

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Standlake Church of England Primary School

Standlake Witney Oxfordshire OX29 7SQ	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Oxford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	June 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	Eynsham Partnership Academy
Date of inspection	12 July 2018
Date of last inspection	4 February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 140983
Headteacher	Andrew Denham
Inspector's name and number	Ian Lewis 629

School context

Standlake CE (VC) Primary is a smaller than average school with 152 pupils currently on roll. The majority are drawn from the immediate catchment area and are mostly White British. The school is an academy within the Eynsham Academy Partnership. The head teacher was appointed in September 2014. The school enjoys a very strong and mutually beneficial partnership with the parish church of St Giles, its clergy and community.

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

- Inspirational leadership by the head teacher supported by a dedicated team of staff and governors enables Standlake to flourish and continually develop as a distinctly Christian community.
- The school has an exceptionally strong and vibrant Christian ethos which is firmly based on distinctly Christian values. This has created a community in which each and every member is loved and valued as a child of God. As a direct result the children at Standlake love being at school and so progress well both academically and socially.
- An extremely strong and mutually beneficial partnership with the parish church of St Giles, its clergy and community enhances and continually strengthens the school's all-embracing Christian ethos. The result is a strongly supportive and nurturing Christian community valued as a cornerstone of village life.

Areas to improve

- In order that pupils develop their understanding that Christianity reaches out to everybody in the world, devise strategies to enable them to know that it is a global, faith in which different communities worship according to their own customs and traditions.
- To further challenge pupils' thinking in RE and to enable them to deepen their understanding of Christianity, devise systems to be used consistently throughout the school for questioning strategies to be used alongside teachers' comments when marking work.

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

At the very heart of Standlake school's life is an extremely vibrant and tangible Christian ethos. This reaches out and embraces all in the school's community as well as visitors who are warmly welcomed by all. The ethos is very firmly founded on distinctly Christian values namely compassion, tolerance, honesty, forgiveness and thankfulness. These are directly linked to the letter of St Paul to the Colossians. They are known and strongly embraced by all in the school's community. Pupils demonstrate a very high degree of understanding of the Christian nature of the values. They confidently describe how they help them live their lives saying, 'We don't just have values – we follow them!' and 'If we didn't have our values we wouldn't have any foundation for our life in school.' Parents very enthusiastically describe how the values shape their children's lives at home as well as at school. This deeply embedded Christian ethos is clearly visible in the exemplary behaviour of the children. It is particularly evident in their attitudes towards others and in how they are eager to help all around them. They say, 'If someone is hurt or unhappy, someone else will go and help them'. Standlake school is a deeply caring and nurturing community in which every person is valued as a child of God. As a result, the pupils feel safe and secure and thoroughly enjoy being at school. Parents warmly endorse this describing how their children dislike non-school days! Attendance is therefore good and is constantly improving. The direct impact is an overwhelming desire by the pupils to learn and achieve, this being clearly evidenced in records of the school's rigorous monitoring of progress and achievement. These give evidence that achievement is at least in line with and frequently above national expectations. It is seen most keenly in classroom observations where pupils are clearly deeply engrossed in their learning. The love and care to all ensures that the more vulnerable pupils are given carefully targeted support enabling them to grow in confidence and progress both academically and socially. Parents and carers speak warmly about this, saying that the school has 'transformed' their children. Standlake's exceptionally strong Christian ethos is much enhanced through religious education (RE) and collective worship. Observation of lessons and discussion with pupils give clear evidence of their enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject brought about by imaginative teaching strategies which are at least good and often better. Pupils are eager to learn in RE and therefore achieve well as evidenced in the school's tracking of achievement and progress. However, the marking of pupils' written work shows insufficient use of challenging questions to extend the children's thinking even further. In response to the previous inspection, the school invites visitors from other faiths and cultures to speak to the children. As a direct result pupils have developed a good understanding of other Christian denominations and other faiths. However, they have at present insufficient understanding of the diversity within Christianity as a worldwide faith. Throughout Standlake school there is an exceptionally strong sense of spirituality. Pupils are clearly developing a good understanding of the nature and purpose of prayer saying that they know they can pray to God at any time and anywhere. This is greatly enhanced through the school's very close partnership with the parish church. Through it they have clearly been inspired by the 'prayer spaces' initiative which they and their parents speak about enthusiastically. Together with this, the church's clergy play an active role within the school, bringing the spirit of the church and Jesus Christ into its community. Pupils are made very aware of those in need and demonstrate their compassion by taking part in a number of initiatives such as the annual 'shoe box' appeal together with St Giles' church. Discussion with them gives clear evidence that they are developing, through their compassion, an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens in the wider and global communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship occupies a place of the highest importance in the daily life of Standlake school. Through its content the core Christian values, by which all in the school's community live, are strongly affirmed and strengthened. This is achieved through a clear focus on Biblical teachings, particularly those of Jesus Christ. The impact of this on the whole school community is clearly evident in the compassion, care and love shown to all. Observation of collective worship and discussion with pupils, staff, parents and school leaders gives clear evidence that everyone feels warmly included regardless of their own faith or denomination, if any. The pupils at Standlake are clearly excited by worship. Parents warmly describe how their children are eager to relate their experiences at home. 'They are inspired by worship' is a typical comment. Pupils say they look forward to worship describing it as 'fun'. This was clearly evident in the whole school act of worship observed in which everyone present took part not only with enjoyment but also with a real sense of reverence, joining in enthusiastically with responses and singing. Pupils enjoy leading the prayers and helping the leader through acting parts as appropriate. In response to the previous inspection they have regular opportunities to plan and lead worship enabling them to understand its nature and purpose. Observation gives clear evidence that collective worship at Standlake is a joyous celebration of the Christian faith. Prayer is clearly central to worship. Pupils have regular opportunities to compose and read their own prayers which are subsequently kept in well-presented books for ongoing use. Observation and discussion with pupils, parents and school leaders gives clear evidence that the person of Jesus Christ is absolutely central to collective worship. Pupils are also developing their understanding of the concept of the Trinity through frequent reference to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A three-wicked candle is also lit to illustrate this. The headteacher

devises innovative and effective ways to help the children's understanding, for example using their recent triathlon to illustrate three parts making one main event. Planning for collective worship is meticulous and is firmly founded on the school's Christian values which are at the base of each act of worship. Stories from the Bible play a crucial role, each linked to the current value. Together with this, Christian festivals and those of other faiths are addressed as and when appropriate. Discussion with pupils in particular gives evidence that the involvement of visitors from other faiths widens their understanding of diversity. An example they give is a Muslim parent describing to them the importance of Eid in Islam. Worship also addresses local and worldwide issues and events giving the pupils the opportunity to ask searching questions. They describe how a discussion about the war in Syria aroused their compassion for the people there. As a result, the sponsored triathlon was recently held which successfully funded a 'shelter box' to be sent. This has greatly strengthened their understanding of the value of compassion and of their responsibilities as caring, Christian citizens. Parents say how much they enjoy attending collective worship whenever possible and particularly when it is held in church. The quality of provision in worship and its impact on the school's community is regularly and rigorously monitored and evaluated by the head teacher and a member of the church's clergy. This is achieved largely through face to face discussions with stakeholders. Comments by the children in particular inform subsequent planning. Evaluations are discussed by governors leading to the ongoing development of worship within the school's overall development plan. The result of such monitoring procedures is that collective worship is consistently excellent throughout the school evidenced in discussions with stakeholders and through observation. Pupils frequently visit the parish church for both worship and curriculum purposes. In addition, the church's clergy are very closely involved in the school's life and particularly collective worship. As a direct result pupils are gaining a good understanding of Anglican tradition and practice.

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

Since the previous inspection in February 2013 the school has undergone a major change. In June 2014 it became an academy within the Eynsham Academy Partnership. Leaders took this decision in order to broaden the school's horizons and, building on the existing partnership between the schools, to grow in strength through academic and social collaboration. School leaders and the Academy Primary Director stress that the Academy Partnership strongly supports the ongoing development of the school's Anglican distinctiveness. Leaders say that they particularly value the strong links the Partnership has established with the Oxford Diocese, in particular the continuation of service agreements to provide both general support and the professional development of staff. This has resulted in the school flourishing as an Anglican community. Exceptionally strong and inspirational leadership by the head teacher working closely with an extremely dedicated team of staff and governors has ensured that Standlake School's distinctive Christian character has continued to intensify and flourish. The school's leaders have established an exceptionally strong, vibrant and all-embracing vision for Standlake clearly reflected in its Christian ethos. This is strongly underpinned by distinctly Christian values which drive every aspect of the school's life. Leaders very explicitly promote the values. They are prominently displayed around the school both on display boards and as murals making them an integral part of the school's fabric. In addition, they are prominent on the school's website and on its communications, both written and electronic. In response to the previous inspection the mission statement now strongly reflects the school's Christian ethos. The result is that all in the school, visitors and those in the wider community are fully aware of its caring, Christian character and strongly value it as a cornerstone of the local community. The impact of the ethos is clearly visible in the love, care and respect for all which abounds throughout the school. This enables the children to thrive both socially and academically, evidenced in the school's thorough monitoring records. The Christian character is seen as being of supreme importance by leaders who rigorously monitor and evaluate its impact on the school community. All stakeholders are involved in this process, mainly through personal contact and discussion. Subsequent evaluations are carefully discussed by governors and inform the next stages of development planning. Parents comment warmly on the approachability of staff and governors. They say that they are well informed about their children's progress and about general school matters. Pupils too are confident that they have a strong voice, are listened to and their views acted upon as appropriate. Leaders have a very clear view of the future of Standlake as a distinctly Anglican school. This forms a major part of both staff recruitment and professional development. Leadership qualities among staff are recognised and nurtured through appropriate support and professional development. Governors and staff take full advantage of training opportunities saying that they particularly value those provided by the Oxford Diocese. The result is that Standlake is continually growing in strength as an Anglican school. The leadership of both RE and collective worship by the head teacher is strong and clear-sighted. The result is the excellent provision and development evident in each. Provision in both exceed current national requirements. The school's distinctively Christian character is further enhanced through its exceptionally strong and mutually beneficial partnership with St Giles' parish church, its clergy and community. Observation around the school together with discussion with leaders, staff, parents and pupils give clear evidence that this enhances both the school's Anglican distinctiveness and the spiritual development of all in its community.