



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Colwich Church of England Primary School

Main Road
Colwich
Stafford
ST17 0XD

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding (VC)

Current inspection grade: Outstanding (Academy)

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 17 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 8 February 2011 (VC)

School's unique reference number: 142422

Headteacher: Nicki Clay

Inspector's name and number: Allyson Taylor 768

School context

Colwich Church of England Primary school is a smaller than average school with 185 learners on roll, taught in seven classes. The majority of learners are of white British background. While the number of children on roll with social and learning needs is below national figures, there are a number of learners who require additional support. In February 2016, Colwich joined with two church schools, St. Andrew's, Weston and St. Peter's, Hixon, to create the Mid-Trent Multi-Academy Trust.

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

- The impact of the Christian character is widespread and extends into family and parish life so that the school's mission to create 'learners for life' is fulfilled.
- The leadership and all staff exemplify the key Christian value of 'endurance' and are committed to strengthening the Christian foundations of Colwich within the context of the academy trust.
- Religious education (RE) and collective worship make a major contribution to the effectiveness of the school as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Extend formal systems for governors to evaluate the Christian character, RE and collective worship so these fully inform strategic plans to sustain Church school distinctiveness.
- Develop shared roles with the two other trust schools to enhance subject leadership and so nurture staff as future leaders of church schools.

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

The outstanding Christian character of Colwich is seen in the vibrant outworking of the four key values of trust, compassion, friendship and endurance. These values, chosen after considered reflection by children and adults, have a profound impact on learning and personal growth. The value of friendship is the lifeblood of the school. Learners explain in detail how the other values are lived out in their friendships and the great mutual support given for all backgrounds and abilities. Learners describe how they trust the adults to help them in their studies. They show compassion and practical help for their classmates who might be struggling in lessons. Members of staff provide additional support which is sensitive towards meeting the individual needs of learners, for example with encouraging reluctant readers. As the key values are lived out in every aspect of school, the distinctive Christian character underpins the very high standards achieved in national tests across all ages and abilities. Notable is the way adults and children in the school community have helped each other through bereavement. A teacher said the experience has made them a stronger team and that they feel more able to grow in their own faith. Children are able to give several examples of where the Bible teaches them to apply the values in their own lives. They explain how the story of Jesus healing the paralysed man shows endurance and friendship in action and helps them to settle any disagreements with their own friends. One child said 'they didn't give up on helping him.' Relationships between all members of the school community are built on mutual respect and are exceptionally strong. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is firmly rooted in the Christian character. The school is described as 'all-encompassing' in its mission to meet the needs of learners. The mission statement, 'In God's name we learn to love, love to learn, learn for life' permeates all curriculum planning. RE is inspirational and very popular. Children enjoy the practical activities which teach them about a range of faiths and cultures. One child said 'the subject helps us express our feelings too.' RE enables learners to have a sense of their place in our diverse world. This is an area the school plans to extend with more visits to a wider range of places of worship. The rich school curriculum provides regular opportunities for spiritual development and this will be enhanced as the school considers its definition of what spirituality means at Colwich.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

'School is an extension of church and vice versa' is a view expressed by several adults. There is a spiritual interdependence between the parish church and school. This exemplifies the mission of learning throughout life which the headteacher holds dear, 'we are all still learning.' Collective worship is central to the success of the school. It is the mortar that secures the foundation on which understanding of the key values and Christian faith is built. Thought-provoking topics encourage children to act in the service of others. For example, diagnoses of diabetes in two members of the school community prompted a year 6 to fundraise for the charity 'Diabetes UK.' Acts of worship offer all present the opportunity to have a deeper relationship with God. Learners are familiar with a wide range of Anglican traditions, including liturgical responses, Holy Communion and the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. School services in church mark the main Christian festivals. In addition, children write to family members, inviting them to attend weekly Morning Prayer in church. This extends the value of friendship into the wider community. Some members of staff say the inclusive worship life of the school has brought them comfort and strength to face challenges. As a result of the exemplary links with the parish church, the assistant minister states that the numbers attending church services have increased. Prayer is a thread throughout the school day. Learners appreciate the opportunities to say the Lord's Prayer, school prayer or those they have written in worship, at lunch and at home time. Each class has a reflection area and these, combined with the garden area, allow learners regular opportunities for personal prayer. Children frequently lead aspects of worship and do this with reverence and confidence. Teaching staff, the assistant minister and other members of the church support them to do so. Worship is, therefore, planned and led by a wide range of ages and this enhances the spiritual development of adults and children. The school is blessed in the devoted service of the assistant minister. Under his guidance the church-led 'Tuesday club,' held in school,

is oversubscribed. Feedback on worship is used to improve the experience, for example introducing class-based worship which encourages younger children to take an active part. Worship at Colwich is life-enhancing for all ages in school and its impact is felt in the local community beyond.

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

Leaders are united in a shared vision to secure the future of Colwich as a distinctive and highly effective church school. Their vision has sustained them through the many challenges of academy conversion and the creation of a multi-academy trust. Governors and the headteacher have managed changes and difficulties faced by staff with great compassion. All leaders explain how the key values and strong Christian character have a significant impact on the progress and achievement as well as personal development and well-being of learners. This is also well understood by parents. One said: 'the values help our children to strive.' In making strategic decisions, leaders consider the Christian distinctiveness of the school and have chosen partner schools which share similar values. Governors know the school well. Frequent communication with the headteacher and RE/worship coordinator enable them to ensure statutory requirements as a church school are met. Governor monitoring of RE and worship is in place but this is not informing specific action plans as fully as it might. Partnerships with families are excellent. Parents describe the impact of the Church school ethos at home. One commented: 'I am finding out more about things like the Transfiguration from my child.' Links with the diocese have grown. The diocesan adviser has worked with the deeply committed RE coordinator to plan creative lessons which fulfil the school's aim to develop learners' respect for those of other faiths and cultures. The diocesan academy trust also supports the leadership as a member of the new multi-academy trust board. As Colwich moves into a new stage of its history, the dedicated headteacher and supportive governors are well-placed to build leadership capacity across the trust schools. In this way subject expertise may be shared, curriculum and social experiences for children extended and future leaders of church schools nurtured. Charlotte Sparrow, who is honoured with flowers and cake on Founder's day, is surely smiling at the continued success of the school she founded in 1827. This is a school which is 'learning for life' and is set to enhance the lives of its children for many years to come.

SIAMS report March 2016 Colwich Church of England Primary School Stafford ST17 0XD