Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| **St. Giles’ and St. George’s Church of England Academy** | |
| St. Paul’s Road, Off Orme Road, Newcastle, ST5 2NB | |
| **Current SIAMS inspection grade** | **Outstanding** |
| **Diocese** | **Lichfield** |
| Previous SIAS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Date of academy conversion | October 2014 |
| Date of inspection | 21 September 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 12 July 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | 141486 |
| Headteacher | Lynne Evans |
| Inspector’s name and number | Allyson Taylor 768 |

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| **School context**  St. Giles’ and St. George’s is a thriving academy with 329 pupils on roll, including those in the nursery. The school is supported by two parish churches and clergy. Since the last denominational inspection, the school has converted to an academy and undergone extensive building work to facilitate the increase in number on roll. Leaders are working towards establishing a multi-academy trust with other schools. Several teachers are newly appointed. The school welcomes pupils from a range of faiths and backgrounds. The proportion of children with additional learning and personal needs varies and is above national figures in some year groups. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Giles’ and St. George’s Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding**   * St. Giles’ and St. George’s meets the academic and personal needs of pupils in a child-centred and deeply Christian way. * Children from different backgrounds are accepted and supported; the school is a celebration of God’s love in the way it nurtures each individual. * Leaders at all levels are fully committed to developing the Anglican character of the school and consolidating its firm foundations in the Christian faith. * Relationships are key to enabling adults and children to learn together in a climate of mutual respect and trust. * The long-standing headteacher provides an outstanding role model for staff and children who value her care for every member of the school community. * Members of staff deliver a richly creative curriculum which fosters God-given talents and develops self-esteem. |
| **Areas to improve**   * Ensure the website, policies and key documents more fully capture and celebrate the outstanding Christian ethos of the school. * Extend opportunities for children of all ages to independently plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship and so enhance the pupils’ engagement with worship. * Agree a definition of spirituality in order to shape opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum. |

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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding**  **at meeting the needs of all learners**  Happy, safe and enthusiastic learners are evidence of the distinctive Christian character of St. Giles’ and St. George’s. The shared vision: ‘As children of God, we Aspire, Believe, Achieve to be the best that we can be’ is lived out by all members of the school community to create a highly inclusive and ambitious culture where children flourish.  Test results show standards improving and above national figures in some areas, in mathematics and Early Years in particular. Where results dip, swift and effective action is taken to turn this around. This is as a result of the strongly held commitment that each child is enabled to develop their individual talents and achieve their potential. Christian values, chosen in consultation with the school council, are readily articulated as supporting personal development and achievement. Children explain how the values help them, one commented that ‘Jesus had courage to heal, we have courage to learn.’ Other values, like forgiveness and gentleness, guide and help pupils to treat each other with unfailing kindness. A pupil explained how ‘gentleness means we can guide a friend with their work but not give the answer.’ As the number on roll has risen, new children are welcomed and embraced into the extended family of the school. A parent explained how her child, ‘settled in a heartbeat.’ Frequently, new children who have not had a positive school experience elsewhere feel secure and so learn to have faith in themselves. Pupils say that all staff help them to get on together as well as learn. Children are rightly proud of their school.  Positive relationships are modelled by all members of staff. Children, therefore, behave exceptionally well and are polite and considerate. A culture of helping each other and taking on areas of responsibility, such as shepherding younger children after lunch, contributes to the ethos of service and mutual support.  The curriculum is broad and designed to enable all to succeed in their learning. Art, music, technical (STEM) and sporting successes are further evidence that children are flourishing. Religious education (RE) contributes to learners’ understanding of and respect for those of different faiths and cultures. As such, RE supports the Christian character of the school. Activities are provided for spiritual development although the school does not yet have an agreed definition of what ‘spirituality’ means in this community.  The proportion of children with special educational needs or disabilities is higher than average in some years groups. Yet, these children are so well integrated and included it is hard to distinguish them from their classmates. In a calm and purposeful atmosphere those who are more vulnerable feel part of the whole community. One child said: ‘we are all accepted for who we are.’ Sensitive support is offered to families who appreciate that teaching, office and support staff, embody the Christian character and are true ‘second milers’ as Jesus said. For many, school is a safe haven. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**  Collective worship is an important element in drawing the school together. Celebrating and worshipping every day reinforces a sense of belonging to a calm and caring community. Acts of worship have strong Bible roots and so confirm the foundations as a church school. Singing is very popular, tuneful and enriches the experience of adults and children.  Pupils are familiar with a range of Bible stories and how these demonstrate the Christian values. One child said ‘we know God is in our hearts’. There is scope for awards to be given at Friday assembly to those who show the current value as well as for other areas of success.  Prayer and time for reflection flow from worship into the school day. The beautiful reflection spaces in classrooms and around school give opportunities for children to offer personal prayers and reflections and so provide for spiritual development. This builds on the formal prayer life where children use the school and Lord’s Prayer regularly as part of worship. Members of staff enjoy taking part in worship and guiding pupils when worship is class based.  Links with and support from both parish churches give children knowledge of some Anglican traditions of worship and familiarity with the main events in the Christian calendar. The use of coloured cloths and artefacts enables worship to be framed by elements of Anglican liturgy, for example lighting three candles to signify the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While pupils are aware that Christianity is a world- wide faith, they are less aware of the different traditions within Christianity.  At this time, most acts of worship, in class, the hall or parish churches are planned and led by the headteacher or other adults. Older pupils write and say prayers, help with readings and acting out stories and generally support worship with growing confidence. Pupils of all ages, however, are more than ready to assume responsibility for leading worship. The school intends that pupils take a more regular and active part in planning, leading and giving feedback on worship. Informal feedback is noted by the headteacher as worship coordinator. Governors, especially foundation governors, provide additional guidance to improve provision. As a direct result of feedback, clergy led worship is less frequent to give more time for children to develop their leadership of acts of worship. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**  The headteacher leads by example. She knows every child and family and is an anchor in the life of the school, holding the community fast to its roots as a church school. Her Christian faith supports her in directing a school which is highly effective in being child-centred and rooted in the love of Christ. The wellbeing of all within the community is a priority, doors are open and a listening ear and care offered.  All leaders know the school exceptionally well and have guided it into academy status and through the ongoing challenges of a rising roll and new build. Challenges are faced with fortitude and patience. Growing the school is part of St. Giles’ and St. George’s mission of service to the local community. A deeply held, shared vision, grounded in living out Christian values, has sustained leaders in recent years. Consequently, the Christian character and ethos are outstanding. The impact of these is remarkable and yet understated. Academic results continue to improve and children are given an excellent start in their formative Early Years. Pupils say it is a great church school because ‘teachers are friendly and help us, Mrs. Evans is so calm and the education is really good.’  ‘This is who we are, this is what we do’ was a comment made several times during the inspection. While much of the character is so implicit it is as natural as breathing, leaders acknowledge that there is a need to make the character more explicit. The website, newsletters, policies and other documents do not fully reflect the deeply Christian character which is so palpable to a visitor. Leaders continuously evaluate the school in more informal ways. Formal systems to do so, which capture the progress of the school as a church school, are developing. These include integrating improvements as a church school into the wider school development plan. As a result of the expansion of the school, a system of developing future leaders is in place. This gives less experienced staff the chance to grow their leadership skills. Recruitment and induction procedures ensure that new staff are clear about working in a church school.  Partnerships with parents and the local church community are strong and mutually supportive. Parents are warmly appreciative of the care given to their children and to them. The parents’ forum, recently re-established, gives family members a voice in the direction of the school. Clergy, described by staff as ‘wonderful,’ and members of the parish churches play an active part in the life of the school, for example hearing readers and being part of the extended family. Leaders make good use of diocesan support and training.  The talented RE coordinator is well-supported in fulfilling her key role. Trialling new assessment systems and introducing the ‘Understanding Christianity’ resource demonstrate her and all leaders’ commitment to vital aspects of being a church school. It is encouraging that a review of the syllabus for RE and how to capture progress in practical activities in the subject are already identified as actions. Statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship are fully met.  As the school moves into the future as a multi-academy trust, leaders are well-placed to safeguard the Christian character and to use this to establish sustainable partnerships with other schools. |

SIAMS report September 2017 St. Giles’ and St. George’s Academy, Newcastle ST5 2NB[Month/Year] [Name and location of school] [Post code]