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

| St George's Church of England Primary School | |
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| The Hoskers Westhoughton Bolton BL5 2FB | |
| **Current SIAMS inspection grade** | **Good** |
| **Diocese** | **Manchester** |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Bolton |
| Date/s of inspection | 3 November 2016 |
| Date of last inspection | December 2011 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Aided 131038 |
| Headteacher | Philip Ivory |
| Inspector's name and number | Paul Adnitt 590 |

**School context**

St George's is an above average sized school with 323 pupils on roll (including nursery provision) located in an urban residential area in which socio-economic circumstances are very mixed. The school has a very small number of children from ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average. There have been significant changes to the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. The school has strong links with the churches and community.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's as a Church of England school are good**

- The outstanding and distinctive Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life and has an important and affirmative impact on pupils' personal and spiritual development. This is evidenced in excellent pupil behaviour and relationships.
- Inspiring and inclusive daily worship is central to the life of the school. Its quality and vibrancy makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
- Strong links between school, home and the local churches, underpinned by gospel values, provide a positive Christian witness in the wider community.
- The exemplary Christian leadership of the headteacher, supported by a strong governing body, ensures that the school's Christian character has a strong impact on pupils' academic achievement and spiritual growth.

**Areas to improve**

- Develop accurate assessment and evaluation systems in religious education (RE) to enable measurable improvements in progress and attainment to take place.
- Ensure that all staff and governors are fully involved in rigorous self-evaluation of the school as a church school so that effective strategies for further improvement are put into effect.

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

The school's distinctively Christian ethos nourishes, encourages and challenges the spiritual and cultural development of the whole community. Chosen core Christian values including truthfulness, thankfulness and forgiveness are made explicit and are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. These Christian values clearly contribute to pupils' behaviour which is outstanding. The staff and governors demonstrate these gospel values by example, evidenced by the excellent quality of relationships between all members of the school community. This, together with the emphasis on caring for others, makes an exceptional contribution to the pupils' social and moral development. Parents and pupils say that Christian values are important and have a positive effect on pupils' personal and spiritual development. The Christian character of the school enables and supports the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils, regardless of faith or culture. All pupils feel safe and special and have positive attitudes to their learning. They know they are valued and loved by staff. The pupils are proud of their school and speak confidently about why it is special to them. One pupil commented, 'Our friendships and how we behave are based on our Christian values. They are important because they help us to know what is right.' This has a positive impact on the pupils' excellent personal development, wellbeing and school attendance. Pupils are highly motivated, exhibit a love for learning and enjoy being in school. This has a significant effect on the good academic standards and progress achieved by the end of Key Stage 2. Interactive worship and religious education (RE) displays in classrooms and central areas, strongly engage pupils and actively promote prayer, reflection and spirituality. They act as a constant and appropriate reminder that the school is a place where the Christian faith is alive and nurtured. The school's work on 'Christianity around the World,' enables pupils to understand culture and life in a part of the world very different from their everyday experience. As a result they have a thorough understanding and awareness of Christianity as a relevant, multi-cultural and vibrant living faith. This is strengthened by the school's commitment to supporting local and international charities such as the Shoebox and Macmillan appeals. Effective and imaginative teaching in RE, which is of a good standard, contributes well to the Christian character of the school.

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

Outstanding collective worship, which is dynamic and exciting, is central to the life of the school. Pupils enjoy and value worship and speak enthusiastically about its importance to them and the wider school family. Worship develops their spirituality and helps them to reflect on issues they face. It enhances the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, including their awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Consequently pupils are confident when discussing their faith and demonstrate significant levels of spiritual maturity. One pupil commented, 'The Bible helps us understand what God and Jesus are telling us about how to live our lives.' Opportunities for reflection and prayer help to develop pupils' spiritual awareness. 'Worship is a time to reflect and get together to talk to God. It helps us understand how God wants to help us and how we can help each other.' remarked one pupil. Pupils are confident in praying and are encouraged to do so, both in worship and throughout the school day. Their use of prayer is exceptional, sensitive and meaningful and they readily provide their own impromptu prayers in worship. Pupils have a clear understanding of gospel values because worship promotes them strongly. It also enables pupils to recognise their responsibilities towards others and to reflect on community and personal values. They speak enthusiastically about the value of worship in their lives. Because of this, pupils are respectful and enthusiastic in helping to plan, lead and evaluate worship. This is often through the pupils' ethos and worship group. The clergy play an important part in the life of the school. The canon and church team are well liked by the pupils who greatly value their involvement and support. About the canon, one Year 6 pupil commented, 'He spends time talking to us and he gives us more detail about Jesus and why it is important we know that Jesus gave his life for us.' The church meets regularly in the school hall which helps to further cement the great relationship between church and school. St Bartholomew's church, a distance from the school, is also well used for worship and lessons. This contributes well to the pupils' knowledge of the variety of Anglican practice. Excellent worship displays and an altar with candle

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and Bible, and liturgical cloth provide a clear and positive focus. Planning, monitoring and evaluation are outstanding and include contributions from pupils, staff and governors. This has added significantly to the maintenance of excellent, child-friendly and Christ-centred worship. Worship is supported well by high quality displays on Christian values and also by the ongoing development of the outdoor area which includes a prayer garden. This enhances the pupil's reflection and prayer opportunities considerably. The school's status as a forest school has contributed well to developing a sense of awe and wonder, particularly for the younger pupils.

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

Religious education (RE) is an integral part of school life. It makes a significant contribution to personal, social and health education (PSHE). The majority of teaching is good with some outstanding features. Teaching has pace and challenge and stimulates pupils' learning. Pupils are engaged by the creative and imaginative teaching. They talk about and reflect on their learning and show empathy with others and an understanding of real life situations. This also aids their understanding of the practical application of prayer. Pupils enjoy RE and say that it is important to them and the life of the school. They relate their learning to their own experiences and articulate what the Christian faith means to them. One pupil remarked, 'RE teaches us how to live the right way. It helps you to follow the right path when life is difficult.' Pupils are challenged and given time to reflect on what they are learning, and this aids spiritual development throughout the school. Good standards are attained by pupils across both key stages. They also make good progress in RE, achieving in line with national and diocesan expectations. They display a secure knowledge of many of the key aspects of Christianity and the Bible. Commenting on Easter one pupil said, 'Jesus sacrificed himself to save us from our sins. He rose again and is alive for Christians.' Pupils' understanding of world faiths is enhanced by visits to a mosque and synagogue and by faith visitors to school sharing their beliefs. Planning and assessment of RE are good and full monitoring procedures are in place. Pupils' involvement in their own assessment and understanding of next steps is not yet developed. Accurate assessment and monitoring systems to enable pupils to make better than good progress are not fully in place.

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

The headteacher has a strong and clear Christian vision for the school and is well supported in this by the staff and the governing body. His personal faith enables him to lead well by example. The school leadership's evaluation of the school as a church school is thorough and accurate. However, although Governors and staff have a strong commitment to the school's Christian foundation, not all as yet contribute significantly to this process. As a result the process of monitoring and evaluation is not as effective as it could be. School leaders ensure that the school's Christian values are at the forefront of all initiatives. They also provide appropriate support, encouragement and challenge to the RE and worship co-ordinators. This ensures that good standards are maintained and improvements are made. RE and worship meet statutory requirements for the voluntary aided sector. The continuing professional development of all staff and governors is a high priority within the school. This enhances their confidence and expertise. It is particularly effective in the induction of new staff members. Parents appreciate the distinctive Christian nature of the school. They speak highly of it and recognise that the Christian aspects of the school, such as the clear Christian values, are important. Pupils' views are taken seriously and they have a leading role in the decision making process of the school through their active involvement in the school council and eco-council. There are very strong links with both the parish church and the local community. This includes church fairs and services, both within the church and school. The canon supports the school pastorally and has a regular and important input into the work of the school. 'He helps us be a Christian school,' commented a Year 4 boy. This enables pupils to understand the involvement of the church in the local and wider community and facilitates a positive contribution from the church to the life of the school.



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