

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Needwood Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary

Yoxall Road, Newborough, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 8SU

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Staffordshire
Name of federation	The Forest Federation
Date of inspection	26 January 2018
Date of last inspection	8 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	VA 124337
Executive Headteacher	Charlene Gethin
Inspector's name and number	Marianne Phillips 586

School context

Needwood is a smaller than average primary of 77 pupils. Pupils eligible for free school meals are below the national average. Most pupils are from White British heritage. The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is approximately half that of the national average. Almost 4% of pupils are in receipt of a statement or educational health care plan, which is significantly above the national average. The executive headteacher was appointed acting headteacher in May 2013 and became permanent when the school entered into a hard federation with All Saints Primary, Rangemore, in April 2014.

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

- The strong Christian leadership and the passionate team support effectively drive the Christian vision and values.
- The commitment of governors to ensure that the Christian distinctiveness of the school permeates all aspects of school life.
- The confident and committed involvement and leadership of pupils in worship effectively supports the spiritual life of the school family.
- The pupil leadership groups that influence the daily life of the school, living out their Christian values through their efforts to care for each other and the wider community.
- The strong links with the church and the ways in which the church leaders support and drive Christian distinctiveness.
- The focus on biblical teaching through the work of Jesus and the 'Fruits of the Spirit', which guides daily choices and underpins the relationships within the school family.

Areas to improve

- Develop the pupils' deeper understanding of the importance of using prayer at any time or in any place, in their journey to become close and intimate with God.
- Ensure, through the monitoring of teaching and learning in RE by governors and school leaders, that pupils are challenged regularly, creatively and consistently to inspire and engage in their learning.

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

From the moment you enter the school, Needwood Church of England (CE) Voluntary Aided (VA) Primary school proclaims its Christian foundation. The symbolism of the large wooden cross in the entrance witnesses that Jesus is central to the life of the school. This is evidenced through the words of the pupils in the worship team, 'Jesus is God's Son, He came to earth to help us and to take away our sins.' Biblical teaching informs the vision and affirms that, 'If we love one another God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us.' The Christian values, guided by the 'Fruits of the Spirit', encourage all to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlling. This guidance underpins daily life and shapes the strong relationships that exist and the choices pupils and adults make. There is a sense of unity of purpose, effectively nurtured by the strong Christian leadership of the executive headteacher. The inclusive approaches are effective in creating a school family that belongs and works together for the good of all. The 'make a friend seat' in the playground exemplifies this. Pupils explain, 'If you feel lonely you can sit on the seat and someone will come, because we are all meant to help.' Parents also are sure: 'This school teaches our children to care about everyone – they are an inclusive family.' Pupils displaying the values through their actions are nominated, by the worship team, for a half-termly 'Fruits of the Spirit Award'. Consequently, behaviour is excellent, evidenced by the pupils' names in the green and gold circles in each classroom. Pupils feel safe, happy and want to come to school. Hence, attendance is also at a high standard. Pupils have a strong voice and are encouraged to take responsibility through the 'team structures'. The worship team, the school council, the learning council and the team captains regularly meet to share their views. They feel their roles are important and, 'make a difference to the life of the school'. They monitor the 'ideas boxes' and make decisions about fund raising and other events. For example, the worship team are currently designing an outside reflection area to support prayer during playtime. Cultural diversity is celebrated and links have been made. They include the 'Little Angels' school in Uganda, a Class 3 link with Qatar and a teaching link with Shanghai. Their slogan, 'Hand in hand we love to learn and achieve', is displayed in Mandarin and pupils have learned to say this in that language. There have been exchange visits and pupils of the school now use 'Shanghai Maths' approaches in their lessons. The executive headteacher and her team share the vision and positively encourage all to achieve their best. Pupils' skills, on entry to the school, vary annually, but are often below national expectations. Many display additional needs and government grants are used effectively to provide individual support and appropriate care. Rigorous monitoring and tracking systems have been introduced. These ensure virtually all pupils progress rapidly and achieve levels in line or above national expectations by the time they leave the school. Marking is consistent and is effective in guiding pupils' next steps in their learning. The accelerated progress made, particularly by the vulnerable, reduces the gap between them and their peers. This is appreciated by parents. 'This school instils attributes in our children that help them be happy and confident with whom they are which also breeds success.' The curriculum is rich and inspiring. Pupils and staff attend training and regularly go on retreats. As one child explained, 'a group of us went on a retreat to help put the WOW in worship. It was great.' There are strong links between worship, religious education (RE) and social, moral spiritual and cultural (SMSC) lessons. Pupils enjoy and are inspired to learn. Extra-curricular activities, such as the Christian club, visits and visitors enrich the learning experiences. There are strong links with All Saints Church that actively support and strengthen the spiritual life of the school. Governors are passionate and committed to the school, through their roles. As one explained, 'We reflect on every aspect of school life to ensure that the golden thread of distinctiveness permeates all areas, to embed and drive our Christian faith and values.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is outstanding and a central feature of the daily life of the school. The timetable calls on pupils, staff, school leaders and members of the church to lead worship weekly. The school family assembles daily to praise and, 'pray to God'. Pupils leading worship respectfully welcome God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit as they light the Trinity candles. Pupils are confident in the variety of Christian and Anglican traditions they are learning. Their responses are natural and spontaneous. Singing is enthusiastic, active and joyful, exemplified through the words of 'My Lighthouse', acknowledging Jesus as the 'Light of the World'. Stories and verses from the Bible regularly focus those present on the Christian value and the teachings of Jesus. In the effective worship observed, the story of Jonah was shared to ensure everyone that 'God cares for every individual and has a plan for us.' As the worship team explain, 'The Fruits of the Spirit values are important, because they tell us how God wants us to act. He has set them up for us because He wants us to have them in our hearts.' Prayer is also important and is encouraged in worship and throughout the school day. The 'prayer tent' is manned at breaktimes, by the worship team and this encourages pupils of all ages to maintain their efforts to, 'talk with God'. School leaders have prioritised the commitment to develop pupils understanding of prayer, 'at all times and in all places'. Learning from the worship experience is encouraged through the 'Big Ask' questions that are recorded and used to guide reflection. The Vicar of All Saints, half-termly, leads Eucharist services in Church and pupils, parents and staff are encouraged to participate. These, and all acts of worship, are inclusive and celebrate the Christian festivals throughout the year. The Vicar and his wife regularly visit school to nurture the spiritual and pastoral life of school. They lead the Christian club and encourage pupils to focus

on Jesus's teaching. Pupils have creatively and spontaneously responded, for example, through their 'joyful dancing to be shared in worship, their art and writing'. Monitoring of worship is done termly by the foundation governors. They share their findings formally and informally and regularly gather the views of pupils as part of their visits. Pupil voice is important and informs decisions through the opinions shared. Consequently, school leaders have prioritised the need to ensure all pupils have their views understood, through pupil conferencing regularly. Consequently, pupils and all members of the family participate fully with the worship experience. Daily worship inspires and supports the spiritual life of the school and underpins its Christian distinctiveness.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile within the school and is a popular subject. Pupils enjoy learning about Christianity. They are challenged to think deeply about difficult topics such as the Incarnation through the Understanding Christianity curriculum. They engage, explore and reflect on teaching about Islam, Judaism and Hinduism guided by the Discovery RE approaches. RE books evidence the high quality experiences and consistent structures that have been introduced across the school over time. Pupils of all abilities are supported through clear lesson planning that encourages deep thinking time, recorded through the 'reflection scrolls'. Marking is also clear and consistent and provides an effective tool to assess and guide pupils' learning, lesson by lesson. Governors, the RE leader, teachers and school leaders regularly monitor the quality of RE. Book scrutiny, discussions, observations, questionnaires and learning walks provide evidence that ensures the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better. As a result, standards in RE are in line or above other core subjects. Challenging pupils of all abilities has been and remains a priority to ensure they achieve and remain engaged throughout lessons. Lessons evidence the strength of teaching and learning, the depth of pupil knowledge and their skills of analysis. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 were challenged to artistically represent the Last Supper to highlight its links to Holy Communion whilst pupils from Years 5 and 6 explored how Hindus show their devotion to their religion. All pupils were able to draw on prior learning and could confidently articulate their opinions from their knowledge and experiences. RE is led strongly and creatively. The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus, training and guidance from the diocese also informs organisation and provision. RE experiences are also underpinned by the core values. Teaching and learning effectively develops depth and challenge and links to worship and SMSC. Consequently, pupils are developing a good understanding of a range of world faiths. Visits and visitors and conferences across the Forest Federation of schools are also used to enrich the pupils' experiences in RE. Consequently, RE is consistently contributing to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and helping to drive forward Christian distinctiveness. RE and worship meet statutory requirements.

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

Needwood is a school that cares strongly about the community it serves. The strong spiritual leadership and team approaches are inclusive and highly effective. The school is united as a family and committed to the vision and values that strengthen relationships and inform actions. They are the foundation on which the school guides its decisions, celebrates diversity and nurtures a sense of belonging. Christian values shape lives beyond the school boundaries and prepare pupils to be informed, confident citizens of the future. As parents shared, 'The school's values and inclusive approaches make a difference to family interaction at home. Our children often open up dialogue about faith and are skilled in challenging our faith, or lack of it!' Parents, pupils and staff all witness the difference this school and its leaders have made in their lives. Belief, faith and confidence are nurtured through the Christian caring approaches of the executive headteacher and her staff. The partnership with parents is also strengthened through the Parents' Forum and an open-door welcome that parents appreciate. The executive headteacher is highly respected. As parents explained, 'Her enthusiasm should be bottled, she is an incredible leader.' They also feel that the changes through Forest Federation of schools, 'has been explained and has been successful'. Performance management targets, professional development and training strengthen the school and are building capacity for the future. Rigorous monitoring by school leaders and governors ensures that they know their school and are aware of pupils' needs. Systems and structures that have been introduced are underpinned by the Christian vision and values. They are effective in driving the school's high standards and its Christian distinctiveness. Pupil leadership is strong and encouraged, as is the leadership of RE and worship. Breakfast clubs and a rich and varied curriculum provide care and inspire learning. Links with the church and the diocese are strong and supportive of the spiritual life of the school. The development points from the previous inspection have been met.

SIAMS report January 2018 Needwood CE (VA) Primary, Newborough, Burton-on-Trent, DE13 8SU