



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Nelson St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hibson Road
Nelson
Lancashire
BB9 0DZ

Diocese:	Blackburn
Local authority:	Lancashire
Date of inspection:	11 September 2014
Date of last inspection:	30 September 2009
School's unique reference number:	119438
Headteacher:	Mr Stephen Crook
Inspector's name and number:	Mr Mike Graham 286

School context

The school is in a new building with excellent facilities, provided to meet the need for extra places in this urban area. It is large enough to accept two form entry and Key Stage 1 is already full. The children come from very mixed social and cultural backgrounds. The proportion of children supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is well above average. There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection, including a new headteacher and deputy.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Paul's as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian vision of the headteacher, well supported by all staff and governors, is lived out in the care and love given to all children. This has a positive impact on their academic development and well-being.
- Christian values are understood, articulated and demonstrated in the excellent relationships between all members of the school community.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) impact significantly on children's spiritual, moral and cultural development, encouraging an understanding of prayer and its relevance to the children's lives and conduct.

Areas to improve

- Review the mission statement with input from the whole school family, in order to reinforce the positive new era with a statement that encapsulates in child-friendly language the Christ-centred ethos of the school.



- Establish greater coherence in worship between church and school, so that children and parents find similar acceptance and enjoyment in church as they do in school worship.
- Involve the governors more fully in reviewing the distinctive Christian ethos of the school so as to give them greater ownership of the new vision.

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

Distinctly Christian values are well embedded in the life of the school. Children and staff understand and articulate these values in worship and RE, and endeavour to live by them every day. The secure loving ethos frees the children from fear of failure, and achievement and attendance have significantly improved after a period of instability. Most children enter school with skills that are below those typical for their age. By the end of both Key Stages the levels of achievement are above the national average. Vulnerable children with special educational needs are cared for diligently and their progress is also good. Behaviour is outstanding. Mutual respect and good manners are hallmarks of school life. Relationships between all members of the school community demonstrate Christian values of love, service and friendship to excellent effect. Teachers treat children respectfully and teaching assistants intervene sensitively and carefully to enhance the children's learning. The Christian values such as trust, hope, reverence and endurance, on which all the school's work is based, make a significant impact on the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children and parents make reference to these values when discussing various areas of school life. RE greatly enhances the school's distinctive Christian character. A good example is the comment from a Y2 boy during an RE lesson, 'We want to behave like Jesus'. The excellent work on other faiths widens children's knowledge and deepens their understanding.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is highly valued by all members of the school family. The reverence shown by all as they enter for worship in silence is testimony to the high level of expectation and respect. Teaching about the Trinity is thorough and appropriate. The children speak with a remarkable ease and depth of understanding about the work of God as creator, Jesus as healer, teacher and example, and the Holy Spirit as guide and comforter. A Y6 girl commented, 'Jesus sacrificed His life for us, and afterwards the Holy Spirit came to help us'. Worship includes Bible readings, reflection and prayer, with the whole school family fully involved. Laughter and wholehearted singing, with actions when relevant, combine with awe and careful teaching, based on and including Christian values. The spiritual impact on children and staff is significant. Worship frequently includes spontaneous prayer from a range of children. Examples include thanking God for the new school and for His help in the turning over of a 'new leaf'. Prayer is a natural part of the school day, and the children clearly understand that God is always with them and listens to their prayers. Worship is sincere, relevant and varied. All the staff, the children, and visitors such as the PAIS team of young Christian volunteers lead worship. The children give regular evaluative feedback about worship, and their comments are used to inform developments, giving them ownership of this crucial part of school life. The children's spiritual growth is encouraged and developed further in the 'JAFFA' (Jesus a friend for all) after school club, run by one of the RE co-ordinators. Christian festivals are celebrated by the whole school and church community together, and this strong link between school and church is



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demonstrated further through the vicar's involvement in teaching, with practical demonstrations, about baptism and the Eucharist. Portfolio evidence shows that the children have a good understanding of these sacraments as a result. He also leads confirmation classes which are held in church and are supported and encouraged by the school. There is however a lack of regular child-friendly Sunday worship in church.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The achievement of the children in RE is good, with standards at least on a par with the other core subjects. Their work in folders, on displays and in levelled portfolios shows good progress, backed up by careful assessment. They are inspired by RE because much of the teaching is outstanding. It is dramatic, varied, relevant and well planned, and the depth of the children's understanding, particularly regarding the impact that faith has on a believer's life, is impressive. One Y5 boy said that he reads the Bible for himself and when he has a decision to make, often asks himself, 'Would God do it?' A Muslim boy in Y6 spoke of his new understanding of Jesus and stated that 'However big, however small you are you still matter to God'. The vicar makes valuable contributions to the RE programme, including hosting sessions in St Paul's Church about the traditions and symbolism of Anglican life and worship. Lessons include excellent teaching and teamwork, good use of ICT and clear progress in understanding. The relationships between staff and children are warm, open and respectful. In Y2 special books are explored, using primarily, but not exclusively, Bibles. One child said that the Bible taught us that 'Jesus and God love everyone'. Lessons about values focus on specifically Christian values such as hope, trust and love. For example, the children in Y4 experienced and verbally expressed a 'wow' moment, when an 'ugly' rock was opened up to reveal beautiful crystals. The explanation that this metaphor illustrates the way God can see the good values in people's hearts, as in the story of Samuel anointing David as the future king, had a strong impact. Visits to synagogues and mosques support excellent teaching about other faiths, and the children fully appreciate the value of such study. 'It helps us to understand each other' said a Y6 girl. The impressive leadership of the subject from skilled and experienced co-ordinators, with thorough monitoring and evaluation, leads to good progress throughout the school. Excellent in-service training, teamwork and support, also enhances the work of all children and staff in this vital area.

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

The explicit Christian vision, with its emphasis on restoration and renewal, that is articulated so well by the leadership team, including governors, is demonstrated to excellent effect by the headteacher. His Christian commitment and love shine out in every aspect of his leadership. The sense of a team of dedicated leaders working as one for God is strong. The leadership team, the governors, the staff and the children aim to live the Christian values which are crucial in establishing a Christ-centred ethos. The governors play a key role in school, with links to classes and to subjects. This leads to informed and supportive contributions to the school's development. Teamwork, coaching and excellent in-service training prepare staff well for current and future leadership roles. Their potential to assume such roles in this and in other Christian schools is developed well. The chair of governors speaks warmly of the 'teaching staff's religious commitment'. This is demonstrated well by the loving care shown to all members of the school family, in school and beyond. The vision has taken centre stage during



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the building of the new school. For example the sign over the main entrance welcomes all visitors 'in the name of Jesus'. However, the current mission statement does not do justice to the Christ-centred ethos of the school. School leaders strive for continuous improvement and greater Christian distinctiveness through evaluation and strategic planning. Governors are not yet fully involved in this area of work but plans are in place to correct this. Worship resources are significantly improved and expanded since the last report and there is also a fresh approach to governorship, with full understanding of the role. This shows how the school has moved on since the last inspection. The school is not yet outstanding because the recent improvements need to be sustained over a longer period of time. RE and worship are key elements in this improvement and provision goes beyond that required by law. Relationships with church, diocese and the local community are warm and mutually beneficial. Parents and carers are proud of their school, particularly the inclusive and caring Christian ethos and the new building. Comments included, 'She (my daughter) loves it!' and 'The church ethos brings morals, ethics and the whole community together.'

SIAMS report September 2014, St Paul's CofE Primary, Nelson, BB9 0DZ