

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St Francis Church of England Primary Academy

Longfield, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 4SU	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Truro</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	September 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	Falmouth Multi-Academy Trust
Date of inspection	26 March 2018
Date of last inspection	19 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 144059
Acting Headteacher	Hannah Stevens
Inspector's name and number	Revd David Hatrey 844

#### School context

St Francis Church of England Primary Academy is a larger than average school, with 419 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils come from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or a disability is broadly in line with national averages. On 1 September 2017, the school became a part of the Falmouth Multi-Academy Trust with other local schools. An acting headteacher has been in post since the promotion of the headteacher in February.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness St. Francis Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian vision is clearly evident in its personalised provision which ensures that each pupil experiences being an important member of a caring community.
- Distinctive Christian values permeate all aspects of school life which pupils understand well and talk about with confidence.
- The enthusiasm and expertise of the religious education (RE) coordinator ensures that the subject has a very high profile and enables pupils to achieve well.
- The teaching about prayer is excellent with quality progressive experiences offered which lead to a deepening of pupils' thinking.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure pupils have a detailed understanding of all the main Christian festivals so they can talk about their meaning and importance within the church's year.
- Extend pupils' awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith through links with other Christian communities.

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

Pupils talk about their deep understanding of being part of this warm, caring family and the Christian ethos which permeates school life. Twelve Christian values are central to this work. Pupils make strong links between Christian values and learning, they talk about hope and aspirations. An understanding of values underpins pupils' enthusiastic attitudes to learning, enabling all to make better than expected progress. Attainment over the last four years has risen steadily and is now broadly in-line with national expectations. The school's provision for disadvantaged pupils is a particular strength, so their progress is well above national averages and that of their peers. This individualised provision reflects the school's Christian character. Pupils of no faith or other faiths recognise the contribution values make to their thinking. The school nurtures pupils' understanding that they are all unique, important to God and each other. This is effectively woven into all aspects of daily life and emulates St Francis' teaching. Rich artistic work portrays St Francis' care for all, reminding pupils of their part in this family. Younger pupils explain the distinctive Christian interpretation of values by linking these to Bible stories. Pupils understand how values link to golden rules. Weekly awards linked to golden rules are given to pupils who show values in action. The reasons for the award are shared so that everyone has a deep understanding of the effect of values in different situations. Attendance is good and continues to rise because of strong links with parents. Pupils take the view that values are given by God and embodied by Jesus. Behaviour is of a high standard, pupils show care and concern for one another and consistently link this to the Christian character of the school. Pupils of all ages work together quite naturally with the oldest pupils providing excellent role models. Pupils recognise how staff model values and seek to copy them. Spirituality is woven creatively with Christian values, collective worship and RE. Spirituality has been extensively developed and is well embedded into daily life. Staff identify experiences in all subject areas which deepen pupils' understanding. They have developed a shared understanding of what spirituality might look like for pupils in each year group. Pupils frequently express deepening ideas in a variety of ways such as art. Pupils' understanding of God is deepened as they respond to big questions, for example questioning how God can allow suffering. They draw on ideas from RE and collective worship to begin to shape answers. Pupils say they find these discussions valuable, as they are encouraged to question their own beliefs. 'Ex days', with themes such as diversity or reflection, have been introduced by the leaders of the school for each year group. Pupils find these exciting, stimulating experiences and talk about them enthusiastically. The diversity of religious beliefs is explored through specific lessons, so pupils talk about how they are all different but together, 'make a wonderful picture.' The school encourages pupils from other world faiths to explain in RE how they pray. This leads to pupils having a highly developed understanding of diversity and showing a high degree of empathy and respect for those who hold different views. At present, pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith is not fully developed. RE is central to enriching pupils' understanding of values and how these are relevant to all aspects of daily life.

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

Collective worship has a number of significant strengths, particularly pupils' planning, leading and evaluating. A pupils' worship team has been introduced and has weekly opportunities to lead. Pupils use a range of excellent visual resources and write drama scripts to make the message clear. Younger pupils now have opportunities to lead worship. The worship team devise questions to challenge others' thinking. They share their ideas about how worship can be improved. For example, pupils' requests to be more involved and for further visual images have all been actioned. However, in some worship times pupils have limited opportunities to respond. Whilst a number of pupils can recount an act of worship, they are not always confident to talk about the meaning. A new two-year plan for worship progressively explores a value with a key question each week. This effectively deepens pupils' understanding of values. Good opportunities for reflection are built into worship. The Eucharist is celebrated twice a year with pupils taking a leading role so they understand the importance of this celebration for Christians. Pupils have a detailed knowledge of some Christian festivals and talk about seasons in the church's year. At present this does not cover all of the festivals, such as Pentecost where their knowledge is limited. Pupils enjoy the rich opportunities provided for prayer and find these valuable. The teaching about prayer is a particular strength and there is a planned progression of experiences. Pupils explore the school's prayer and use aspects of this to structure their own thinking. Prayers written by older pupils in response to national events show a growing maturity. Systematic teaching ensures that pupils gain a detailed understanding of Jesus. The use of visual images helps to develop pupils' understanding of the Trinity. A number of leaders including clergy, staff and the 'Open the book' team bring different and varied approaches which further enrich worship. Diocesan training using new resources enables all staff to lead worship. The coordinator leads by example, her ongoing evaluations lead to focused initiatives such as extending visual resources and reflection areas.

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

Attainment in RE is high and all pupils achieve well. A significant number of pupils achieve the higher levels and this is rising. In the last three years standards in RE have consistently been above other core subjects. This is because pupils can record their ideas in a number of creative ways including through art or drama as well as through talking and discussions. The coordinator monitors teaching and learning rigorously, she enables staff to see excellent practice and she models this herself. As a result teaching and learning is at least good with a significant proportion being outstanding. An agreed approach to teaching is embedded where staff use initial questions to determine pupils' knowledge so activities are well matched to their ability. Teachers' questions challenge pupils to use the higher order thinking skills. Deeper thinking is developed through thoughtful prompts such as, 'I wonder' or 'I want to ask.' This develops a real curiosity; pupils pose some insightful questions whilst recognising there may not be agreed answers. The quality of pupils' responses is excellent as they creatively draw on ideas from spirituality and the Bible and apply this knowledge to new learning and answer questions of meaning and purpose. The work of able pupils is impressive and at an advanced level. Christianity is taught particularly well; pupils explain the meaning of key terms such as salvation or incarnation thoughtfully. Pupils enjoy exploring Cornwall's unique Christian heritage because of the local links. They explore world faiths in some depth, making links with their own beliefs. Pupils speak enthusiastically about RE and talk of being inspired. They understand the importance of RE because it has a relevance to their daily thinking. Opportunities for reflection are well established and pupils are confident to share their deepening thoughts, knowing these are valued. Assessment strategies are very well embedded whilst internal moderations ensure the accuracy of teacher's judgements. RE is regarded as a core subject with each pupil's progress monitored and action taken to close any gaps in attainment. Pupils' ongoing self-assessment enables them to record their progress, note those aspects which they most enjoy as well as the questions for which they are seeking answers. The enthusiasm of the co-ordinator stands out and is transferred to all staff. She ensures that RE has a high profile across school life. The monitoring of RE is continuous with governors conferencing with pupils, conducting work scrutinies and observations all of which lead to well-focused actions for improvement.

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

At the heart of the school's work is the understanding that everyone is special to God. Pupils talk about this and its links to the school's vision, 'Every person matters, every person succeeds, every person helps.' Leaders explain that this is underpinned by clear Christian principles, that everyone is special to God because they are wonderfully made in his image. They promote the view, inspired by the life of Jesus, that all at the school should treat one another with care. Leadership is passionate and committed to the work of a church school. A strong cohesive team share this vision. Leaders talk of the personalised care for each pupil, academically, spiritually and socially because they believe everyone is special. Pupils explain their logo of caring hands holding a dove. They say that this shows everyone being cared for in God's hands until they are ready to fly, when they go on to fulfil their God-given potential. Pupils say that the hands can be those of the staff caring for them or their own hands. All staff are trained to lead activities which develop pupils' personal well-being and mental health. This is highly effective, with pupils making significant gains which raise their self-esteem and develop their emotional intelligence. This makes an impact on their academic achievement and the quality of their relationships. The school's pastoral care is another impressive example of its Christian distinctiveness and it emanates from the vision. Case studies give a wealth of evidence of the impact the school's care has on pupils and families at different times. Continuous evaluations by leaders lead to actions for improvement. An ethos team of governors receive reports from staff and others. Their evaluations lead to action such as the recent improvements to the visible Christian character of the school. Evaluations are informed by talking with pupils to determine the impact of the current provision. Staff development is regarded as a priority, linking to the vision and enabling everyone to succeed. Following the previous inspection, pupils designed a quiet garden where they find calm and value moments of peace. The acting head currently leads the, 'Schools Direct' programme for the diocese supporting the training of teachers in church schools. She is a fine example of how the MAT nurtures staff for leadership roles in church schools. Relationships with the diocese are strong, for example, using advisers to introduce 'Understanding Christianity' resources. The church, vicar and other ministers make excellent contributions to daily life, leading worship each week, dedicating significant time to governance and attending staff training. In addition another minister provides interactive lessons on the Old Testament for Year 5 which pupils greatly enjoy. The school is frequently active in community life, sharing worship in exciting ways. Parents acknowledge the impact the school has on their child's life and achievements. They value the care shown by staff and the feeling that they are part of the school family. Parents are actively involved in the life of the school and they work closely with leaders to discuss possible improvements. The school goes beyond the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.