

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

<b>Stottesdon Church of England Primary School</b>	
Stottesdon Cleobury Mortimer Kidderminster Worcestershire, DY14 8UE	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Hereford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	September 2016
Name of multi-academy trust	Shropshire Gateway Education Trust
Date of inspection	15 March 2018
Date of last inspection	1 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy (former VC) 142312
Headteacher	Katie Jones
Inspector's name and number	Andrew Teale 770

### School context

Stottesdon Church of England Primary is a small rural primary school in south Shropshire. There are 126 pupils on role, including 22 children in the nursery. Pupils numbers have doubled since 2006 and there has been a high turnover of teaching staff in the last three years. Previously a voluntary controlled school, Stottesdon became an academy and joined the Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust (SGET) in September 2016. SGET contains three primaries and one secondary school. Stottesdon is the only Church of England school in the multi academy trust. Stottesdon has twice been judged as outstanding by Ofsted.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stottesdon Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The close partnership between the school, the local church and its community enhances the Christian life of the school.
- Stottesdon is a school which clearly values all of God's children. The strong Christian ethos is evident throughout the school and this is clearly having a significant impact upon the whole community.
- Strong leadership at the school means that the Christian character and the spiritual, social, moral and cultural curriculum have a strong positive affect on children's development.

### Areas to improve

- Develop increased leadership opportunities across the school so that future leaders of church schools are nurtured.
- Improve monitoring and assessment in religious education (RE) in order to further increase achievement levels for all pupils.
- Ensure that the school's strong Christian character is clearly evident in all documentation and on the school website.

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

The school's mission and daily practice makes it clear that Christian teaching, in an atmosphere of loving kindness, is central to the work of the school. The child centred ethos helps children to achieve high academic standards and fulfil their promise. Strong leadership and effective teaching have sustained high attainment levels across the school. Attendance is high because children enjoy coming to school. Children feel safe and cared for at Stottesdon. Children are very well behaved and are confident learners. Relationships between different members of the community are strong and enhanced through the caring and nurturing ethos, which characterises the school. One parent talked about the sensitive support provided when he first brought his child into the school community. From day to day, the strong church partnership brings support to those that need it within the school community. Children and staff greatly value the partnerships with the local church and the strong support from the incumbent. Parents and children report that though problems are rare within the school, those that do occur are dealt with quickly and sensitively by staff. 'Teachers always help us if we have a problem.' The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is a great strength. For example, there is a wide variety of thoughtful charity work which involves the children including Sports Relief, MacMillan Cancer Support and Bridgnorth Food Bank. RE teaching makes a significant contribution to the cultural development of learners. Valuable cultural and spiritual curricular experiences are provided, such as visits to different places of worship including a chance for older children to visit a synagogue as part of a wartime study project, and whole school visits to a mosque, gurdwara, Hindu temple and Hereford Cathedral in recent years. The school also provides a rich musical offering for children, supporting their spiritual and cultural development through choirs and a wide variety of opportunities for instrumental tuition. A third of the school are learning to play a musical instrument. Learners are given opportunities to explore spirituality as part of their everyday lessons. Engaging displays and prayer spaces around the school, encourage thoughtful reflection, for example the use of prayer stones. RE is creative and valued as an important subject within the school. The school recognises where children excel in RE. The school's work on Christian values, such as forgiveness and fairness, is helping children to thrive and learn lessons for life. Governors understand this work and highlight the links with Christian teaching. Values are related to biblical teaching and children are able to make their own connections. For example, children were able to make links between the story of the good Samaritan and the value of forgiveness. The children's survey showed that they value the distinctive ethos experienced in school and enjoy regular visits to church and the work of the incumbent. Although the profile of the Christian character is evident in school, it is not always celebrated fully in documentation about the school.

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

The whole school community is included in a rich and varied worship cycle, which centres on its close partnership with St Mary's Church. Parents are welcomed to worship for the traditional festival services and high attendance ensures these take place within a full church. The recent explanation of the meaning Holy Communion, in church, was a powerful experience for children and staff. A wide range of adults and children are given opportunities to plan and lead worship. Children also experience vibrant weekly worship delivered by members of the local Baptist Church through the 'Open the Book' programme and this helps the children develop a good knowledge of biblical stories as well as an appreciation of how they help us in our daily lives. The incumbent clearly has a major impact on the rich opportunities to worship in school and also leads worship on a weekly basis. Children take inspiration from the chosen Christian values to design and lead their own worship. For example, the value of fairness inspired older children to lead worship with a focus on the environment. Children sing worship songs with enthusiasm. Collective worship clearly nourishes the prayer-life of the community. Children are comfortable when joining in with prayers during worship time and in the classroom. Prayer outside collective worship, such as at lunchtime or in personal moments of reflection, is also evident. One child explained, 'I put my own prayer into the stone and hold it tight. All of the stones are blessed together'. The leadership team, with valued support from the incumbent, maintains an effective coordination and strategic overview of worship. School worship provides a strong framework for children's understanding of Anglican practice within a broader context of Christian traditions. Exploration of the experiences of Jesus from the Last Supper to the crucifixion enhanced children's understanding of ideas which are fundamental to the Christian faith. 'Jesus died for us'. The life of the school and the behaviour of members of the community are shaped and influenced by the strong worship traditions. Separate infant and junior worship times mean that topics are matched sensitively to the age of the children. Children are able to explain enthusiastically that Jesus' story of the Prodigal Son teaches us about forgiveness and to 'not be foolish with the things we have'. Children show an awareness of God as the Holy Trinity and can talk about this with some confidence. Worship, at times, lacks a strong enough focus on the person of Jesus Christ, although children do show some understanding of the central position he occupies in Christianity. The school endeavours to use small areas effectively within the classrooms to provide a focal point within worship time.

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

RE is recognised by staff, governors and children as an important subject within the curriculum. The school provides creative learning opportunities in RE which help to develop children's understanding of important themes. When Children in year 2 and 3 were thoughtfully discussing the importance of forgiveness in the Easter Story, one child explained, 'We can forgive people and God forgives us'. Standards of attainment for the majority of learners are in line with national expectations and sometimes much higher. RE at Stottesdon clearly has impact on the lives of children and staff and there is a strong link between RE and worship in the school. One child has recently made the decision to become confirmed following the impact of work in RE. A rigorous system of monitoring and assessment of RE is not yet fully developed although leaders do make some informed evaluations of teaching and learning which contribute to plans and strategies for improvement. Children respond positively to the extensive and valuable opportunities to learn about other world faiths. Children greatly valued a recent trip to a synagogue, which drew links to the Christian value of respect, and children were able to relate this to their study of the World War 2. RE learning activities meet the needs of different groups of learners in ways which help all children to make progress. Children benefit from wide ranging opportunities to discuss and ask questions in RE in order to develop their skills of inquiry and reflection. In response to thinking about Palm Sunday, one very young child confidently observed how they 'threw palm leaves around and shouted a special word', when Jesus came into Jerusalem on a donkey. Work in RE is supported by some engaging displays around the school. These are most effective where children have made contributions through their own work and where the display encourages interaction either independently or at the direction of the teacher. The RE curriculum provides rich opportunities to enhance the spiritual social moral and cultural development of children. These clearly have a powerful impact on learning for staff and pupils.

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

Leadership within the school is focussed on meeting the needs of each child by immersing them in a supportive educational environment, which helps children to succeed by paying careful attention to their academic, spiritual and emotional needs. School leaders articulate, and promote through example, a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian values. Forgiveness, humility, fairness and bravery are themes which the children have chosen to be at the centre of the caring ethos which sits at the heart of the school. The school has begun working to more clearly relate its own vision to the Church of England's vision for education. Leaders provide a concerted approach to the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school. The governing body are very actively supportive in developing the school's Christian foundation. They have worked hard to nurture a vibrant partnership with the local church. The incumbent is also chair of governors and clearly places great importance on work in school. 'I am privileged to be able look though one window of the vicarage and see this wonderful school and another to view the beautiful church and I feel that symbolises the role I have to play here'. The school is careful during staff appointments to ensure that successful applicants recognise the importance of the school's distinctive church school character to the wider community and are committed to the development of an effective church school environment. This has been particularly important in recent times when there has been such a significant number of new staff. The leadership structure of the Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust is successfully preserving and enriching the distinctive Christian character at Stottesdon. Changes to leadership within school since joining the trust are quite recent and continue to evolve but leaders of the trust clearly value and appreciate the importance of the school's Christian ethos. Stottesdon's ethos also has an outward influence on the wider trust and it plays a role in strategic development which reinforces its Christian foundations and helps its partner schools. RE and worship are clearly prioritised in the school's development planning. The school engages in careful self-evaluation of its distinctive character with consideration of pupil and parent views as part of this process. As a result, the school has strong development plans for pupil achievement, worship and religious education, which aim to deliver outstanding provision in all areas. Effective monitoring in RE requires further development within the framework for assessment and tracking system across the school. Worship provides the hub for involvement of the church and wider community in school life. Leadership of RE and worship is currently concentrated around very few members of staff and consequently opportunities to nurture future leaders of church schools are underdeveloped.