkers group also bring school and church together in a mutually beneficial way. The parish priest brings strong pastoral care to the school and spends reflection time with staff as well as supporting the whole community through worship. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship and the area for development from the previous inspection has been addressed. The school is outward-looking and is involved in school improvement activities with the Broxton Federated Group of Schools. This rural school partnership provides opportunities for moderation, monitoring and professional development. The school also values its links with the diocese in order to explore church school distinctiveness and develop strong Christian leadership.

Tilston is truly a Church of England school at the heart of its community.