



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Chad's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Cranham Drive, Patchway, Bristol, BS34 6AQ

**Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding**

**Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Bristol**

Local authority: South Gloucestershire

Dates of inspection: 1 May 2015

Date of last inspection: 2 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 109179

Headteacher: Darren Brown

Inspector's name and number: Margaret James 698

#### School context

St Chad's is an average sized primary school located in the outskirts of Bristol in a culturally and religiously diverse residential area. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are below average as is the number of pupils in receipt of funding under the Pupil Premium initiative. There has been a significant amount of staff change over the past two years whilst the school has worked to emerge from an Ofsted judgement of Requires Improvement. A very recent inspection by Ofsted has judged the school to be Good.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Chad's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inspirational and focused vision and leadership of the headteacher results in a unity of purpose shared by all school leaders leading to rapid improvement in all areas of the school as a church school
- The shared understanding by the whole staff and governors of how a church school can be both distinctive and effective with a focus on the needs of each child
- The high profile of spirituality and spiritual development in the everyday life of the school, and in the development of the curriculum, creates a living and dynamic Christian learning community

#### Areas to improve

- Fully embed monitoring and evaluation of the explicit impact of the vision and Christian values, including spiritual development, into the governors' work so that the school continues to grow as a church school
- Extend routine leadership of acts of worship to include the regular involvement of all children so that they grow as worship leaders and develop their own spirituality
- Ensure that all public documentation, including policies and the website, accurately reflect the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as an outstanding church school

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

St Chad's VC Primary is a community rooted in and driven by Christian values for the benefit of all. Children automatically consider the needs of others before themselves and attribute this to the behaviour and attitudes of their teachers whom they see as role models. Parents also regard all members of staff as role models for their children and cite many examples of ways in which this makes the school a safe, nurturing and thriving community. The school's values are known by all as being explicitly Christian. Adults and children alike explain how they are based upon Bible teaching and the life of Jesus. The school's inclusive approach of instilling these values, as a child explained, ensures that the school is a culturally and religiously diverse yet cohesive community. For example, one child explained that the values teach you 'how to behave like a Christian even though you don't have to actually be a Christian'. Through the engaging and high quality religious education (RE) curriculum, this diversity is celebrated and embraced at St Chad's and children have a remarkable respect for and interest in the faith and belief of their friends and others about whom they learn. As well as being a diverse and values-driven community, the school is also a place of nurture where the needs of each child are known, considered and addressed. The vision of the headteacher, that all children are made in God's image and have their own gifts, drives the shared determination to develop those gifts, whether academic, creative, social or spiritual in nature. The recent and sustained improvement in academic standards at the school, for example, had at its heart a commitment to continue to focus upon the wide range of needs amongst the children driven by the clear vision of the head. This clarity of purpose ensures that spirituality and children's spiritual development is central to all decisions and actions at the school. Members of staff never lose sight of the importance of this aspect of children's development and routinely include spiritual development across all areas of the curriculum. This ongoing focus also helps to create an atmosphere in which relationships are positive and behaviour good, with all children attributing this to the impact of the school's Christian values. Another result of the focus on spirituality and Christian values is the way in which children are encouraged to be independent thinkers and learners and this is noticeable in the creativity with which they approach discussion and problem solving. Nothing is too small to be noticed at St Chad's and, as described by a Year Five child, 'all of the small things are glued together to become big things and these make a difference to the world'.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is an important aspect of life at St Chad's and is the main context within which the school's Christian values are shared and explored. Staff involvement through attendance and leadership of worship ensures that their messages are enhanced through further discussion in class and as part of learning. This helps significantly in embedding Christian values and ensures that they have a direct impact upon children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Worship is predominantly Christian in nature and enables children to develop an ever-growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit as well as of Bible stories, teaching and prayer. Prayer is an integral part of the school day. There are good opportunities to pray through the creative and inviting prayer spaces at various shared points around the school building as well as in classes. All classes have books of prayers written by children. They are used every day and help children to develop their understanding of what prayer means to people of faith. Children are enthusiastic about the reflection areas and books in each class. They know that they are able to use them to take time out whenever they need a quiet moment to think, pray or reflect and that this can help them in their learning as well as in times of personal struggle. The children's Assembly Team is currently taking the lead in children becoming more involved in the development of worship in the school. This team has begun to lead assemblies and are tasked with the role of gathering feedback from others on the impact of worship. This evaluation has already led directly to some improvements being made. For example, more modern Christian worship songs are now used in acts of worship. Children do not lead worship independently, although there is a desire

amongst them to take part in this next step for the school. They have a good understanding of how worship at school extends beyond formal 'assembly' times and describe how important it is that visitors to the school should understand that they are a church school and that Christian teaching is important to them. They describe numerous times when what they have learned in worship directs how they behave. For example, the importance of welcoming and showing respect to children new to the school and making them feel that they belong. The involvement from the vicar in developing the worship life of the school is valuable and is much appreciated by all. His creative approach to prayer and worship, and his skill and expertise in the leadership of this with children, makes him an intrinsic member of the school community. Although the journey between school and church buildings is not easy, links between the two communities are excellent and this considerably enhances the worship life of the school.

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

The impact of the inspirational leadership and clarity of vision of the headteacher of this outstanding church school cannot be overestimated. His determined commitment to the school as a safe haven in which each child is enabled to develop their own God-given gifts is the driving force behind all decisions taken and initiatives implemented. This is an immovable vision and demonstrates its full worth at times of difficulty and challenge. It sits at the heart of all the improvement to the school over recent years and is an excellent demonstration of education in a Christian manner. This vision is known and understood by all members of the school community and parents independently describe ways in which it has had a direct impact on their children's personal development and well-being as well as on their academic achievements. Children understand and benefit from the outworking of this vision describing how they know that they can 'grow up to be extraordinary' even though they sometimes feel very small in the world. The vision also closely informs decisions made regarding the nature of the school's taught curriculum with the result that it offers an education which it correctly describes as being distinctively Christian. Governors also fully understand and live out this vision. They are already aware of the need to monitor and evaluate the school's annual priorities and to further develop this by routinely incorporating the specific monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the vision and values on the life of the school into their work. Distributed leadership amongst staff is effective and enables individuals to develop their own leadership skills and their understanding of what it means to work in and help lead a distinctive and effective church school. The RE coordinator is skilled and knowledgeable and works closely in her role with an RE specialist higher level teaching assistant. The recent strategic decision to extend the teaching of RE to all class teachers has led successfully to a further rise in the profile and effectiveness of the subject in the school. Links between the school and the wider community are seen as important. The school works very hard to ensure that partnerships with parents are beneficial. As a result, there is an impressive level of understanding amongst parents of what the school stands for. However, the website and other school documents and policies do not always accurately reflect the extent to which the school is a distinctive, effective and inclusive Christian community. The recent review of the school's vision and values included consultation with all staff, children, governors and parents. The outcome of this has ensured that there is full ownership by all of the new vision and has put the school in an excellent position from which to move forward as outstanding church school. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report May 2015 St Chad's VC Primary School, Patchway, BS34 6AQ

