

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Leonard's Church of England Primary School

Walton Green, Walton-le-Dale, Preston PR5 4JL

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local Authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	27 April 2017
Date of last inspection	06 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 119575
Headteacher	Kay Schofield
Inspector's name and number	Helen Sage 909

School context

St Leonard's is an average sized Church of England voluntary aided primary school with 280 pupils on roll, situated in the village of Walton le Dale. The majority of pupils are White British. A small number of pupils come from faith backgrounds other than Christianity. The percentage of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below the national average. The percentage of pupils receiving support for special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is well below the national average. The headteacher took up post in September 2012.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Leonard's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The effective leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the senior leadership team (SLT) and governors, ensures that Christian values are deeply embedded in every aspect of the school's life and work.
- Biblical values are the foundation of the school's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development opportunities.
- A broad and balanced curriculum, which lights the imagination of staff and pupils contributes to high achievement rooted in the school's Christian foundation.
- The strong focus on Christian values influences relationships throughout the community and inspires the building of partnerships between the school and the community, including the church.

Areas to improve

- Increase and develop further the range of relationships with representatives from the local churches and members of other faiths communities.
- Enhance the religious education (RE) curriculum through increasing the range of visits made to different places of worship.

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

Christian values are explicit, very deeply embedded and seen as the heartbeat of the school. They are celebrated and consistently articulated by all members of the school community. This results in outstanding behaviour and high attendance, within an atmosphere where 'values in action' are rewarded through initiatives such as the 'What Would Jesus Do' (WWJD) awards. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and all stakeholders describe it as being 'one big family'. Christian values of respect and trust impact positively on learning, the curriculum and good attainment and progress. Uniqueness is celebrated and difference respected. The revised school's mission statement, 'A Journey in Faith, Love and Learning,' is rooted in Christian teaching, which values every individual as a child of God. The revision process involved all stakeholders, and is marked by the mosaic in the school entrance area. All see its ethos and values as a strength and one staff member commented, 'it is the foundation of all that happens here'. It also creates a platform for excellent behaviour and consistently high levels of attendance. Pupils are clear that it is the school's distinctive Christian values, which help them to be caring and respectful. Forgiveness, as one pupil explained is, 'not holding a grudge and being able to start again.' Pupils are appreciative of staff that model the Christian values of forgiveness, wisdom and generosity of spirit. This enables them to understand how to reconcile their differences and arguments with their friends; one pupil commented 'that's because we are Christian'. Pupils rightly recognise the commitment of teachers and the local vicar to serve and encourage them to achieve. This underpins an exemplary school in developing pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Parents spoke about how staff 'go the extra mile' to provide the most supportive and best opportunities. Staff spoke of the impact of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and its enhanced SMSC development. There are effective links in IPC with RE, Christian Values and the worldwide Christian Church. Consequently, RE makes a valuable contribution to SMSC development and helps define the school's inclusive Christian character. The school's involvement in and contribution to a Church in Sierra Leone and a pupil's visit to Paraguay, helps in developing understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Pupils reflect well on their understanding that, 'our church is part of one big world wide family'.

Many, from the perspective of their own faith or what they encounter in collective worship, draw connections between the school's ethos and specific Christian teachings. The openness with which the vicar, parishioners and teachers speak about their faith encourages pupils to talk and share thoughts about their faith. The variety of extra-curricular activities includes the Cool Christian Council (3Cs) group meetings through which pupils explore aspects of the Christian worship and faith. Christian values are incorporated and displayed throughout the school's paperwork, website and worship themes which are cohesively linked to the curriculum. The Christian character and values of the school are intrinsically linked to the school's strategic plan and the spiritual development of the whole school community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Central to the life of the school is inspirational and inclusive worship. There is a strong focus on the Christian expression of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, supported through prayers and visual imagery. Themes for worship are rooted in the Christian year and values and are carefully planned. 'Roots and Fruits' a two year programme for worship is also used extensively and effectively to support worship time. The worship committee is comprised of senior leaders, church representatives, teachers and pupils. The vicar and some parishioners play an important role in enabling some older pupils to 'Open the Book' worship time, which focuses explicitly on biblical material. The worship committee efficiently manages the planning, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. This ensures a good understanding of the diversity of Christian traditions. All stakeholders articulate the impact and evaluation of worship. However, pupils not directly involved in the worship committee have more limited opportunities to take part in planning and leading worship

Worship takes place in different contexts and times in the school day and gives an opportunity for pupils and adults to develop spiritually. The spiritual life of the school reflects Anglican aspects of worship very well. Prayer permeates the beginning and the end of the school day and before lunch. It is a natural part of school life. All classrooms have areas for worship and reflection. Prayer boxes and bags, and the Lord's Prayer can be found there with resources well matched to the ages of the pupils in the class. Pupils' own heartfelt prayers are included alongside formal prayers. The importance of prayer within school life is well recognised. For example stakeholders recognise how the school's life is enhanced through, 'everyone being prayed for'. The use of open reflective questions in worship time enables those participating to explore links between the teachings of Jesus and Christian values and to grow spiritually. Pupils speak about worship with enthusiasm, one commenting, 'it helps you get your thoughts and feelings out to God,' whilst another reflected, 'the hymns make you happy and have actions!' They are inspired by social and charitable initiatives, such as the 'Hat Day' for Barnardos. Such times have a positive impact on all members of the school community.

In keeping with the school's Christian character, worship always includes biblical teaching and its relevance for life today. Pupils have a basic understanding of the significance of the Eucharist within the Anglican tradition through the RE curriculum. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to experience the Eucharist as part of the worship programme, using appropriate material. The end of year service and annual carol service are held at the local Parish Church. This reciprocal relationship has grown since the previous denominational inspection under the leadership of the current vicar and headteacher.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils of all ages use originality and creativity impressively as they apply knowledge and skills in RE. This effectively encourages them to reflect on their own questions of meaning and purpose. The school follows the diocesan syllabus, 'Questful RE' which supports the high profile of RE across the school. RE is included in the whole school systematic routines of monitoring and evaluation, which continually identify strengths and areas to improve. Learning activities are thoughtfully planned to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the religions studied, alongside addressing the significance of religious teaching and practice to their own and others' lives. The subject area is well led by the headteacher as part of a committed and enthusiastic RE team. Expectations are effectively communicated and staff are well supported for teaching RE. Governors are kept well informed of current RE developments within the school. Members of the RE team access current and continuing professional development via the diocesan RE networks. The very high quality of display around the school aids learning. There is rigorous monitoring by the RE team across the school. RE moderation is also carried out in partnership with a local Church of England primary school to ensure challenge, rigour and high standards. Assessment is focused and consequently is clear and effective in encouraging pupils to improve and make progress. RE scrapbooks are used to improve thinking and reflection skills and pupils' spirituality. The effect has been significant. Standards are high and in line with other core subject and learners' progress is very good irrespective of their starting point.

Lessons are outstanding and the curriculum is rich and varied. The teaching is interactive and offers opportunities for pupils to lead learning. Year 2 pupils are enabled to explore sensitively the themes around saying 'goodbye', drawing links between scripture and the death of loved one. Pupils talked freely in a supportive atmosphere. Teachers sensitively draw the most reluctant into discussions. Pupils listen to and answer one another respectfully. Visits to the Burnley Faith Centre enhance and enrich children's learning by providing them with opportunities to meet members of Jewish faith communities to explore what it is to be a Jew today. This enables them to reflect deeply on what they believe and what those of other faiths believe. A class teacher evidenced this, reflecting on the impact on peers by a Muslim pupil who inspirationally shared her faith, saying 'I don't celebrate Christmas', then confidently talked about her own celebrations.

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

The school is passionately led by the highly respected headteacher, ably supported by governors and other staff. The school is rightly proud of its welcoming, inclusive Christian foundation. Biblical teaching also drives forward the school's Christian service. Since the previous denominational inspection, the mission statement and values have been refreshed and revisited. Governors, staff and parents are confident that their vision of an inclusive school 'family', arises from Christian principles, beliefs and values. These are lived out in all their decisions, policies and actions. Although for the majority within the school there is a clear distinction between RE and worship, this is not consistently reflected in policy documents. Reciprocal partnerships with parents, community, the church and the Diocese greatly enrich the school's Christian distinctiveness and supports pupils' learning. The home-school behaviour and learning partnership is expressly rooted in the Christian faith. Parents support this with one saying that being a church school, 'gives children a moral compass.' Areas for improvement since the previous denominational inspection have been well addressed. Evidence of this impact is seen in new mission statement, clearer and more focused RE data and expressed Christian values. Links with local Christian communities and the wider community and Diocese are mutually beneficial through a variety of initiatives, which include charitable giving events. RE and worship meet statutory requirements. Leaders are committed to maintaining a strong RE team, which achieves above average results. The strategic plan is embraced by the whole school community under the leadership of the headteacher. A member of staff said it was 'a joy to come in each day.' There is a strong commitment by governors to recruit and continue to develop staff rooted in the school's Christian ethos.

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