

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Mottram Church of England (VA) Primary

Warhill, Mottram, Longendale, Hyde, SK14 6JL		
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Chester</b>	
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding	
Local authority	Tameside	
Date of inspection	9 October 2017	
Date of last inspection	3 July 2012	
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 106237	
Executive Headteacher	Esther Bland	
Inspector's name and number	Rev Craig Watson	78

#### School context

This is a small school (133 number on roll) situated in a semi-rural area with most pupils coming from a White British heritage. There is little pupil mobility. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The number of pupils that have special educational needs or disabilities is significantly above the national average. In 2014 an executive headteacher was appointed to lead both this school and Broadbottom CE primary school. Ofsted carried out a short inspection of the school on the 12 July 2017. The school is opposite the founding parish church of Saint Michael and All Angels and has been recently refurbished.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mottram CE (VA) Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The values of peace, hope, love, thankfulness and togetherness are expressed in an explicitly Christian way that creates a supportive and caring school community.
- Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school, enabling pupils and staff to understand and respond to the teaching and person of Jesus in a helpful and empowering way.
- Religious education (RE) is given priority in the school. It is led by the headteacher and an experienced teacher, and is taught effectively ensuring that it is highly valued by all in the school community.
- The headteacher's leadership inspires and supports the development of the school leading to a clear understanding of what is expected in this distinctively Christian school which embodies its stated values.
- Strong links between the school and the wider Christian community, particularly Saint Michael and All Angels parish church, have created a cohesive sense of community, enriching all stakeholders.

#### Areas to improve

- Build upon natural links with other countries to develop an understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith; thus expanding pupils learning horizons.
- Establish a more rigorous system for monitoring and evaluating collective worship that allows leaders at all levels, including governors, to analyse and assess the quality and impact.
- Embed the newly adopted Chester Diocesan RE scheme and an effective and accurate system for assessing RE to ensure maximum progress is achieved by pupils.

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

Members of the school community can explain the values of peace, hope, love, thankfulness and togetherness in an explicitly Christian way, leading to an understanding of how these work out in practice in the daily lives of all stakeholders. Achievement is increasing because all stakeholders recognise the values and how they are applied. Parents value the school's support, with one commenting that it was wonderful because they pray for community needs such as when her baby was seriously ill. The respect for diversity is evident and flows out of the Christian values. This is illustrated by an autistic pupil with significant communication difficulties feeling sufficiently comfortable to say 'We really need to say 'thank you' to God for this baby'. The work of the 'Open the Book' team from St Michael and All Angels provides opportunities for high quality, interactive spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences that bring the community together. This contributes to maintaining the high profile of the school's Christian character.

Pupils and staff value RE, with some seeing it as their favourite subject, reflecting its role in enhancing the Christian distinctiveness of the school. RE contributes to the Christian character of the school because it is explicitly applied to practical situations that pupils encounter during the school day.

Children are encouraged by the environment created in the school to express their thoughts and views. They engage in spontaneous prayer, written prayer and in discussion and debate, grappling with some significant issues such as terrorism and poverty. Pupils have some understanding of Christianity in a global context through topics on countries such as Russia and China. However they have limited awareness of the multi-cultural richness and the variety of Christian traditions within the church across the world.

The school's behaviour policy is determined by its values, with the Christian belief of forgiveness central to the school's behaviour management strategy. Its positive effect was evident in the interactions between pupils and in the relationships within the school community.

The governors' recently introduced code of conduct is explicitly Christian, ensuring that the character of the school is maintained and rooted in the Church of England. Parents and pupils recognise the importance of this character in delivering what they described as 'a love of learning' that ensures children 'absolutely flourish'.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is seen as being very important in the life of the school, enabling staff and pupils to find strength and support to face the challenges of life. Its importance is evident in that it is led by the executive headteacher and an experienced member of staff which gives it significant status. Pupils and staff clearly enjoy collective worship; praying spontaneously, singing enthusiastically and listening intently, however pupils rarely plan and deliver collective worship themselves. The worship is supported by members of the wider community and this establishes a positive climate for learning.

The 'Open the Book' team supplement the regular focus on scripture so that pupils can describe how this relates to the school and their own lives, with children commenting on their school as being 'really friendly'. Regular visits to the parish church and celebrations centred on the church year provide experiences of the Anglican tradition. From these visits flow opportunities for service to others such as collecting food gifts at harvest, which the school community engages in enthusiastically. This provides a vehicle for learning, with food gifts going to the 'Carpenter's Arms' food bank from the harvest celebrations. A similar contribution to the shoe box appeal in partnership with Mottram Evangelical Church expands pupils' experience into the wider church. The degree to which these links raise aspiration is limited primarily to the local community.

The vicar from Saint Michael's is a regular visitor to the school and contributes to the planning of collective worship. He enables pupils to understand the Anglican tradition and promotes effective links between the church and the school. The system for monitoring and evaluating collective worship lacks rigor, and there is little analysis of the evaluations that are carried out leading to a restricted understanding of its quality, particularly in the governing body. Pupils are occasionally involved in evaluating collective worship, however this is infrequent.

There are reflection stations in each classroom that are clearly well used by pupils for written prayer. The presence of a South American style cross in each classroom ensures a common focus for collective worship across the school, emphasising its importance and this is recognised by pupils. Pupils and staff are encouraged to participate in collective worship and are keen to do so.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

The standards of RE are in line with expectations with some pupils making better than expected progress. The school's internal data demonstrates that the progress in RE reflects the outcomes in all other subjects at the end of both key stages. This is evident in the standard of work in pupil books. RE is delivered by the class teacher,

supported effectively by an experienced member of staff as subject leader and the headteacher. This ensures it holds a high status in the school.

The teaching of the subject is at least good leading to effective learning taking place in lessons. The pupils develop a secure knowledge of the Christian faith through the study of the Bible and church practices, which is then rooted in practical applications to their daily lives. This is a thread that runs through RE lessons enabling pupils to make at least expected progress. The scheme of work previously studied considered religions other than Christianity only a little, leading to a limited understanding of other world faiths such as Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. The school is seeking to improve this by changing its syllabus to the Chester Diocesan Syllabus. This has created the need to devise a new scheme of work, pilot the way it is taught and establish how it should be assessed. Although the decision to change the syllabus reflects an ambitious vision for the subject, regular lessons are not yet inspiring and challenging pupils in the same way as the excellent RE days.

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

All staff and governors can describe the impact of the Christian values on the lives of the school community. This was evident in the behaviour of pupils who demonstrated care and concern for each other and for staff and visitors. Teachers apply the vision practically in all lessons, teaching pupils how to live out the vision and values in their daily lives. The headteacher effectively supports both RE and collective worship, ensuring that this has a high status in the life of the school, securing good practice and driving improvements. Leadership is devolved and training is encouraged and provided to governors and all staff, teaching and support. This is strategically planned and equips them effectively for service in the school and to secure succession planning.

Self-evaluation is accurate, and is clearly embedded in the life of the school, with accurate lesson observation processes used to identify good practice and to develop strategies for improvement. A limited collective worship monitoring programme collects data on some acts of collective worship however this is supplemented by a more qualitative approach. The headteacher and other staff present at most acts of collective worship provide qualitative assessments of that worship which, combined with the quantitative data, provide an accurate picture. The wider community, Chester Diocese and members of St Michael and All Angels are actively engaged by the leadership of the school, securing significant benefits for both school and community.

The headteacher models the vision, talking about it with passion and providing strong leadership. She ensures that good practice is shared from training with Broadbottom CE primary school, the Diocese of Chester and other providers to maintain a focus on improvement. Staff value the sharing of good practice in staff meetings and with Broadbottom CE primary school, applying this to improving their teaching of RE leading to good or better teaching and learning in lessons.

The embodiment of the value of togetherness is particularly striking, with pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities fully included in all aspects of school life. One pupil, who was one of a number of wheel chair users, summed up this inclusive learning, saying 'we learn loads of stuff, get better at stuff every day, and have friends. It's great'.

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