

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Hollinsclough Church of England Voluntary Aided Academy

Carr Lane, Hollinsclough, Buxton, Staffordshire. SK17 0RH

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	September 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	Praxis Multi Academy Trust
Date of inspection	25 January 2018
Date of last inspection	6 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	142276
Principal	Janette Mountford-Lees
Inspector's name and number	Marianne Phillips 586

School context

Hollinsclough is a smaller than average primary with 50 pupils on roll. 19 pupils are full time and 31 attend school on a flexi-schooling basis. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below national average. The majority of pupils come from White British heritage. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. No pupils are in receipt of a statement or educational health care plan. The principal has been in post since September 2008. The school became an academy in September 2015 and is part of the Praxis Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). There have been a number of staff changes since then.

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

- The strong, Christian leadership of the principal, supported effectively through the staff team, positively drives the inclusive, caring ethos underpinned by clear, Christian values.
- The behaviour and attitude of all pupils, regardless of ability, background or faith is of the highest standard, supported by the explicit vision and values of the school.
- The pupils' passionate commitment to lead worship, which is effectively supporting the spiritual life of the school family.
- The support and involvement of governors in monitoring worship and religious education (RE) is effectively driving the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Areas to improve

- Establish regular times for governors and school leaders to investigate and explore pupils' views through pupil conferencing to ensure the quality of worship consistently meets individual need and is sustained at a high level.
- Introduce half-termly evaluations of worship to involve all stakeholders, enabling them to share their views on a regular basis.
- Strengthen the links with the other schools in the MAT to share expertise and best practice to drive future school improvement whilst retaining the school's distinctive Christian character.

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

Hollinsclough VA Academy is a very unique church school. Each and every individual experiences love and care through Christian values, lived out daily. These are shaped through the 'Fruits of the Spirit' and, as their ethos statement emphasises, help them to, 'Develop their potential and their Christian values in a nurturing school'. The inclusive, caring approaches are underpinned by biblical teaching through the life of Jesus. The vision statement is one example of this, taken from Philippians 4:13, 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.'

Consequently, parents travel quite large distances to enable their children to be part of this very special school. Many of these have experienced failure in their previous schools, but are thriving and successful in this unique setting. As you enter the school, symbols of its Christian foundation are displayed. Also, statements that emphasise the caring respect that school leaders encourage towards all religions. When questioned, all pupils explained, 'This is a Christian school that celebrates different beliefs and helps us to have a great education because our teachers care.' They all think their school values are important and guide them in the way they live together. Consequently, standards of behaviour are excellent and there is no bullying. Relationships are close and supportive both in school and towards the wider community. In the words of a child, 'our values and this school help me to see myself in the best way I can be.' As a result, they are encouraged to be loving, joyful, good, kind, peaceful, patient, faithful and self-controlling. Pupils displaying the values are rewarded with the 'Fruits of the Spirit' Awards during their celebration worship every half-term. Attendance is also high. Flexi-schooling approaches are monitored rigorously by the principal, through home visits. These arrangements ensure pupils attend Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week. Monday and Friday are the flexi days, where they are home schooled. Pupils want to attend and feel safe, happy and challenged to be caring young citizens of the future. All are encouraged to be responsible and share in the decisions that are made. Pupil questionnaires formally evidence how positive they feel about their school and how much their opinions are respected. They are confident in sharing their views in lessons and informally, with adults, through the monitoring that takes place. School leaders value their views and are keen to ensure individual needs are met. Consequently, they have prioritised the need to formalise these pupil conversations through regular 'pupil conferences', as part of their rigorous monitoring. Religious education (RE) is a very popular subject, which is enabling all pupils to develop an understanding of other faiths and cultures. Pupils visit places of worship and engage with visitors to school. During their 'Inter-faith Term', they visited a Mosque and the 'Faith Trail' in Derby. During their 'Awe and Wonder' week pupils experienced a day of Pentecost and explored the Eucharist. They discussed their learning experiences with a number of visiting clergy. Photographic records and pupil conversations evidence how these experiences are developing pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and different faiths. Parents are very positive about the school. 'Our children are nurtured to be respectful of cultural and faith differences. They have a good understanding of the world.' The principal and her team know their pupils very well and personalise learning to meet individual need, particularly of the vulnerable. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously, to target intervention and support. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies, but is generally below national expectation. Year groups are very small. Teaching is consistently strong and effective enabling pupils to progress rapidly. As a result, all pupils are in line or above national expectations by the time they leave the school. The curriculum is rich and creative, linked to themes, to cater for the flexi-schooling. 'Project Fridays' build independent choice and challenge, both at home and in school. Extra-curricular activities expand the experiences incorporating art, music and sport, for example through their 'Young Voices Choir'. Consequently all pupils say they are challenged and inspired to learn and their spiritual development is enhanced. As a hub school for 'Global Learning', their studies are expanding their global perspective. The strong links between the school and church have been sustained in the absence of a designated minister. The local Methodist minister and an Anglican minister from Stoke visit regularly. The latter has become a governor, supports RE and is fully committed to the spiritual life of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is central to the life of this school and is valued by all attending. During worship pupils and staff come together, as a family to, 'focus on God'. Singing is a key part of every act of worship. During an effective act of worship during the inspection, there was a real sense of creating spiritual unity. The school song, 'You shall go out with Joy', created an atmosphere of joy and hope. The whole school stayed at the end of worship to share their views on the experience. It is clear that staff and pupils enjoy worship. They share views such as: 'It helps me to focus on hope for the future, it makes me calm and peaceful, it helps me to learn about Jesus and to talk to God, I feel close to Jesus and He helps me.' All pupils and staff are encouraged to lead worship and they are keen to do so. There is a worship committee of pupils from years 4 to 6. They plan and lead weekly sessions, guided by the principal and their own Christian communities. Worship is enabling the school community to focus on their Christian values and to explore the teaching from the Bible. Pupils are sure that 'Our values are very important in teaching us how we should live and what we should do or not do.' Jesus is their guide in helping them to apply their worship experiences in their daily lives, through their class rules. Worship regularly celebrates Christian festivals both in school and at the Methodist chapel. The Trinity is welcomed through the lighting of candles. All pupils know

and say the Lord's prayer confidently. Through worship, pupils are being taught a range of Christian traditions including Anglican responses, the Grace and the importance of prayer and reflection. Pupils understand that prayer is the way they can communicate with God. During their weekly 'mindfulness' worship pupils are offered time to reflect individually and to share their experiences and prayers. This encourages all to grow spiritually. The principal is a practising Christian. She is a strong Christian leader who holds a Bishop's certificate and a Farmington Fellowship. The school regularly invites Christian speakers, some of whom are governors, to enhance the worship experiences. Regular, rigorous monitoring is a feature ensuring quality is sustained in RE and worship, ensuring they meet statutory requirements. School leaders value feedback and pupils are confident in expressing their opinions. Parents enjoy worship and enthusiastically share their views about worship through annual questionnaires. Developing pupil conferencing and regular parental evaluations is a priority for school leaders. Consequently, the quality of worship is ensured and effective in supporting the spiritual lives of the school family.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is a popular subject that holds a high status as part of the school's curriculum. Standards in RE are at least in line with or above national expectations. All pupils enjoy RE and feel challenged by the experiences offered. RE is led effectively by the principal. Class teachers have accessed training and, through her support, are gaining confidence in teaching their own classes. Monitoring records evidence that teaching is consistently good and learning outcomes are high. These judgements were confirmed by the RE lessons observed on the day of inspection. In both lessons teachers used a range of strategies to guide and support learning. Brainstorming ideas, partner talk and targeted, skilled questioning challenge pupils to 'Explore, Relate and Apply' their learning. Themes, such as the 'Incarnation, Salvation, Pentecost and People of God', are planned over a two to three year rolling programme. Pupils display confidence in raising questions about the themes studied. For example, through the story of Zacchaeus they explore the characteristics of Jesus as a teacher and Saviour. Also, through studying the 'Incarnation' they grapple with the idea of the Trinity through, 'God in human form'. Planning is creative. Themes such as the 'Inter-faith Week' and the 'Awe and Wonder' topic enable them to develop skills of enquiry. They are challenged to analyse and compare beliefs and cultures. Pupils are encouraged to apply their learning through discussion, art and music. Although the school has developed their own long term plans, these follow diocesan guidance. All staff and governors have attended a variety of training and relationships with the diocese are strong. An example of this was the 'Stonewall Training' celebrating 'All God's Children', earning them the title of 'Stonewall Champions'. Training underpins teaching and learning. Governors have link roles in RE and sometimes lead worship, offering pupils access to communion. Monitoring is effective in driving forward the distinctiveness of the school. Assessment and planning has been reviewed by leaders and the diocese. These features are an on-going priority to ensure high standards are maintained. RE is effective in supporting the spiritual lives of the pupils. It has strong links with the spiritual, moral and social curriculum (SMSC) It also enables pupils to develop an understanding of Christianity and a range of faiths and cultures locally, globally and nationally.

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

The principal, through her distributive leadership approaches, has developed a team that is passionate about facilitating children's learning. Her strong, Christian faith and belief is effectively underpinning the spiritual life of the school and building capacity for the future. The vision and values are explicitly shared and endorsed by all members of the school family. These focus on providing an inclusive, nurturing environment, where all are made welcome and respected as unique children of God. This unites everyone through celebrating diversity and encouraging all to belong and treat each other with love and kindness. The 'Fruits of the Spirit Values' underpin and guide daily choices, ensuring relationships are strong. Parents appreciate the close partnership with the school and travel considerable distances to benefit from the flexi-schooling approaches offered. These encourage parental responsibility and commitment to their children's education. Parents have also formed a strong parent/ teacher association that supports activities and fundraising. They share that, 'the ethos, values, strong caring leadership, inclusive and aspirational approaches were the reasons we chose this school for our children as these inspire our children to be confident about themselves.' School leaders and governors are committed to raising standards and developing the school as a distinctive church school. There has been change within the governing body coinciding with the transition to academy status. There have also been significant changes within the MAT, which have impacted on the ways in which each school has been supported. Networking, to date has been limited. However, the chair of governors, who is a member of the Trustees Board of the MAT, has provided a communication link and consistent support. He meets fortnightly with the principal as part of his monitoring role. He and the other governors effectively review the distinctiveness of the school. The school has maintained its strong links with the diocese and benefit from the training offered. The development points from the previous inspection have been met.

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