



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Gnosall St Lawrence CE Primary Academy	Lowfield Lane Gnosall Stafford ST20 0ET
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese/Methodist District	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Date of academy conversion	April 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	West Stafford Multi-Academy Trust
Date of inspection	6 October 2016
Date of last inspection	20 October 2011
School's unique reference number	141779
Headteacher	Trish Edwards
Inspector's name and number	Susan Taylor 688

School context

Gnosall St Lawrence CE Primary Academy is part of the West Stafford Multi-Academy Trust comprising of three local church schools. There are 229 pupils on roll, predominately from the village of Gnosall. The pupil admission number has recently increased to 45 to cater for the growing demand for places. The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The school moved into a new build in the spring term of 2016. A pre-school with 57 children is run and managed by the local governing board and operates within the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gnosall St Lawrence Primary Academy as a Church of England Academy are outstanding.

- The leadership of the school is a united team with a clear vision based upon explicit Christian values. This has a very positive impact upon the life of the school and pupils' personal development.
- The daily meditation sessions give pupils opportunities to develop their own spirituality.
- The positioning, ambience and wide use of the sanctuary sets the tone for all visitors to the school.
- There is a close and effective working relationship with the church.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and positive attitudes to learning shines through in all they do.

Areas to improve

- Create an outdoor quiet area so as to give pupils opportunities at lunchtimes and playtimes to independently use their highly developed reflection skills.
- Create a Christian focus in the hall so as to enhance worship.

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

Gnosall St Lawrence CE Primary Academy is a very caring school where all pupils and staff are valued and supported. Pupils enter the school eagerly and are greeted by name by a member of staff. Parents say that the system works well and that it is easy to give messages to the staff on duty. The mission statement “Working together, with Jesus beside us, to achieve our full potential” is understood by pupils and underpins their relationships and learning. The school’s Christian values of honesty, respect, kindness, commitment, perseverance and responsibility were decided upon by the pupils and are prominently displayed in all classrooms and around school. Pupils understand these values fully and can relate them to their own lives. They are able to give many examples of Bible stories that display a particular value and so are in no doubt as to the Christian application of these values. For example, when discussing honesty one pupil talked about “Adam and Eve”, and for kindness one retold the story of “The Good Samaritan”. The school has incorporated British values into this moral framework. Academic achievement is good and all groups of children, including the more vulnerable, make at least expected progress. The school endeavours to raise the aspirations of pupils, both academically and personally, by a range of contemplative reflections on the walls around the school such as “There will be obstacles, there will be mistakes but with hard work there are no limits” and “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted”. The Christian character of the school has a significant impact on pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. There are clear policies on spirituality and meditation which are understood by staff and governors and are consistently implemented. The impact of the daily Christian meditation, which is held in all classes including pre-school, is an outstanding element because the silence, calmness and level of reflective concentration displayed by the children are remarkable. This has been developed over the last 3 years and older pupils speak about the difference it has made to them. As one pupil said “*when we first started I couldn’t keep my eyes closed for very long but I can now. I think about lots of things that have happened and say ‘peace be with me’ in my head*”. Another pupil said “*it clears your head for the afternoon’s learning*” and another “*at home if my brother annoys me I lie on my bed, close my eyes and meditate*”. The school offers a wide-range of extra-curricular activities, both before and after school, which are highly valued by both pupils and parents. These activities together with school visits and residential events provide opportunities for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils show an understanding of, and respect for, other faiths which has been enhanced through their learning in religious education (RE), a Hindu workshop, visiting Muslim speakers, visits to places of worship and a range of multi-faith books displayed in classrooms and library. Children say that they enjoy RE and speak in depth about their learning. RE is central in defining the school’s Christian character and re-enforcing the school’s values. Pupils have a degree of understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith but this area could be further developed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is highly valued by all members of the school. It takes place daily as either a whole school or class worship. Worship is planned on weekly themes by the worship co-ordinator who provides material to ensure continuity of delivery and development of the theme during the course of the week. Themes are based upon school values and the Christian calendar and are clearly linked to Biblical passages. Consequently, pupils have a very sound understanding of the Christian context of their core values. Children are able to recall a wide range of collective worship experiences, both the story and the message. Pupils are particularly inspired in worship led by the “Open the Book” team who are an ecumenical church team who deliver a very creative worship involving the pupils. For whole school worship a temporary table with a cloth of the appropriate liturgical colour, a cross, Bible and candle is set-up by pupils and reflective music played as children enter. A candle is lit to signify the start of worship and a response of “*Peace be with you*”. This has enabled pupils develop a thorough understanding of Christian doctrine and beliefs. Prayer is given a high profile in worship with the school prayer is said daily. Worship concludes with saying the grace together. Pupils enter and leave the hall reverently and participate fully in prayers, singing and reflection time during collective worship. Unfortunately, due to issues with the new build the school are not as yet able to attach anything to the walls in the hall so there is no focal point or permanent table for worship. The leadership team fully acknowledge that these are necessary and would enhance the worship experience even further. Worship is led by a range of different leaders including the team rector and the Methodist minister giving pupils experience of a range of styles. There is a very active and committed school ministry team comprising of church members that meet regularly to plan, deliver and help organise events between school and church. They consider themselves as “*a bridge between the church and the school*”. All pupils and parents visit church for the principal Christian festivals as well as a leavers’ worship when pupils are presented with a Bible. Also the reception class experience worship

through a welcoming service and being given a wooden holding cross to mark the start of their spiritual journey in school. Pupils say the grace in worship, at lunchtime and the end of the day and this has developed their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each class has a reflection area which is easily accessible to the pupils. These areas have a degree of continuity across the school but also manage to reflect differences across the age-range and provide yet another opportunity for pupils to develop their personal spirituality. Opportunities for personal prayer are valued by the pupils and many speak about times in their life when prayer has been helpful. As well as opportunities for prayers in the classroom and whole school worship, pupils speak about how they can ask an adult to go to the sanctuary with them to talk and pray if they have worries. The school ministry team and leadership team meet together regularly to pray for the school, pupils and families and pupils can ask for their prayers to be said at these meetings. Consequently, prayer has a very high profile in the school. The forest school is used weekly by classes and enables pupils to learn new skills in the outdoor environment, “*you can hear the birds and nature is all around you*”. Feedback on worship is obtained from pupils, staff, parents and governors. This feedback is evaluated, discussed and forms part of school development.

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

The Christian commitment of the Headteacher ensures that her leadership is based upon Christian principles where each person is valued. She is ably supported by a deputy and an assistant head. As one pupil summarised “*the teachers are very good at this school*”. This has led to a very united team of staff and governors who share the vision that Christian values underpin all school improvement. The school self-evaluation is very detailed, honest and accurate and so has had a direct impact upon identifying areas for development. Documentation shows that the school’s core values are central to all areas of the curriculum as well as the wider life of the school. The leadership team have managed to inter-link religious education, personal, social, and health education (PSHE), SMSC education, British values and academic achievement within their 6 core Christian values and mission statement. This ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of these values and how they affect all their life. The considered decision to introduce daily meditation and a daily fitness run in a very already full school day has enabled pupils to develop their spiritual, emotional and physical well-being. Within the multi-academy trust responsibilities have been delegated to the local governing body of Gnosall, St Lawrence. Foundation governors are fully aware of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school and report back regularly at full governor meetings. The Headteacher produces a comprehensive weekly report for all governors to which they reply electronically so as to keep everybody informed. Additionally, the Headteacher, deputy, chair and vice-chair meet fortnightly. Consequently, governors are very aware of all aspects of the school and because of this have a strategic vision for the future development of the school and the trust. Links with both St Lawrence Church and the local Methodist church are strong. Pupils were involved in Bishop Michael’s welcoming service in Gnosall where they questioned him about his role and calling, so deepening their understanding of Anglican traditions. The school welcomes support and training offered by the diocese. Pupils are involved in a number of fund-raising activities charities which are identified by pupils. These have included Eclipse, Douglas MacMillan and Parkinson’s disease. As a pupil said “*I feel really proud when we raise money*”. Through watching ‘Newsround’ daily pupils gain an insight into global events which has in turn led to them supporting various charitable initiatives. Parents speak highly of the school and this is also evidenced by the increase in pupil admissions. A weekly coffee morning is held for parents in the sanctuary with an opportunity to informally talk with school leaders. RE is led and managed very effectively by an enthusiastic leader who has a clear understanding of the impact of RE on the Christian character of the school. The development points from the previous inspection have been addressed.