

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Millfields Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Willington Avenue, Eastham, Wirral, CH62 9EB

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Wirral
Date of inspection	8 March 2018
Date of last inspection	February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 136056
Headteacher	Michelle Holford
Inspector's name and number	Carolyn Whiteway 933

School context

Millfields Church of England Primary School is smaller than average in size and has a much higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is also higher than average. The number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is much lower than average with a large majority being of White British heritage. The headteacher has been in post for nine years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Millfields as a Church of England school are good.

- With the support of her staff and governors, the headteacher has been instrumental in successfully developing a Christian ethos of respect, trust and kindness, which effectively nurtures the development of all pupils.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are a strength and are clearly influenced by the caring Christian ethos.
- Religious education (RE) and worship make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Areas to improve

- Enhance the Christian distinctiveness of the school's vision and values and consequently its policies, so that they are clearly rooted in biblical teaching.
- Ensure governor monitoring is focussed on the impact and outcomes of the school's Christian distinctiveness to ensure Millfields continues to develop as an effective Church of England school.
- Continue to promote understanding of and respect for diversity by developing pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and an important part of their knowledge of contrasting global beliefs and cultures.

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

Since becoming a Church of England school in 2010, Millfields has continued to develop its distinctiveness as a Church of England school. Staff and governors testify to the increasing recognition from parents and the local community of the impact of the school's strong Christian ethos. The motto 'Faith, Respect, Courtesy and Endeavour', underpins the school's success in creating an inclusive, warm and supportive community in which pupils flourish. It is supported by the adoption of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School programme, which enhances the school's work in developing pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Members of the school community recognise the school's values as Christian but are not always able to articulate how they reflect distinctively Christian teaching. The school's Christian vision is more explicitly evident in the physical environment, which effectively supports and celebrates the school's Christian identity. Stimulating faith related displays in corridors and classrooms make an effective contribution to the spiritual development of all members of the school community. Parents are very positive about the school and value its caring Christian ethos. They feel that it produces caring, respectful children who are confident to share their thoughts and feelings. The close relationship established between church and school has benefited church, school and the local community. This is evidenced by the vicar of St. Mary's Church, Eastham's praise for the school's Christian distinctiveness which she considers 'a joy' to visit.

Positive relationships are a real strength of the school and are clearly rooted in the Christian ethos. All members of the school community value what a governor described as a 'loving family' atmosphere where they feel supported and encouraged. The warm, supportive Christian ethos has clearly contributed positively not only to learners' attitudes and behaviour but also to their achievements. Pupils make excellent progress from often low starting points and generally achieve well. The school is fully inclusive and makes every effort to provide individual support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils where needed. Every effort is made to encourage good attendance, which remains stubbornly a little below the national average. Achievements are celebrated and learners can earn house points or treats such as an invitation to have lunch at the 'Golden Table'. Pupils consistently model the school's motto of faith, respect, courtesy and endeavour and, as a result, behaviour in class and around school is outstanding. Pupils feel confident that staff and their peers will support them if they need help. Rare instances of bullying are quickly resolved by staff intervention.

Through St. Mary's Church the school has a link with a school in the Solomon Islands, which has given pupils some insight into Christianity as a multicultural world faith. The school strives to promote pupils' understanding of communities outside the local area, for example through a multicultural week and through teaching about other world faiths. Due to the nature of the locality, however, it is difficult for leaders to enable pupils to encounter more diverse communities and cultures at first hand and this means that their understanding of diversity is under-developed.

Pupils are enthusiastic about RE which enables them to explore and reflect upon both Christian beliefs and those of other major religions. One pupil commented that she likes RE because she can give her 'opinions with my peers being supportive'. Pupils are encouraged to relate their learning to their own lives and as a result RE makes a significant contribution to their SMSC development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

All members of the school community value and respond positively to the daily act of worship. This is because worship is carefully planned and linked to the school's values and the Anglican church year. Although fully inclusive with all pupils attending, worship is distinctively Christian in nature, frequently using biblical material and focusing appropriately on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

During the act of worship witnessed, pupils entered the hall quietly and participated willingly. The use of a focus table with candles and the quality and enthusiasm of the singing also contributed to the reverent atmosphere. Simple liturgical words of welcome enable pupils to experience the Anglican tradition of their worship. This understanding is reinforced by visits to St. Mary's Church to celebrate the major church festivals.

Worship is varied because it is led by a range of staff and visitors from several local churches including United Reformed and Methodist, giving pupils some familiarity with different Christian traditions. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the weekly worship led by visitors to the school as they enjoy the variety of styles of worship. Active links with these local churches enhance pupils' experiences of faith outreach into the community. Pupils have some understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit but this is not yet well developed.

Following the last inspection the school has provided more opportunities for pupils to become involved in leading

worship. As a result, Year 6 pupils introduce and thank the visiting worship leader and lead prayers. They are also actively involved in evaluating worship. Parents appreciate the termly opportunities to join their children in worship at St. Mary's Church.

Prayer and reflection contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils value Friday class worship when they get an opportunity to discuss and reflect upon an issue from the week's news. Pupils understand the value of prayer. One commented, 'Prayer makes the bad thoughts go away. You can share thoughts with God.' Reflective areas in each classroom effectively prompt prayer and reflection in varied and imaginative ways. Even some of the youngest children demonstrate an ability to reflect on the need to say sorry when we hurt or upset someone and make cards, flowers and stones for their reflective area to give as gifts by way of an apology.

Systems for the evaluation of worship by pupils are well embedded whilst monitoring and evaluation of the impact of worship on the school community by staff and governors is informal. This has led to some improvement but would benefit from a more systematic approach.

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

The deeply committed and experienced headteacher has worked hard to continue to develop the distinctiveness of Millfields as a Church of England school. Her vision for an inclusive Christian community is shared and upheld by all members of staff who effectively model expectations of behaviour and care for pupils to emulate. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness based on effective self-evaluation strategies, enabling the school to continue to improve the way in which it meets the needs of all pupils.

Governors are fully committed to the school and help to promote the link with St. Mary's Church but are not currently involved in the systematic self-evaluation of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Millfields as a Church of England school. Some governors have undertaken training as leaders in a church school. Partnerships with local churches and with the local cluster of Church of England schools provide effective support for school leaders and strengthen its links with the local community.

Collective worship and RE are underpinned by the school's values and make a significant contribution to pupils' SMSC development. This is demonstrated in pupils' RE books and class SMSC books, which provide a visual record of activities and discussions which have encouraged pupils to reflect and have had a positive impact on their attitudes and behaviour. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of the Christian imperative to support those in need. They are active in raising money for local and national charities and in giving more practical help. For example, a recent non-uniform day raised money to buy ingredients for pupils to cook meals for homeless people as part of a local initiative.

The recently appointed leader for RE and worship is enthusiastic about her role and has made an excellent start. She has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum fulfils the school's desire to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to study elements of the 'Understanding Christianity' learning resource, whilst still meeting the statutory requirement to cover the locally agreed syllabus.

Parents are very appreciative of all that the school offers and feel that the headteacher is personally always available to offer help when needed. One commented, 'Millfields adopts a wonderful attitude of encouragement, respect and love to help my son confidently grow in his faith.'