



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Priory Church of England Primary School

Jubilee Road
Trentham
Stoke on Trent
ST4 8EF

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 11 June 2015

Date of last inspection: 23 November 2009

School's unique reference number: 132240

Headteacher: Pam Keen

Inspector's name and number: Huw D Bishop 344

School context

Priory CE Primary School is a larger than average primary school with pupils from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The majority of pupils live within the parishes of Hanford and Trentham and are of White British Heritage. 7% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of students with special educational needs is average. The school is popular and admissions are improving. When last inspected by Ofsted in 2015, it was judged to be a good school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Priory Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Pupils show exemplary behaviour, strong attitudes to learning and good understanding of Christian values in a practical context.
- The outstanding quality of relationships that exist between pupils and their teachers.
- The headteacher's enthusiasm and commitment which promotes an inclusive Christian vision for the whole school community.
- The partnership with the parish church which pupils enjoy and which enables them to understand the school's Christian and Anglican identity through prayer and praise.
- The great value placed by parents on the school's Christian distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Embed the formal evaluation of collective worship to inform its specific contribution to pupils' personal spiritual development.

- Develop the role of the new governing body in monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness.

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

Pupils, staff and parents are very happy at Priory school. The Christian vision of the headteacher, that each child is a unique child of God, is very clearly demonstrated in the outstanding quality of relationships that exist within the school community. Achievement for all groups of pupils has improved and this was verified by Ofsted in a recent inspection. This is because the headteacher and her team have built a culture of learning and improvement based on Christian values. Pupils and parents speak of this with tremendous pride. Pupils seen on the day of the inspection said that 'the school helps us to believe; I like the fact that we are not like an ordinary school, and we are like a close family'. Parents are enthusiastic about the school's leadership and appreciative that the headteacher 'knows her families and every individual child by name'. They believe that this respect for each child nurtures each one to reach their potential. Evidence of the school's Christian character is found throughout the school. Christian artefacts and displays permeate the building and all are relevant to the religious education curriculum and worship theme being considered at the time. The school has been on a significant journey of improvement in recent years and leaders have had to focus on key academic issues. However, they have also maintained their responsibility to develop the school's Christian identity, although this now needs to become a greater focus for the governing body. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is well supported through collective worship and the curriculum. Pupils' work in religious education is good. They enjoy the subject, are keen to learn and appreciate how it is linked to collective worship and the wider curriculum. Pupils of all cultures and abilities feel valued and respected within a strong, inclusive community. The school's status as a UNICEF Rights Respecting School supports the Christian character well and pupils are articulate in talking about their ownership of their class charters. Behaviour around the school is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and polite and enjoy every opportunity to talk about their learning activities. Spiritual support for pupils and staff is given by the parish priest of St Matthias's church who is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. Pupils appreciate and articulate strongly how this promotes the Christian and Anglican distinctiveness of their school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school's policy and planning for collective worship is detailed and relevant to its daily spiritual life. The organisation and involvement of all staff in the delivery of collective worship is good and staff have benefitted from training led by the parish priest. The worship programme is thematic with the main Christian festivals and other relevant world events included. Worship includes music, singing, reflection, readings from the Bible and prayer. Prayer is an important focus in school and is a significant part of its daily life, enhancing pupils' spiritual development and their understanding of the value of prayer for a believer. Pupils pray every morning, lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Pupils also create their own prayers which they share with their peers as well as offer private petitions in a prayer box in the reception area. Some parents commented that their children often sing the school prayer at home – particularly when they are in the bath! Pupils are appreciative that worship is interactive and enjoyable. They say that teachers present the worship themes in language they understand. Pupils know about the doctrine of the Trinity and use the Lord's Prayer confidently. They really enjoy the weekly 'Praise Time' and the opportunity to learn a wide range of worship songs which complement the themes. Parents, too, attend worship in school and in church. There are some procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of worship. However, a recently established steering group is intended to evaluate worship formally and this will include the input of pupils, but it is too early to assess its impact on pupils' personal, spiritual development.

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

The headteacher and her leadership team work hard to create a strong Christian ethos 'that supports pupils in developing into confident, successful individuals with a strong moral compass'. This is verified by pupils who were articulate about the changes that have happened in recent years to improve the range of learning opportunities available to them. Pupils recognise and value that Priory is a church school, lament the day they will have to leave, and say how much they will miss the various aspects of Christian distinctiveness when they move on. They recognise that the headteacher, staff and parish priest are the catalyst for promoting the core Christian values of the school. It is clear that the school works closely with the church and the community and this is valued by pupils and parents alike. The school has valued and benefitted from opportunities for training and development for staff and pupils with diocesan advisers and attendance at 'Open Door' at Lichfield Cathedral. Staff at the school are fully committed to upholding the school's Christian ethos and this is managed effectively by the leadership team. Governors are in the process of change from being an Interim Executive Board (IEB) to a full governing body. Whilst the IEB has been very effective and supportive of the headteacher's strategies for school improvement and Christian ethos, a more systematic monitoring of the school's Christian character in the immediate future would ensure that its distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England school is protected, proclaimed and firmly embedded.

SIAMS report June 2015 Priory CE (VC) Primary School ST4 8EF