



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Sneinton St Stephen's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Windmill Lane  
Sneinton  
Nottingham  
NG2 4QB

**Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Southwell and Nottingham**

Local authority: Nottingham City

Date of inspection: 7 July 2016

Date of last inspection: June 2011

School's unique reference number: 892/3311

Headteacher: Kelly Lee

Executive Headteacher: Rebecca Meredith

Inspector's name and number: Kerry Palmer (60)

#### School context

Sneinton St Stephen's is an average sized inner city primary school serving a diverse community with a rich mix of cultural and faith heritage. The proportion of children with special needs, eligible for free school meals or with English as a second language is well above average. The number considered disadvantaged and receiving pupil premium funded support is also well above average. It is the lead school in the Transform Teaching School Alliance and became a converter academy in 2013. Church links include St Stephen's, St Cyprians, St Christopher's and Trent Vineyard.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- A school with Christian vocation at its core results in Christian values lived out in the nurture of all.
- Powerful Christian leadership espouses aspiration and shared values very positively on all stakeholders in the school community.
- Dedicated and professional leaders for religious education (RE) and collective worship successfully promote these key areas of school life.
- A culture of inclusion which sustains the view that all in this diverse community are special in God's eyes.

#### Areas to improve

- Review website content and the guiding principles of key policies so as to make clear the centrality of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ in this Christian school.

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

It is very evident that an established Christian ethos is deeply embedded at this school. Ten Christian values have been adopted and are actively promoted as school values. Copies of the school values book are widely available and link each school value to indicative Bible stories. Friendship and respect are evident in relationships between young and old, in a community where Christian love promotes the well-being and nurture of all. The motto 'Together we can Achieve' is lived out, not only with children, but encompasses families and the community. It's not just children who feel safe and 'at home' in school. Links with the community are celebrated and termly community action days involve all classes in practical expressions of Christian service. For example, one class has established strong links with a local care home. Dedicated and skilled staff work as a mutually supportive team with the confidence to share strengths and weaknesses. Every child is challenged to make the most of their God given talents; academic standards are consistently above national expectations and the progress of pupils of all abilities is recognised as outstanding. This, along with a rich and creative curriculum maximises the social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) growth of all. The Christian character of the school is evident in an abundance of displays and artwork. Much of it produced in partnership with older pupils at Nottingham Emmanuel Academy. This developing relationship has resulted in an increasing number of Year 6 pupils transferring to this Christian secondary school. Behaviour is excellent, promoted by a policy of Christian forgiveness and restorative justice. Playground buddies talk through occasional minor incidents helping children to empathise with the feelings of others. Children feel safe and confident, they enjoy school so attendance is excellent and exclusions unknown. Everyone in this very diverse community recognises and appreciates that the school successfully promotes understanding and mutual respect amongst people from a wide variety of cultural and faith backgrounds. Visits to local places of worship include links with Jamia Asjid Sultania. It is indicative of the confidence of families in the integrity of the school's approach that no children are withdrawn from RE or collective worship. The school holds the International Schools Award and has a number of world-wide links.

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

High quality collective worship enriches the lives of children and adults alike and is clearly at the heart of the school community. Whilst recognising a variety of faiths amongst children and staff, there is a strong but sensitive focus on Biblical teaching. Children appreciate the special nature of Jesus, volunteering, 'we think, 'what would Jesus do?' 'cos he's the Son of God'. They also have an age appropriate understanding of the Christian's view of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A Year 2 child described the Holy Spirit as 'truth'. The school benefits from an accomplished musician who leads inspirational worship singing which moves many at such gatherings of the school community. Times of reflection and pondering on the implications in children's own lives are a regular feature. Children respond enthusiastically. Following a children's role play of Zacchaeus the tax collector, children readily make links with Jesus' example of being a forgiving friend to all. Hall displays rotate through core subjects. This term it is RE focussing on the Lord's Prayer, with each class displaying and interpretation of a different verse. Prayer is a regular and natural feature of the school day with occasional whole school prayer days supported by Trent Vineyard or local clergy. Some children make use of quiet prayer areas in school and the grounds. Responses from a range of stakeholder monitoring activities, including staff, children and governors, contribute significantly to development planning. This has resulted in increased pupil participation and the collective worship team. Festival services in church, a recognition of the church calendar and the use of some liturgical formats contribute to children's appreciation of Anglican tradition.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

RE is embedded in the school's Christian context by each lesson beginning with a prayer, often

from a child, asking God's help in learning. Teaching is skilled and learning consistently very good or better, resulting in enthusiasm and significant progress. Work scrutiny makes clear that standards are outstanding, in line with other core subjects. Each lesson has progress questions covering expected, accelerated and exceptional. Assessment systems show a significant tranche of mastery, exceeding age related expectations. Standards are moderated with staff from other schools in the local faith schools forum and development promoted by the Transform Trust RE group. Teachers use questioning well to stimulate reflective thinking. A wide range of creative strategies bring the subject alive. The use of a 'What if?' approach, in common to other curriculum areas, results in thoughtful and confident discussion, spiritual growth and the school's recognised strengths in SMCS. Foundation children suggested ways of being kind following the story of The Good Samaritan, whilst a Year 6 class reflected on 'moving on' needs in terms of spiritual support. One boy wrote 'Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself'. Whilst predominantly Christian, as expected in a church school, the programme of study includes teaching about other major faiths and use is made of the first-hand knowledge of some families. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leaders build staff confidence and expertise, For example, all staff have a 'beginners guide to religions represented in the school community with key 'do's' and don'ts'. They ensure consistency and challenge in a subject perceived as central to school life and strongly supporting its Christian values. An innovative example is the Christmas pilgrimage which took classes out to a variety of community venues to interact with characters from the Christmas story.

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

School leaders enthusiastically articulate a well-developed Christian vision for the school which is lived out by all. However, its centrality is not sufficiently clear in documentation or on the school website. The recognition of each child and adult as unique and special in God's eyes drives a concern to motivate all, with their wellbeing prioritised. There is a culture of continuous improvement in which staff, governors and children strive to do even better. Focused professional development, supported by the Transform Teaching School Alliance and a wide range of partnerships, maximise leadership potential at all levels, from pupil through to headteacher. This includes leading a School Direct teacher training programme from which a number of staff have been recruited. Parents are very supportive of the school and express great confidence in school leaders. Comments included 'everyone is so welcome' and 'the children are so happy'. Another said 'they get such a good start in life' and 'the values are so important, but they don't just talk about them, they live them.' Governors play an active part in the school's strategic development, actively promoting links with local churches. This historic strength is planned to develop further when new clergy are in post. Many, mutually beneficial, community partnerships enrich the children's lives, ranging from reading support with Boots staff to the Dare drug and knife crime awareness project. The school has addressed development issues from the last inspection fully. It more than meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship and the potential for further positive growth is excellent.

SIAMS report 2016 Sneinton St Stephen's CofE Primary School, Nottingham, NG2 4QB