

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England Academy

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| Address | Fenton Manor, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2RR | | |
| Date of inspection | 26-27 September 2019 | Status of school | Academy inspected as VA Woodward Academy Trust (WAT) |
| Diocese | Lichfield | URN | 136824 |

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| Overall Judgement | How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? | Grade | Good |
| Additional Judgements | The impact of collective worship | Grade | Good |
| | The effectiveness of religious education (RE) | Grade | Good |

School context

St Peter's is a secondary school with 989 students on roll. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. Members of the school family speak 43 different languages and represent 60 different countries.

The school's Christian vision

The school's vision drawn from 1 Peter 4: 8-11, calls for everyone to live a life that's enriched, to love (care) for each other deeply, to show hospitality to one another and to use the gifts we have to serve others.

Key findings

- The school commits wholeheartedly to the vision living it out through the core Christian values that underpin all aspects of daily life. Based on 1 Peter 4: 8-11, it effectively calls all members of the school family to live and grow together as a nurturing, caring community.
- The strong Christian leaders and staff of the school form a team of excellent role models for the students and families they serve. They actively cultivate close relationships to create an inclusive, cohesive, stable environment in which their students flourish, driving rapidly improving academic outcomes.
- Worship is central embedding and reinforcing the vision and core Christian values daily, whilst thoughtfully supporting the spiritual lives of the richly diverse school community. However, although prayer is an important aspect of all worship, it lacks spontaneity and the impact is inconsistent.
- Religious education (RE) is a very strong core subject, which effectively develops and challenges students' understanding of faith and culture in relation to a range of global religions.
- Students are inspired to develop as leaders in many contexts. Although they regularly deliver and actively support worship, they are not yet enabled to make decisions about worship experiences.

Areas for development

- Build more time for prayer in worship, including spontaneous prayer led by students and staff.
- Expand the existing leadership roles of students to enable them to make decisions about worship to support and drive the spiritual life of the school.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

St Peter's (SPA) serves a community with high levels of deprivation and many significant needs. It succeeds in uniting its richly varied community into a cohesive, inclusive family that respects and celebrates its diversity. This is commendable when you consider members of the school family speak 43 different languages, representing 60 countries world-wide. Selfless leadership and strong 'team' approaches from staff provide positive role models, to which the vast majority of students aspire. Passionate Christian leaders have embedded a vision that actively calls for everyone to live out the core Christian values daily. The first letters of the values of service, thankfulness, peace, empathy, trust, endurance and reverence spell St Peter's. This provides a constant reminder, reinforcing their importance in all aspects of school life. Students are rewarded for displaying these in their lessons, behaviour and relationships. They are motivated to 'follow in the footsteps of Jesus and their patron St Peter, the rock'. Consequently, attitudes to learning are positive and behaviour is consistently good. The 'Behaviour for Learning Framework' has been structured to ensure students are responsible for the choices they make. Underpinned by the values, the framework and all policies holistically establish a solid foundation for this Church school. The environment created is harmonious and conducive to learning. Vibrant displays, Christian and other faith artefacts, biblical quotes and areas named after the four gospels provide a stimulating backdrop that proclaims its Christian distinctiveness. Consequently, attendance figures are rising and exclusions, where necessary, are managed to reflect their Christian values. Students are clear that, 'our core values form the basis of our lives and the school is very good at telling us what we are doing well'. Pastoral care, through the Oasis centre provides quality support for all students. It also effectively nurtures the high numbers of vulnerable students and those displaying additional needs. The students appreciate the care from its specialist leader, who is a counsellor and qualified mental health first aider. They feel it is a 'centre of trust where we are not judged, but are helped through hard times'. 'Rocky' the centre dog is a particular favourite with all. He embodies the school's desire to make a difference. St Peter's exists for its students and community and is truly distinctive in its outreach and Christian care.

The school's curriculum is broad and enriched with a wide range of individual challenges and experiences. The core Christian values are integral to all lessons. Leaders, supported by the academy council, have made bold decisions about the curriculum to ensure it is meeting and fulfilling the needs of the students. For example, RE is studied by all students to GCSE. It contributes strongly to the development of their skills academically, whilst broadening their understanding of global religions through exploring 'big questions'. Each student is seen as a gift from God and their contribution is celebrated. They choose the music played to signal the end of each lesson. One of their favourites is 'My Lighthouse' which provides a joyful accompaniment to their movement between classrooms. The mental health ambassadors, SPA scholars and school council are three examples where students are empowered to lead and serve. Students respond well to the demands of leadership to support the spiritual life of the school. They currently support worship and are confident and keen to display their skills in planning and leading worship more fully. All students feel safe and confident that, 'they have a voice and are understood by their teachers'. Diversity weeks and 'Life and Soul' activities celebrate culture, faith, gender and are successful in bringing groups together supportively. Students share food and opinions in a safe and caring atmosphere, learning about their similarities and differences as unique children of God. Bullying is rare and students are guided effectively, by their values, to resolve any conflicts which might occur. This care for each other extends beyond the school. Through outreach and the support of many charities, the school population engages in social action projects. They raise funds to support individuals and communities, such as their local foodbank. From low and sometimes very low starting points, quality teaching enables students to be successful learners. Rigorous monitoring and clear expectations led by the headteacher and staff team accelerates progress against national averages. Targeted interventions address additional need effectively, through 'joined up' systems and structures, driven by the vision and values. These enable all to flourish spiritually, emotionally and academically.

Mental health issues are of paramount importance to the headteacher. He and his leadership team have raised the awareness of work life balance to staff and pupils through training and support. Consequently, staff speak very highly of his vision for the school and share his desire to build an aspirational and hopeful culture. Staff stability reflects their commitment to their students and the school. Professional development is on-going, targeted to strengthen the quality of provision. Networking with other schools and the diocese to develop staff skills is growing confidence and developing future leaders. The senior leadership team strongly supports the

headteacher. Their roles in engaging with middle leaders to share expertise and guide decision making is effective in building consistency across all faculties.

Links with the Church are strong and effective. Church leaders regularly facilitate worship at Stoke Minster and in school. This includes Eucharist services. Representatives from other local churches also contribute to the students' worship experiences. The core Christian values underpin worship, which also uses Bible stories to develop an understanding of Anglican tradition and practices. Special services celebrate important times in the Church's year, such as Easter and Christmas. Tutor led sessions, called 'Rock', provide an uplifting start to the day, where students explore current affairs and social issues through worship. They are guided by the teachings of Jesus and Peter. Worship provides time to develop a spiritual approach to reflection, prayer and praise. The 'mindful minute' allows time to reflect silently on the theme for the day or week, which relates closely to the core values. Structured prayers written by the students are read, but the impact of prayer lacks spontaneity and consistency.

Governors know the school well. A number, particularly the chair, actively engage with leading worship and other aspects of school life, through planned monitoring visits. They passionately support the headteacher and his team, growing St Peter's distinctiveness, by driving the vision and values. St Peter's is a school that has been on a long and difficult journey. Current leaders are harnessing effectively the passion to shine as a Christian beacon to the community. The school regularly hosts conferences to network with local businesses. This is one of the many ways it is raising the sights of its students to aspire and achieve.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE is a strong and effective core subject. It is well led and teaching is consistently good across the school. The new RE leader, as a middle leader, is empowered by the headteacher to monitor the quality of this subject rigorously. The findings are then shared with senior leaders to sharpen outcomes and target next steps to drive high standards. Lesson plans and structures drive the vision and values through posing big questions to build skills of enquiry and reflection. This effectively challenges students to think deeply about faith and religion. Consequently, they flourish and are confident that RE is enabling them to build an understanding of others beliefs. They explained, 'RE helps us understand where others are coming from, reducing the likelihood of racism.' Students make good progress and their successes in RE have enabled them to study English to a higher level.

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| Headteacher | Michael Astley |
| Inspector's name and number | Marianne Phillips 586 |