

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

### St Meriadoc Church of England Junior Academy

Cranfield Road, Camborne, Cornwall. TR14 7PJ

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**Truro**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Date of academy conversion

April 2014

Name of multi-academy trust

Rainbow Multi-Academy Trust

Date of inspection

23 March 2018

Date of last inspection

14 March 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Junior Academy 140781

Headteacher

Bethan Anderson

Inspector's name and number

Revd David Hatrey 844

#### School context

St Meriadoc Church of England Junior Academy is similar in size to the average school with 207 pupils on roll. The majority of the children come from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding is significantly above national averages as is the number of children who have special education needs or a disability. In April 2014 the school, along with three other local schools, formed the Rainbow Multi-Academy Trust. The schools share a joint chief executive officer.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Meriadoc Church of England Junior Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Distinctive Christian values are lived out by pupils and staff and they acknowledge that these make a significant difference to their lives and attainment.
- Behaviour is excellent, pupils show a high level of care and concern for one another and understand this comes from the school's Christian character.
- Religious education (RE) is led by a highly skilled leader who promotes high standards of teaching enabling pupils to make impressive progress.
- Leaders are passionate about the work of a church school and lead by example.
- Rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluation are established which lead to ongoing improvements, which make a distinct difference to pupils' lives and attainment.

#### Areas to improve

- Enable pupils to talk about the difference collective worship can make to their thinking.
- Extend pupils' understanding of the main Christian festivals and their importance in the church's year.
- Develop links with other global communities which extend pupils' understanding of the world wide Anglican community.

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

Pupils are immersed in a culture where the language of values is explicit and rich. Six values are agreed: forgiveness, trust, thankfulness, courage, friendship and truthfulness are embedded in school life. Pupils who profess no faith recognise the difference these values make to their learning. Enhancing pupils' self-esteem and aspirations is a particular strength of the school. Pupils use the phrase, 'Being the best I can be' and explain what this means for them. They say that this is not just academically but in the use of all of their God-given gifts. Explicit links are made between values and learning attitudes, for example, pupils talk about how values help them to overcome problems. Pupils' enthusiastic attitudes are reflected in standards which continue to rise and are generally in-line with national expectations. Results over a number of years show that pupils make very good progress from their starting points. The provision for disadvantaged pupils is impressive as they frequently make comparable or better progress than their peers. Pupils confidently explain what values look like in daily life and give numerous examples of where they apply them, such as in friendships. Values are reinforced by awards, such as dojos when staff see pupils applying values. Reasons for the award are clarified, so all perceive the contribution values make in different circumstances. Pupils talk about Bible stories which reflect the distinctive Christian meaning of values. Behaviour is excellent, pupils collaborate well and celebrate one another's successes. Pupils talk about being a family and consistently attribute this to the Christian character of the school. Attendance is rising because of the relationships the school makes with parents and the care offered. A highly developed interpretation of spirituality has been agreed by staff who provide a number of quality experiences. A particular strength is the creative way spirituality is linked to current events and values. Pupils explore the links between caring for God's world and reducing plastic waste and this has recently led to their involvement in a beach cleaning project. Pupils use the framework of 'Windows, mirrors and doors' to help organise their reflections. This allows pupils to express their deepening ideas through art, for example, when they think about what God is like. Pupils make some comparisons about how Christians celebrate their faith in other countries, but their ideas lack depth and clarity. Teachers help pupils to talk about what prayer means to believers from a range of world faiths. This leads to pupils showing a high degree of empathy and respect for those who hold different views to their own. RE enriches the school's Christian distinctiveness by providing thoughtful experiences which deepen pupils' understanding of values. Creative links between RE and spirituality provide excellent opportunities for discussion which challenge and inspire pupils' thinking. The environment explicitly expresses this Christian distinctiveness, notably through pupils' displays.

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

Leaders plan worship so that pupils can contribute in different ways. Pupils are engaged through the effective use of visual images. A team of pupils now plans and leads worship based upon the value for the term. This team writes drama scripts based upon Bible stories which help other pupils to understand key messages. Leaders and pupils use thoughtful questions which reinforce themes and allow other pupils to consider how they might respond. The worship team gathers ideas from their peers regarding how worship can be improved and discusses these with the coordinator. Pupils and staff say that worship has a message which challenges them. Staff develop themes further in class, linking these to pupils' lives so pupils are helped to understand the relevance of the message for daily life. Pupils recall some acts of worship which have made them think. However, pupils are not always confident to explain the difference worship makes for them. Planning for worship is detailed and new resources and training have enabled all staff to lead. Visiting clergy and the 'Open the Book' team add to the variety of styles which pupils appreciate. Planning for worship ensures pupils' knowledge of values is progressively deepened with an aspect explored each week. A clear Anglican structure for worship is established and used by adults and pupils. Worship themes consistently draw upon biblical teaching enabling pupils to talk in considerable depth about Jesus and explain the meaning of parables. An understanding of the Trinity is emerging and pupils are beginning to use different images to clarify their thinking. Prayer is developed well, pupils understand the nature and purpose of prayer. Pupils talk about different types of prayer as these are modelled in worship. Pupils write prayers often in response to a reflection which prompts them to think about local and national events. The quiet garden has been enhanced since the last inspection; it is highly valued by pupils because they can pray informally and share their ideas with a staff member. Pupils say they find prayer valuable at different times of their lives. Pop up prayer spaces have been recently introduced around the school. These are vivid displays which encourage short prayers or stimulate pupils' responses. Written comments by pupils show they are wrestling with questions raised by the displays. Pupils know some of the main Christian festivals and seasons and can explain their significance. However, many pupils are unaware of others such as Pentecost. The evaluation of worship involves all members of the community. Class learning forums explore what worship means to pupils and how worship might be improved. Pupils' comments show that worship is valued as a time of calm or to reflect. Staff and governors' monitoring gathers information which leads to ongoing improvements, such as more detailed planning and the introduction of pupils leading worship.

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

The passion and expertise of the coordinator ensures that RE has a very high profile. She continues to introduce new initiatives, raising standards and pupils' interest. Religious education is regarded as a core subject and teachers have high expectations. Attainment over a number of years has been at least in-line with other core subjects. Attainment in RE is frequently better than the core subjects and the number of pupils achieving the higher levels is rising. 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. All pupils consistently make at least good progress. The coordinator's enthusiasm is transmitted to staff and reflected in the quality of teaching and learning, which is consistently good and frequently outstanding. The coordinator has led the focus on teaching and learning through regular observations and sharing good practice. The introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' resources has led to an enquiry-based approach being established. Pupils learn exceptionally well and use new concepts quickly. They use specific religious language with confidence. They creatively apply new ideas and skills to other questions, making insightful conclusions. The introduction of these resources has also enhanced staff subject knowledge in relation to Christianity. Pupils talk confidently about Christian concepts such as incarnation and make excellent links with ideas from collective worship and spirituality. Challenging questions at the start of the lesson readily engage pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils explore whether science and religion are conflicting or complementary and draw on their understanding of the Bible to form deep answers. Pupils are curious and challenge their own ideas and those of others. Teachers' questioning is a strength. This means pupils frequently use the higher order thinking skills. RE provides numerous opportunities for reflection and teachers nurture deeper thinking by using a range of prompts such as 'I wonder if?' as sentence starters. Teachers' use of individualised marking skilfully extends pupils' thinking. Knowledge of other world faiths is extensively developed, enabling pupils to make informed comparisons with their own beliefs. Visitors from other faiths bring in artefacts which significantly extend pupils' thinking. Pupils say they enjoy RE and are challenged by it. Monitoring in RE is systematically undertaken; staff talk with pupils and use their ideas and this leads to further improvements. Knowledgeable MAT members support the RE leader and this leads to new action plans. Pupils' progress in RE is closely monitored and action taken to support individuals. Rigorous assessment strategies are well established and provide accurate information about pupils' progress.

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

Leaders and governors consistently articulate a high degree of understanding of the school's vision and the biblical principles which underpin this. The vision, 'Believe you can' is well established. Leaders talk of pupils recognising their special worth as children of God. Leaders explain how God wants to share everyone's 'journey of life' so he is there to help and guide. They see Christian values and Bible stories as being important because they provide this guidance and inspiration. Christian values direct the school's work and leaders in their decision making so they take great care to value the dignity of each individual. Further, leaders talk about God giving them their role and a sense of vocation at the school so they 'can make a difference'. Pupils talk naturally about the vision as it plays a major role in their lives. Pupils say they feel valued and are challenged to be the best version they can be. MAT members talk about Jesus inspiring the school's work to meet the diverse needs of all. This vision led to the school becoming a 'Headstart' Academy offering a diverse range of provision to meet individual pupil and family needs. Case studies demonstrate the impact these have on people's lives. Leaders are passionate and articulate the difference the vision makes to pupils' lives in a variety of areas. A strong cohesive team is established who share and live out the vision. The quality and depth of monitoring and evaluation is impressive. Each term the headteacher's report to the MAT identifies an aspect of the school's Christian distinctiveness to be improved. This is informed by leaders' systematic ongoing evaluations. Monitoring by the local governing body and MAT results in well-targeted action plans which raise the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness. This has led to additional opportunities for pupil reflection and pupils leading worship. Staff development has a high priority enabling them to become subject champions across the MAT or nurtured for leadership roles in church schools. Excellent support is given to leaders of RE and collective worship enabling them to effectively share outstanding practice. The headteacher's recent completion of a leadership qualification in a church school is a fine example. Relationships across the MAT bring mutual benefits where the school shares their outstanding practice with other linked schools. Diocesan expertise is drawn upon and the school supports diocesan initiatives. However, links with global communities are less well developed. The local church makes excellent contributions to worship and governance. Parents celebrate the work of the school and contribute their ideas through questionnaires which are used to shape improvements. New workshops for parents enable them to support their children with their learning. The school exceeds the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.