

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christ Church Church of England Primary School	
Keighley Road, Colne, Lancashire BB8 7AA	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local Authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	16 November 2017
Date of last inspection	February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 119433
Headteacher	Andrew Peers
Inspector's name and number	Lesley Brookbanks 771

School context

The school is situated on the edge of Colne. It serves the local as well as the wider community, including the centre of Colne. All pupils are white British. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives support funding called pupil premium is also below the national average. The school has strong links with its church and parish. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the governing body.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church Church of England Primary School are outstanding

- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher is supported wholeheartedly by staff and governors. This results in the school's Christian vision 'Together we learn, together we achieve, together we grow in the light of Christ' being fully understood and lived out faithfully by all members of the school community.
- Relationships at all levels are exceptional and rooted in the school's core Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation. The school is highly proactive in its approach to the pastoral care of children and families resulting in support which responds to need with love and compassion.
- Collective worship and the role of worship ambassadors inspire the whole school community. Pupils are enthusiastic, reverent and respectful.
- There are strong and mutually supportive links between the school, the church and the local community which make a significant contribution to the school's Christian character.

Areas to improve

- Extend pupils' understanding of multicultural Christianity so that they develop greater understanding of the life and culture of Christians in other parts of the world.
- Provide opportunities for pupils in all year groups to engage with deeper thinking and big questions in Religious Education so as to extend their breadth of understanding.

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

The school's Christian vision, 'Together we learn, together we achieve, together we grow in the light of Christ' underpins every aspect of the school's work. A member of staff accurately describes it as, 'the heart within'. This school lives its faith in everything it does as demonstrated in the quality of relationships at all levels. The school's approach to behaviour management is rooted in its identified Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation. This is fully recognised by pupils, one explaining, 'Love is the main one, we must love each other. If something happens, we bring up our Christian values and say, "Are you loving your neighbour?"' As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. At difficult times, pupils, including the very young, discuss serious issues and genuinely want to offer help and support for others. This is confirmed by parents. One parent explained that the school's clear focus on, 'kindness, compassion and core Christian values gives children a strong moral compass'. The school knows its pupils and families very well which results in highly proactive pastoral care. This results in attendance which is above the national average and exclusion being very rare. Pupils enjoy coming to school, feel safe and are happy.

The school's vision and Christian values effectively support both pupil's well-being and their academic achievements. Standards over time are in line with or above national averages with pupils consistently making good or better progress from their starting points. Swift and robust action is taken should any aspect of learning fall below expectations. RE makes a valuable contribution to the Christian character of the school. Pupils confidently explain how Bible stories deepen their understanding of Christian values. In this way, they recognise how love, forgiveness and reconciliation are at the centre of the Christian faith. Extending pupils understanding of multicultural Christianity is recognised by the school as an area to develop. Pupil's knowledge of other world faiths is successfully promoted. A rich learning environment reflects the school's Christian ethos. Excellent use is made of limited classroom space. RE and worship displays are of high quality while interactive prayer and reflection areas make an excellent contribution to pupil's spirituality. Charitable giving contributes to pupil's experience of Christian service as well as their spiritual, moral and social development. There is support for numerous charities, including The Poppy Appeal and Macmillan. A link with the Bethany School in Tanzania enables pupils to engage meaningfully with global issues. The Bishop's harvest appeal enables them to support the lives of others in Ghana and Burundi.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

There is a true sense of the school being a vibrant worshipping community. Pupils and adults look forward to and enjoy worship which is relevant to their daily lives. Pupils readily articulate the importance of worship and how it makes a difference to them. One child explained, 'Worship helps us to reflect. We learn about Jesus, he makes a difference and helps us make the right choices'. They participate reverently in each element of worship, whether lively or reflective, noisy or quiet. For example, they praise God in the enthusiastic singing of uplifting worship songs and pray with sensitivity. Careful planning ensures that pupils engage with Bible stories, Christian values, festivals and important Christian beliefs. Worship flexibly responds to regional, national and world events, including through prayer. This results in pupils recognising their impact on the lives of others. Their knowledge of Anglican practice is exceptionally strong. This is because they experience a wide range of liturgy through carefully planned acts of worship. Pupils are confident to talk about the Trinity and how they are growing in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit as they move through the school. Hall displays particularly help pupils develop familiarity with artefacts of faith and liturgical colours. There are strong and meaningful links with the parish church. The vicar visits school weekly to lead worship. The school visits church once a month as well as for major festivals, Education Sunday and end of term services.

Monitoring and evaluation of worship is embedded and involves children, staff, governors and parents. Outcomes of evaluation result in direct action and impact on developments in worship. For example, to increase pupil's involvement in planning and leading worship independently, worship ambassadors were established. Pupils of all ages now confidently plan and lead worship together, while their creative ideas inform future developments. This has refreshed and rejuvenated worship. Pupils are highly motivated and excited about their role. They post thinking questions to different classes which provide an active focus for prayerful reflection and provide each class with prayer bubbles. The worship ambassadors are members of an exciting local cluster of church schools established to discuss approaches to worship and share ideas.

Pupils have a mature approach to prayer. They are very clear that God is with them all the time and that he is especially close to them when they pray. One child explains that he prays 'when I need God to be at my side' and another, 'as I've grown older, I've realised God is listening, I feel comforted when I pray and then happy.' Activities in prayer areas such as making 'prayeroplanes' or pebbles to hold are examples of visual prompts which help pupils to grasp spiritual ideas. What emerges strongly is their understanding of the school's Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation and how these values impact on their daily life.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is given high priority by school leaders. The Blackburn diocesan syllabus is used to support progression in important skills across the school. The subject leader regularly attends diocesan training. She is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and able to provide good support to develop the expertise of colleagues. Monitoring of pupil's work identifies next steps for development. The senior leadership team rather than the subject leader currently observe teaching and learning in RE. However, these combined actions result in detailed school improvement plans with a clear timeline of expected outcomes. Attainment in RE is in line with national expectation and, for some pupils, above. Assessment procedures are in place although the formal tracking of progress in RE is a recent initiative. Planning for deep thinking to challenge all pupils to engage regularly with big questions is an identified area for development.

Developments in RE are shared with the link governor who reports to the governing body at its meetings. Aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provide a foundation for learning in RE. This results in pupils who are respectful and empathetic when discussing difficult issues. They have good Bible knowledge which they relate to their day to day lives and choices. For example, the Old Testament story of Daniel describes how he was aware of the presence of God at his side. Older pupils speak of how God is also at their side and give examples of when they know this. Younger children confidently explore why Jesus is called Emmanuel and explain it means 'God with us'. An issue from the previous inspection was to develop the depth of learning about other faiths which has been addressed well. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of diversity in the beliefs of others. This is enhanced by visits from people of different faiths. Pupils are confident to relate their knowledge of Christianity to their learning about other faiths. For example, they name different holy books and places of worship comparing them with the church and Bible. The quality of teaching is good overall. Most of pupil's work is recorded in RE books. Some is recorded in class scrapbooks. However, there are some very good examples of more creative learning approaches which successfully enhance pupil's knowledge and understanding. For example, Year 1 build a sukkah in the hall as part of their learning about the Jewish festival of Sukkot. This is a booth or hut where Jews may live during the festival as a reminder of the Israelites forty years in the desert. In the foundation stage, children make diya lamps out of clay and talk about them. They confidently act out the story of Rama and Sita with masks while others prepare a special meal. Year 6 use creative approaches to discuss big questions which deepen their responses to learning. However, big questions are less frequently tackled in other year groups. Visits to the parish church regularly support learning in RE as well as visits to churches of other Christian denominations. A visit to the local Baptist church recently inspired pupils to Christian service. As a result, they initiated the Christmas shoe box appeal at their own school.

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

In this school, pupils are the priority and Christian love is at the heart of all decisions. The headteacher has a very clear and consistent vision for the school's Christian distinctiveness. Governors have a thorough knowledge of both this and the school's performance. They actively hold the school to account for its effectiveness as a church school. They now know how to challenge, ask for evidence, express their views, and do not take anything for granted. The area for development from the previous inspection, 'to ensure that a system is put in place for governors to be involved in procedures for monitoring and evaluating RE', has been fully addressed. The vicar has an active role as link governor for RE. He meets with the subject leader for RE, shares monitoring evidence, visits lessons and reports back to the governing body. As a result, their work in this area is very well informed. RE and collective worship are very well led. As a result, they have a high profile within the school and meet all statutory requirements.

More than half the membership of the governing body has changed since the last inspection. Leaders work to ensure that the role of new governors is secured as contributors to the self-evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness. The appointment of a diocesan governor with wide expertise in governor training supports this. Some governors visit classrooms regularly, in this way, they monitor the Christian distinctiveness of the school first hand. A governor leads messy church which strengthens the already strong links between the school and church. Support for teachers through training and increasing responsibility effectively prepares them for future leadership. The headteacher has previously supported the leadership development of other church schools.

There are strong links with the diocese, local and wider community which develop pupil's understanding of Christian service and global issues. Locally, examples include support for the local foodbank and the hospice. Globally, involvement in the Bishop's harvest appeal enables pupils to help others in Ghana and Burundi. There are excellent relationships with parents and a genuine openness between the school and its families. Parents speak very highly of the school's Christian ethos and how they are fully involved in the life of the school, 'There is a family atmosphere here, children look after each other very well; this school really lives its Christian faith.'