



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Scotforth St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary and Nursery School

Scotforth Road
Lancaster
LA11 4SE

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 8 October 2015

Date of last inspection: June 2011

School's unique reference number: 119533

Headteacher: Alison Aylott

Inspector's name and number: Kathryn Pym 726

School context

Scotforth St Paul's is situated in the south of Lancaster and currently has 207 pupils on roll. The children come from a wide variety of socio economic backgrounds. The number of children who are entitled to free school meals is well below national average, as is the number of children who speak English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, the school has opened a Nursery class within the school, which currently has 22 children on roll. The school has strengthened its leadership team through the internal appointment of an assistant head teacher and there has been a change of incumbent.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Scotforth St Paul's are outstanding

- Relationships are based on Christian values and provide a unique Christian family where everyone can thrive and reach their true potential.
- The Christian vision is promoted by senior teachers and governors and shared by all members of the school community. This ensures the school's success in meeting the academic and spiritual needs of all children.
- The quality and leadership of the religious education (RE) throughout the school, which is taught creatively, inspirationally and faithfully.

Areas to improve

- Provide appropriate space for the children to pray and reflect within the school grounds and classrooms so they can develop a relationship with God.
- Establish a system to evaluate the impact of worship, which involves the children and informs future worship plans.

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

The Christian character of the school impacts on the effectiveness and achievement of all children. Children feel supported, loved and valued and as a consequence want to achieve their best. They are proud of their school and each other. Achievement is consistently high across all core subjects and RE. Children enjoy coming to Scotforth St Paul's. The children understand the Christian values which are firmly embedded in every aspect of school life, in particular trust, love, respect and compassion. The children demonstrate clearly the impact that St Paul's teachings and life has on their own life, in particular in regard to reconciliation and starting anew. One child explained in detail the significance of the school badge as; 'A sword shows that God is always protecting us and the Bible represents us being a church school.' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the whole curriculum and children have a sense of duty to help others in need both locally and internationally. The Olivia Project (in memory of a past pupil) and Purple Day (in support of a Father who became very ill) are fine examples of how the children live by the values that are central to the life of the school. The children seek ways of helping those members of the school family that are in need. Children have a genuine respect for each other as seen in their attitudes and their understanding of the school's values. One child described the strength of the school as being 'welcoming and loving.' Parents and children value the buddy system. One parent described this as a lifesaver for their child. RE is a particular strength and has a huge impact on the life and uniqueness of the school. It provides a deep understanding of the diverse community in which they live as well as Christianity around the world and other world faiths. The children have a sound knowledge of Bible stories and know that these are where their distinctive Christian values come from. One child said that his favourite Bible story was the resurrection, because Jesus loves us, died for us and will always care for us. Another said that they need to trust God just as Daniel did.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship makes a significant contribution to the whole life of the school. Children and staff enjoy worship and it is valued by all as a special time to come together as a school family to praise God. Planning is thorough and done in partnership with the incumbent. It is structured in line with the liturgical year and the explicit Christian values which are central to relationships, the curriculum, policies and procedures. Children are able to relate each value to Bible stories and how they can use these to help them each day, explaining that everyone on the playground would be a good Samaritan. Worship is meaningful to the children in their everyday lives. During worship, children articulate why they respected different famous people; 'I respect Jesus because Jesus rules over everything. Jesus respects us as we respect him. So then we respect everybody else too.' Children are given the opportunity to lead aspects of worship, pray and reflect as well as sing and praise God. The school has identified ways to involve the children in worship planning and evaluation, which will inform future plans. Since the last inspection, the school's worship working party has successfully looked at ways of ensuring that worship is resourced appropriately. This comprises parents, governors and staff and is making an enormous difference to the children's spiritual development. The children have a thorough understanding of Anglican traditions, such as lighting three candles to represent the Holy Trinity at the beginning of each service and using the liturgical colours on the altar. The school benefits significantly from a unique relationship with St Paul's Church and enjoy services lead by the incumbent both in church and school. The weekly Christian Club, 'Explorers' is well attended and supported by both staff and clergy, emphasising the unique partnership between the parish and the school. Worship is evaluated, but the school recognises that this needs to be more systematic so that it involves all stakeholders and informs future plans. However, the school recognises that creating spaces in the school environment for prayer, stillness and reflection enables children to develop time for private prayer and their individual relationship with God.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Children across all ages make excellent progress in RE and work to a high standard, which is in line with other core subjects and above national expectations. It is taught by enthusiastic and confident teachers, who are able to inspire children and have high expectations for all learners. Work scrutiny shows an extensive range of approaches to teaching and learning, which are highly engaging. RE lessons are enriched by links with the church, visits, visitors and a wide range of resources. The use of 'chatterboxes' in Early Years provide the children with experiences, for example, the key elements of harvest. Lessons demonstrate how the children are inspired by using artefacts. Through challenging questioning the

children are able to develop a clear understanding of the impact that Shabbat has on Jewish people. They relate aspects to their own faith. The profile of RE is high as a consequence of the inspirational, passionate and Christian leadership of the subject. Since the last inspection the school has embraced the revised Diocesan scheme of work and implemented units in a creative way. Each unit is also used to reinforce the core Christian values which are central to the life of the school. Assessment procedures are secure and staff moderate work regularly to ensure consistency throughout the school. The portfolio is used effectively during moderation to secure levels. The children enjoy RE and have a very good knowledge of Bible stories and articulate the difference that these make to their own lives. One child said that the stories in RE are always; 'Inspiring and help us to know that God is always with us.'

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

The Christian vision that governors, staff, and parents share impacts significantly on the lives of the children, their families and of the parish. The school provides each child with firm foundations on which to build a faith for life. The children achieve very well academically but also acquire Christian values which enable them to grow. As a result, the school is a very happy, vibrant place where everyone wants everyone to achieve their best and know that they are loved by God and each other. One parent described the school as a mustard seed environment. The school's improvement planning and self-evaluation involves all governors and staff. Governors ensure that RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements and monitor the impact of both rigorously. There is a firm and shared understanding and commitment to the next stage on the school's journey. Parents are now involved in the school improvement process and contribute to school improvement through representatives being involved on priority working parties. Parents are welcomed into school and any issues are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Succession planning is secure and has a positive effect on growing future Christian leaders. The headteacher is a National Leader in Education and is able to strengthen the success of St Paul's through work with other schools and the diocese. Recruitment procedures are rigorous and protect the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Opportunities for staff to develop skills, such as leading worship and improving teaching and learning in RE are available in abundance. Partnership with the church and families that the school serves is a particular strength and mutually beneficial. One child explained the impact that the school family has had on her; 'Everyone here feels special. We learn about God and Jesus, then life gets a lot better.' Prayerful and practical support is readily available, which contributes to the wellbeing of the whole community. The children see the incumbent as a valued member of their school family and he makes a significant contribution to the Christian education through teaching RE lessons, leading a weekly Anglican service and planning all worship alongside the worship leader. Families enjoy contributing to the school's teaching of Christian values through the certificate system, which reinforces that these are not school rules, but virtues for life. Partnership with the diocese is a real strength and ensures staff receive support and professional development as well as the school supporting others in the diocesan family of schools.

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