Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| **St Margaret’s Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School** | Birmingham Road  Great Barr  Birmingham  B43 7AP | |
| **Current SIAMS inspection grade** | **Outstanding** | |
| **Diocese/Methodist District** | **Lichfield** | |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade: | Outstanding | |
| Local authority | Sandwell | |
| Date of inspection | 29 September 2016 | |
| Date of last inspection | September 2011 | |
| School’s unique reference number | 103995 | |
| Headteacher | Jayne Stackhouse | |
| Inspector’s name and number | LizzieMcWhirter244 |  |

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| **School context**  St Margaret’s has 223 pupils on roll from a wide catchment area across Walsall, Sandwell and Birmingham. The school has a distinct Christian character with pupils from different Christian denominations as well as Muslim, Sikh and Hindu pupils. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average. There is an excellent relationship with St Margaret’s Church. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Margaret’s as a Church of England school are outstanding**   * St Margaret’s is a place of belonging and acceptance. It is a Christian family community where all are valued and become happy, thoughtful and confident learners. * The importance placed on empowering prayer results in personal spiritual journeys being nurtured. * The excellent partnership between church and school permeates all school life. This extends to the links with Uganda, helping pupils understand the significance of the worldwide Christian Church. |
| **Areas to improve**   * Enable pupils to plan and lead worship more frequently. This includes encouraging boys in their faith development. * Extend the gathering of evidence in RE through class books of reflections to demonstrate pupils’ religious literacy and deeper learning. |

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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**  The Christian character of this school has a high profile. Its vision of preparing children to walk on the path of life with hope, courage and resilience, knowing that God walks beside them at all times is underpinned by its core Christian values. Consequently, truthfulness, perseverance, thankfulness, respect and responsibility are at the heart of each child’s academic, personal and spiritual development. Everyone can articulate and live out such values, making links to Jesus’ teaching in the Bible. For example, pupils can explain perseverance as, ‘all athletes have to persevere with their training. They use their God- given talents but have to work hard too’. Excellent relationships and behaviour of the highest quality enable all to succeed. Staff say it is important to them that ‘St Margaret’s is a truly Christian school, which encompasses all faiths and treats everyone with kindness and respect’. Everyone is valued within a spirit of forgiveness. Staff go on to praise ‘the caring environment in which adults are happy to work and children can grow to be well rounded, globally- minded citizens, for whom faith plays a key part’. Attendance is always excellent as pupils love learning. This is because pupils are always challenged to do their best just as Jesus did. As a result, progress over time is very good for all groups of pupils. Achievement is very high and consistently above the national average. Some pupils aspire to be footballers because of the extra-curricular experiences they encounter here. An excellent example includes some boys who have been chosen to play for West Bromwich Albion Juniors. All this takes place within a supportive Christian framework where children are challenged to learn and parental support is positively encouraged. The school’s link with Uganda and Kampala enrich pupils’ awareness of Christianity as a worldwide faith and responsibility to be global citizens of the future. However, pupils say they would welcome meeting people of faith more frequently as well as visiting more places of worship. This supports their spiritual and cultural development. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**  Highly inclusive and engaging collective worship is a special part of daily life at St Margaret’s. The strong links with St Margaret’s Church enrich the lives of pupils and adults alike. The church worker and the worship team are involved in celebrating the Christian year, including Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas and Easter. St Margaret’s enjoys a variety of worship leaders, including children. Staff and pupils evaluate worship. Empowering prayer contributes significantly to the worshipping life of the school and to personal faith journeys. As a result, the well-established worship team recently designed an outdoor reflection area and Year 6 have an annual Reflection Day. Pupils are encouraged to pray aloud or privately. Well used class reflection areas nurture pupils’ spiritual growth very well. Pupils are growing in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They say, ‘God makes me think of creation, Jesus makes me think of perseverance. The Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost reminds me God is with us wherever we are’. Consequently, pupils know they can pray anywhere and look forward to worship because ‘it brightens up my day if I am feeling sad’. However, the school correctly identifies that pupils want to plan and lead worship more frequently and they are committed to developing boys in their faith journeys. |
| **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding** Pupils say they enjoy RE which has a high profile in this school, developing school values and making a very good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development. In addition, the headteacher is the RE subject leader and on Sandwell SACRE. This gives a very high profile to the status of RE. Teaching and learning in RE is very good. For example, Year 1 focus on How can we be closer to Jesus? whilst Key Stage 2 pupils ask How can I be a good friend to others? They all show respect in working collaboratively, linking their learning to building each other up and reflecting songs they sing in worship. Pupils can explain the Christian story well. Standards in RE are in line with other core subjects and pupils make good progress across each key stage. They enjoy asking questions and deepening their learning. Tracking and assessment is in place, informing future planning. The school recognises the importance of gathering evidence in RE through class books of reflection to demonstrate pupils’ religious literacy and deeper learning Pupils value being involved in the school’s Uganda project. Very good examples include Year 1 raising money for a child to go to school in Uganda. Pupils say this helps them in their understanding about Christianity as a worldwide faith. Year 2 enjoy visits to the gurdwara, with many pupils saying they would like to go on more visits to other places of worship as well as welcome more visitors into school. The school correctly identifies this as an area for development to enrich pupils’ spiritual and cultural understanding. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**  The dedicated headteacher and governors constantly and consistently live out and promote a Christian vision which is supported by all members of the school community. There is an excellent partnership with the church whose vicar is the chair of governors and there are strong links with parish and wider community. St Margaret’s School benefits from diocesan support and training and supportive links with other church schools. The headteacher regularly attends diocesan training and conferences and in turn mentors new headteachers within the diocesan family. Her termly report to the governors always has a section of Christian distinctiveness. Governors are committed to the wellbeing of pupils and staff alike, supporting the professional development of all staff. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed, with clear priorities for future action. This includes training new foundation governors as well as strengthening home/school links with regard to the school’s core Christian values. The leadership of worship and RE is given a high priority, with each area being given its own budget and standards monitored through individual development plans as well as visits. Consequently, RE and worship meet statutory requirements. Parental engagement is strong, with many parents saying they have learned much about the church through the church services. They say they too feel welcomed and included and. praise the headteacher and her staff for their pastoral care. As a result, they speak highly of their children being comfortable to pray at any time, including in the home. One parent spoke of St Margaret’s as ‘life-changing’ because all the family asked questions and researched what Christianity meant personally. |

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