CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

The Methodist Church

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Clements Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary Academy

Henwick Road,
Worcester,
WR2 5NS

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 18 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2010

School's unique reference number: 116922

Headteacher: Kate Brunt (Executive Principal) Jackie Castle (Head of School)

Inspector's name and number: C. Ann Stone NS812

School context

St Clements is situated on the outskirts of Worcester city. It has 209 children on roll and all are educated in single year class groups. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage. Learners from Polish and Pakistani backgrounds make up a small minority of the children. The number of children with special educational needs is below average which contrasts to the number of children eligible for free school meals. The school became part of the 'Rivers Multi Academy Trust' in October 2015 with the headteacher becoming principal of the academy. The parish church of St Clements is a short walk away.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Clements VA Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The ability of all stakeholders to articulate and promote a vision for the school rooted in Christian values with the result that every child feels secure and loved.
- The inspirational religious education (RE) coordinator who inspires pupils to apply a wide range of higher level skills to their learning.
- The centrality of spiritual development in school which is embedded in the whole curriculum and life of the school.
- The great value placed on worship which is linked to Christian values and impacts positively on the life of the pupils and staff.

Areas to improve

- Enable children to gain more detailed knowledge of the Eucharist and the Trinity so that they can talk about it with a greater degree of understanding.
- Ensure that all pupils know and understand what they have achieved in RE in order to inform them of the next steps in their learning.

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

Christian values permeate the whole life of the school creating an ethos in which children are enabled to achieve good academic standards. The 'STARS' motto of safety, trust, achievement, respect and sharing is clearly understood and articulated by all members of the school community. The children readily acknowledge the impact these values have and can explain their links to Christian teaching. Vulnerable children are nurtured carefully throughout the school day with initiatives that clearly demonstrate the Christian values of care and compassion. The behaviour of the children is of the highest standard and relationships are consistently attributed to the Christian character of the school. There is a highly developed interpretation of spirituality shared across the school community. This enables children to make their own links between beliefs, practices and Christian values. One result of this is that children understand the need, and have the ability to, put others before themselves. The school has strong links with Kyeleni School in Kenya resulting in children appreciating and respecting global diversity. This link is seen as an equal partnership rather than one founded upon charitable support. Visitors from Kenya contributed to the life of St Clements by building a traditional African hut in the school grounds. Parents and governors comment that they consider the school to be a 'family community where all are welcome and valued'. Visits by former pupils, who feel that staff still care for them and offer help if needed, can be directly attributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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

Collective worship at St Clements is central to the life of the school and is a springboard for learning about Christian values and biblical teaching. Children speak with confidence about the way in which worship shapes their thinking and actions. They clearly articulate the link between Christian values and Bible stories; for example, a Year Two child was able to explain how Noah needed to trust God when the earth was flooded. The impact of collective worship is monitored and evaluated by governors and provides an insight into how worship influences the life of the school community and leads directly to continuous improvement. Governors, staff and children are represented on the RE and collective worship group (CREW) which meets regularly. A Reflective Journal is used by staff and children to reflect and comment on acts of worship. As a result feedback gathered provides an insight into how worship has a direct impact on the life of the school. Following an audit, children requested that they be more involved in the delivery of worship. They are now actively involved through sharing experiences, music making, singing and leading prayers. Symbolic artefacts are displayed on a worship table and children are able to articulate what they mean to Christians. A range of worship leaders offer children a rich and diverse experience of worship. The parish church is used monthly for worship and also to celebrate major Christian festivals. Children support the church by participating in celebratory services, such as on Mothering Sunday. Following the involvement of children in these services many parents remark they are now regular attendees at parish family services. Worship makes a significant contribution towards the spiritual development of all children by challenging them to ask questions and reflect upon their own experiences. Children have a clear understanding of prayer and use the 'Prayer Net' regularly and are encouraged to pray, reflect, help each other and ask questions. They are able to explain that if they have a problem they know God will always try to answer their prayers. The Lord's Prayer, learning about Jesus Christ and a developing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit enable children to make links between the Bible and lessons for their own lives. Children are not able to talk with confidence about the Anglican practice of Eucharist and do not understand its importance for Christians. Reflective areas in all classrooms and outdoors enable worship to extend far beyond the confines of a set time and place. Parents see the messages from worship played out in the behaviour of the children at home, for example saying a prayer before mealtimes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education (RE) has a very high profile within the curriculum. It is recognised by staff, governors and children as being of great importance to the life of the school. Parents remark how often children talk about their RE lessons and regularly want to explore their learning further at home. A dedicated RE room is used for all lessons and has displays to inspire and inform all ages of children. An adjoining outdoor area provides the children with a well - designed reflective area. Children regularly use this area to develop their spiritual awareness by using their natural surroundings. The RE coordinator teaches the subject to all classes throughout the school and planning is always undertaken with class teachers who lead lessons when necessary thereby ensuring that RE lessons are never missed. Children actively and joyfully engage in their learning and this is evident from discussions with other stakeholders. The coordinator is passionate and knowledgeable about the subject and, as a result, planning is creative and varied. This enables children to question and deepen their understanding of the impact which religion has on others. Children recognise that RE contributes to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through experiences offered during lessons. Their knowledge of Christianity is very good and they are developing a deep understanding of diversity within faiths. Children of religions other than Christianity share knowledge of their own faith with others and much work has been done to include parents and visitors in the delivery of RE. Visits to places of worship feature highly in long term planning. As a result, children's knowledge and understanding of cultures and faiths which are different to their own are of a high standard. Assessment procedures are rigorous and judgements are secure, thereby effectively informing future planning. Children are aware of their targets and are developing an understanding of what their next steps are. They learn well and a significant number attain higher than national expectations. Data is recorded on the school tracking system and information passed onto secondary schools. Lesson observations, scrutiny of planning, learning walks, moderation of work and critical discussions take place regularly between the coordinator and foundation governor responsible for RE. As a result there is a clear shared understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness.

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

The principal is an inspirational leader who articulates well the newly introduced vision of the academy to 'Love, Learn, Live.' She is working, in partnership with the head of school, to ensure that this vision becomes embedded into the Christian values already recognised by all stakeholders at St Clements. Maintaining the school's distinctive Christian character was a key feature of the decision to become a standalone academy and leaders continually ensure that this is a high priority in all strategic planning. Governors know the academy well and articulate clearly the understanding of their role as strategic leaders. They have effective systems in place which allow them to monitor the impact of the vision on all areas of school life. As a result any improvement plans are related to the academy's distinctive Christian character. Parents believe that the Christian values shared by all leaders and staff contribute well to pupil behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They feel that their concerns are dealt with efficiently and sensitively. The development of all staff and governors is achieved through individual support, attendance at diocesan and academy training and the mentoring and support of each other. The very efficient chair of governors, also a foundation governor, has an effective pastoral role within the school which is valued by staff, governors, children and their families. Leaders and governors ensure both worship and RE meet statutory requirements. Partnership with the local church is a great strength. Mutual respect and support enable both to flourish and fulfil their mission to the academy, the local community and beyond. The supportive relationships between all members of the school community are clearly rooted in Christian values, providing an excellent example of an academy which is both distinctive and highly effective.