

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Carleton St. Hilda's Church of England Primary School

Bispham Road, Carleton, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 7PE

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Blackburn

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Lancashire

Date of inspection

24 November 2016

Date of last inspection

March 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided Primary 119557

Headteacher

Heather Wareing

Inspector's name and number

Susan Cliffe 832

School context

Carleton St. Hilda's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school with a vast majority of children from White British backgrounds. The number of children from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs is below the national average. Since the last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed and a new senior leadership team has been established. Also, since then, the school has been removed from special measures. There have been significant changes in staffing and governance.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Carleton St. Hilda's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding Christian leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by staff and governors, has impacted positively on school improvement.
- The exemplary behaviour of children is underpinned by embedded Christian values such as friendship, compassion, love, respect and loyalty.
- The explicit Christian character of the school which permeates all aspects of school life enables the school community to flourish.
- Children are inspired by religious education (RE) and learn exceptionally well which impacts on their understanding of Christianity.

Areas to improve

- Increase the involvement of children in the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship to ensure that they have ownership and that their views are part of future planning.
- Cultivate community links outside the local area to develop children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and faiths and of Christianity as a world faith.

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

The Christian character of the school is encapsulated in the school's mission statement, 'open hearts, open minds learning together with God'. It permeates every facet of school life. The curate stated that the strong Christian ethos runs through everything that is done in school. Consequently, Christian values enjoy a high profile and are evident around the school with one being a focus for worship half-termly. Children talk about them with confidence and can explain how they help them to live their lives. 'Christian values help you to know how to do the right thing,' enthused a Year 2 child.

The nurturing, mutually supportive relationships within school are complimented by the exemplary behaviour of the children. This is influenced greatly by the Christian character of the school. A parent explained, 'The excellent behaviour in school transfers across into behaviour in the home.' Parents are particularly impressed with the buddy system between children in Reception and Year 5. Bullying is not tolerated and is swiftly dealt with. Children are very positive about school as shown by a child in Year 2 who explained that school gave him 'good vibes'. They are keen to attend, are taught well and work in a calm, respectful environment. This leads to the high attainment and progress enjoyed by the school. Children are confident that their ideas are listened to and respected as is shown in their successful suggestion to change the school uniform.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the children is strong and is supported greatly by the excellent RE provision. RE contributes greatly to the Christian character of the school ensuring that children are challenged to reflect. Children are respectful of cultures and beliefs other than their own and have a growing awareness of Christianity as a multicultural world faith. However, the school realises that this understanding requires further embedding and has focused on Christmas around the world.

Through the use of reflection areas, spirituality days, symbols and Christian displays such as 'Christian pilgrimages', spiritual development is good. The school has recognised that a sense of spirituality can be developed further by providing more interactive reflection areas in classrooms and outdoor spirituality areas. The school community supports many charities at home and overseas. Children feel that it is their Christian duty to support those less fortunate than themselves donating to, for example, St. Vincent's House and Christian Aid. Children say that the relationship with church is strong and enjoy visits to church and from clergy.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is firmly rooted in Christian values, Bible teachings and Anglican traditions including prayer and the church's year. It is a core part of school life and it is valued greatly by the whole school community. A child stated, 'Worship gives us a chance to think about Jesus and to get together as a church family.' A Christian value is focused upon half-termly strengthening the positive attitudes and relationships found within school. Provision for worship is rich and varied with all teachers involved in its delivery. Clergy are key contributors, lead worship each week and welcome children into church to celebrate major festivals. Their input in supporting staff is greatly valued. For example, they were asked to develop prayers to accompany the lighting of the Advent candles.

Children are actively engaged in worship, sing joyfully and have become increasingly reflective. This has a direct impact on the excellent behaviour of the children and their care for others. A child explained, 'Worship makes us think about what Jesus would want us to do.' Worship has been enriched by the introduction of 'big questions' such as 'What does heaven look like?' These are posed in whole school worship, are a focus in the hall and are followed up in class worship enabling children to share and reflect. Children are able to link the Trinity with the three candles on the worship table. They represent, as explained by one child, 'God, Son and Holy Spirit.'

Worship is well led and children are becoming increasingly involved in its planning, delivery and evaluation. The establishment of the Ethos group has contributed to recent improvement, creating more involvement for parents and parish in the worshipful life of the school. The Ethos group now plan and lead worship at key times such as Harvest. Further improvement is supported by whole school worship, led by classes half termly, on the Christian values, such as hope. All members of the school community are invited to these worships. However, the school recognises that enriching the involvement of children in all aspects of worship develops their leadership role. Prayer takes place during the daily act of worship and at many other times in the school day. For example, reception children were inserting written prayers into a prayer net as part of their theme on 'Fishers of Men' during lesson time. Personal prayer is enhanced by the spirituality areas in each classroom. One child stated, 'That is a special area in our classroom.' The work of the Ethos group is to be extended by involving children across the school in contributing their own prayers in worship. Children are becoming more confident in this respect and are keen for even more involvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is creative and inspiring and makes a significant contribution to the SMSC development of children. The profile of RE has risen immeasurably since the last inspection and this has led to significant improvement in all aspects of teaching and learning. Consequently, children look forward to lessons. They particularly enjoy visits such as the recent one, suggested by the children, to Blackburn Cathedral as part of their topic on pilgrimage. A Year 2 child shared, 'RE is the funnest thing you can do in school next to playing.' Christian values are woven into RE. It is enthusiastically led and closely monitored by the subject leader who is new to the role since the last SIAMS inspection. She keeps up to date with current developments within the subject by regularly attending diocesan RE cluster meetings. The RE leader is ably supported by the curate, who is the RE governor, and the vicar. Clergy support the teaching of RE whenever appropriate and their input is highly valued. In lessons, children are attentive, listen with respect and work with creativity and this can be seen in the excellent class scrapbooks. The richness of activities inspired a parent to comment, 'RE stimulates deep conversations at home.'

Children remark that they enjoy using lots of other curricular areas like drama, music and art as part of their RE experience as it makes it 'more interesting'. Visitors ensure that RE remains stimulating and children particularly enjoyed speaking with a representative of the local Roman Catholic church who spoke about pilgrimage to Lourdes. Work ensures the needs of all children are met and lessons are well planned with reflection activities provided. As a result, a Year 6 child explained, 'There's a right answer in maths but in RE we reflect in different ways and all opinions are valued.' Children respond with thoughtfulness within lessons leading a child in Year 4 to write a psalm which contained the line, 'God keeps us in his hand when we are in trouble'. Children have enjoyed visits to a synagogue, mosque and Hindu temple. Also, links have also been forged with a rabbi and imam. As a result, children have a strengthened awareness of major world faiths. This was seen in Year 2 where children were able to discuss the display about the Torah scroll with confidence.

High standards of attainment and progress are achieved by outstanding teaching, informative marking and feedback. Children's workbooks are very well presented. There is some evidence that children in some classes have begun to assess their own work and this practice is to be extended across school. In addition, to ensure that high standards are maintained, the school has identified that more rigorous tracking systems are necessary.

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

The Christian headteacher, supported effectively by staff and governors, has ensured that the Christian mission of the school is shared by the school community. The chair of governors stated, 'This school is not just about results-it is the Christian values that make the school special.' There is an overarching feeling of wellbeing within the school community with strong SMSC development and excellent behaviour. This is underpinned by the mission statement which children know because they were actively involved in its creation. Caring relationships have blossomed due to the living of Christian values. A staff member commented that the school family had helped her through very difficult times in her personal life.

The senior leadership team, established since the last denominational inspection, is very effective. A teacher stated, 'The Christian leadership is active in every aspect of school life.' Governors challenge and support and have become more involved with the leadership of the curriculum, especially in RE, since the last inspection. The school has good systems for self-evaluation which in turn contribute to high standards for children in school. Each child fulfilling their potential is directly attributable to the Christian character of the school and this has led to substantial school improvement in terms of attainment and progress. Worship and RE are major priorities for sustained school improvement and both meet statutory requirements.

Parents are highly appreciative of school with one writing that their child feels happy and safe at school. Another states that school works hard to allow their daughter to share and develop her faith. They feel that links have strengthened with the introduction of the home-school values sheet. Links with the local church are effective and have strengthened further through 'Messy Church' and an increasing number of families attend church as a result. Parishioners are also seen as part of the school family. They attend class worship led by children and other special events led by the school. There is a strong relationship between the school and the diocese. The school attends training and briefings, ensuring support and the professional development of staff. The school has rightly endeavoured to extend the understanding children have of the wider world nationally and globally. Consequently, a child in Zambia has been supported and charitable work through the St. Hilda's Citizens' group has blossomed. However, the school is continuing to focus on the wider community to embed this understanding further. The future development of Christian leaders is a priority and staff and governors now attend joint training days focusing on the enhancement of Christian distinctiveness. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent.