

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Saint Paulinus Church of England Primary Academy

Iron Mill Lane, Crayford, Dartford, DAI 4RW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Rochester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	September 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	Amadeus Primary Academies Trust
Date of inspection	23 November 2017
Date of last inspection	10 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary academy (VA equivalent) 142294
Headteacher	Sarah Young
Inspector's name and number	Patrick Boughton-Reynolds 897

School context

Saint Paulinus primary school is a voluntary aided school that converted to academy status in 2015. It is part of the Amadeus Primary Academies Trust. It is an oversubscribed one form entry school of 210 pupils. The local church of St Paulinus is close by. The majority of pupils are from families who attend local churches. The number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds are below national averages. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are above the national average.

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

- Distinctive Christian values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school and forge the identity of the school as a church school.
- Pupil behaviour is excellent and is firmly rooted in the Christian values of the school.
- Worship is of great importance to the whole school community which is central in developing and expressing its spirituality.
- The relationship between the school and the local church of St Paulinus is a significant strength that is highly valued by all stakeholders.
- Strong Christian leadership and governance, supported by Amadeus Primary Academies Trust, enables the school to prepare well for the future.

Areas to improve

- Challenge more pupils to work in greater depth in religious education (RE), particularly through the use of questioning, both verbally and in written assessments.
- Ensure that the school's Christian vision and values are articulated clearly in all school policies.

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

Saint Paulinus has a clear set of Christian values that are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. The values of respect, peace, friendship, hope, forgiveness and thankfulness are articulated by all stakeholders and seen as a vital part of what identifies the school as Christian. These values are pivotal in enabling the school to thrive as an outstanding church school. Pupils reflect upon their Christian values and live them in their lives and, as a result, behaviour is excellent. Pupils are able to explain the importance of these values and apply them to all aspects of their lives to great effect. One Key Stage 2 pupil said that respect was important, 'because you need self-respect, also to respect the people around us and the environment'. Another said that, 'hope teaches me that you should never give up and keep going'. The school frequently celebrates when pupils live out these values, for example through 'value stars' in lessons and during Friday worship. They also attend a headteacher's tea party in appreciation of their considerable efforts to live out school values. Pupils create their own certificates to award other school members for embodying a value greatly in the school, as a Year 2 pupil explained 'I made a certificate for my friend because he is a great friend'. As a result, the school's Christian values have a substantial impact on pupils' moral and social development. Pupils take the opportunities to pray and reflect during the school day that enables them to develop spiritually.

Pupils enjoy coming to school which means that attendance is well above national average. A parent of a Year 5 pupil summed up the strength of the school as 'inclusive, everybody is welcome. We're a diverse school but everyone is working together and that makes this school outstanding.' Parents say that their children are cared for, as another parent said 'my kids are loved here'. The school is a caring community where high quality teaching enables all pupils to make good progress or better. Parents say that teachers are friendly, approachable and know their children. As a result, the school is oversubscribed and there is little pupil mobility out of school. Collective worship and religious education (RE) make a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils. This is done through enabling pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of a diversity of religious beliefs and values in the school and in the wider community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is very engaging and is enjoyed by the whole school community. It is highly valued by stakeholders, particularly by the pupils who see it as central in identifying themselves as belonging to a church school. One pupil remarked, 'when we do worship in school, it's like we're in a real church.' Particularly significant is the use of the local church of St Paulinus for a range of key services including the celebration of the Eucharist. Likewise, the school has become a regular place of worship for the church community while the church is being renovated. This serves to give a clear sense of a shared spirituality with the wider community. Pupils are involved in leading worship through a small, but active, 'leading lights' group. These pupils greatly value the opportunity to lead and review worship. Developments to worship have been made as a result of monitoring and review process. This has been through formal observations, through pupil evaluation of worship on an interactive display and through pupil conferencing with the headteacher. Pupils have been listened to and worship now allows for more active participation of all year groups, through role play, drama and singing and signing hymns with actions.

Worship themes are rich and varied and are in line with the liturgical calendar. They explore aspects of the Trinitarian nature of God, particularly focusing on the person of Jesus. These are enriched through the use of relevant hymns and prayers. Bible stories and key texts are used frequently in worship to explore the daily themes. The central messages from worship flow out into the classrooms and playground and are reflected upon. All adults and children join in with Anglican prayers and responses and in singing as a community. Worship, therefore, is a lived celebration and an expression of the faith and values of the school. There are detailed plans for worship that are drawn up by the incumbent and school leaders each term. Key services celebrate pertinent moments in the lives of the pupils, for example the leavers service for Year 6, and these are especially valued by the school community. Another key moment is celebrated on Education Sunday where new reception pupils are welcomed to the school and church community. The welcoming of the new vicar was celebrated by the school community. There are school celebrations held on the Sunday as part of the local church service. Collaborations such as these involve the whole school community and have a significant impact on developing the spiritual identity of its members.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupil progress in RE is good and in line with other core subjects in the school. This is because pupils are engaged in their learning and enjoy the subject. The new RE framework 'Understanding Christianity' has been successfully introduced and has already improved standards in the teaching and learning of RE across the school. Pupils have noticed that the quality of RE teaching is better this year. One Year 6 pupil explained, 'we get to go deeper into

questions' and a Year 4 pupil added, 'we do more fun activities now.' Pupils use biblical texts in lessons to good effect and use them as a basis for exploring core Christian concepts such as the incarnation. In an observed Year 5 lesson, a large group of pupils were working independently, investigating how prophetic verses from the old testament supported the view that Jesus was the Messiah. Pupils' verbal understanding and critical evaluation of the topic was excellent. However, this level of stretch and challenge was not visible in pupils' written work. Pupils enjoy external visits from clergy and a local educational charity which deepen pupils' understanding of Christianity as a lived world faith.

The school has addressed a development point from the previous denominational inspection through effective marking and assessment. Clear assessment standards against the learning outcomes for Understanding Christianity are used. Assessment in RE is regular, and the majority of pupils progress as well as they do in other subjects, with an increasing number of pupils working at greater depth in RE. However, assessment tasks are not always pitched at the right level to allow pupils the opportunity to display high level religious literacy and critical analysis. The teaching about other world faiths has a significant impact on pupils' SMSC development. The RE coordinator is ensuring that diocesan schemes are being used effectively and that transition to the new content and pedagogy is impacting positively on pupils.

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

Leaders articulate a vision for the school based on distinctive Christian values. The school's vision is expressed succinctly in the children's mission statement of creating 'a happy, caring place where everybody is valued, respected and safe so we learn and grow to our very best'. This vision, and particularly the school's values, underpin the strategic decision making and plans of leaders. Governors say that the holistic development of pupils is paramount, as one said 'it is about intimately knowing what the needs are and the outcomes and identifying the gaps.' Strategic plans are in place that enable the whole child to develop. These are based on data and on a solid understanding of the school gained through spending time in the school with the pupils. Therefore, there is a feeling among governors that the school is 'going from strength to strength'. These improvements are evident in pupil progress. The number of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and maths is significantly above national averages, with a greater number of pupils now exceeding expected standards. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. However, not all school policies articulate how the school's vision and values underpin core aspects of provision.

Parents and staff speak very highly of the headteacher and the significant impact she has on the wellbeing and progress of all pupils. Staff feel privileged to work in the school because it is such a 'supportive community' with a 'family environment', where Christian values are 'intertwined and underpin our beliefs.' As a result, staff are committed to the school and work hard to achieve the best outcomes for their pupils. School leaders and governors say they have benefitted from joining together with other primary schools to form Amadeus Primary Academies Trust. This trust is investing time in developing future leaders of church schools through development programmes and conferences and, as a result, leaders feel supported. Expertise from the trust, particularly from its CEO, has enabled the school to develop rigorous tracking procedures using gap analysis of pupil performance. Therefore, leaders have a thorough understanding of school performance and know how best to effect the progress of pupils. Leaders are ensuring that the newly appointed RE coordinator attend diocesan training and meetings. The relationship between the school and St Paulinus' church is a significant strength that unifies and serves both communities excellently. The newly appointed vicar of St Paulinus' church, as an ex-officio governor, is already engaged in school activities and is well known by the pupils. Many governors are active in the church and the school and see their roles as serving one and the same community. All stakeholders appreciate this, and this mutually beneficial relationship is key in enabling the school to flourish as a church school. This gives a clarity of common identity that brings all together. As one Key Stage 2 pupil remarked 'not every school has their own church'.

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