



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Cockerham Parochial Church of England Primary School

Main Street
Cockerham
Lancashire
LA2 0EF

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 22nd October, 2015

Date of last inspection: 28th September, 2011

School's unique reference number: 119525

Headteacher: Jackie Cookson

Inspector's name and number: Susan Cliffe (832)

School context

Cockerham Parochial Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school serving a rural area near Lancaster. At present, there are 83 children on role and numbers are currently rising. The majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. Pupil Premium levels are below average as are the numbers of those with Special Educational Needs. Since the last inspection, there has been a new incumbent along with many governor and staff changes. The children are taught in mixed age classes except in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has received two Diocesan Church School Distinctiveness Awards.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cockerham Parochial as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian character of the school which fosters the nurturing relationships between members of the school community
- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher which has driven school improvement
- The outstanding behaviour of the pupils built upon the firmly embedded Christian values

Areas to improve

- Ensure that involvement of pupils in systematically evaluating the impact of 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
- Raise standards of Religious Education (RE) further by embedding effective systems for monitoring and evaluation

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

Christian values are deeply embedded within school and are related to the life and teachings of Jesus. The governors' Christian distinctiveness sub-committee ensures that the Christian character maintains a high profile. The school is described by the vicar as, 'an arm around you' creating a safe and secure environment with children who are keen to attend. Pupils talk confidently about Christian values and say that they guide how they strive to live their lives. A parent remarked, 'My small child can explain the importance of forgiveness clearly.' Christian distinctiveness is encapsulated in the school mission statement, 'Growing in knowledge, growing in faith, growing in God's love.' The behaviour of the children is excellent and they are very positive about their school. A four year old shared that school made her feel, 'Tee hee hee.' They work in a calm, supportive and respectful atmosphere which contributes to high attainment and progress. Relationships within school are excellent. A teacher commented, 'It is the most supportive school I have ever worked at. Relationships reflect the Christian nature of the school.' Parents feel that school celebrates pupil achievements and that children are treasured as individuals with one stating, 'This is a school where my child can flourish.' Children feel that it is their Christian duty to support those less fortunate than themselves and they are keen to raise funds for charities at home and overseas (such as the Diocesan Vanuatu appeal and Macmillan Fund). Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding with spirituality time, books and areas for reflection having a positive impact upon this development. This has also been enhanced by the introduction of daily ten minute spirituality time. Children state that they are happy to share their prayers out loud because they feel respected. Their moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding and is strengthened by the thought provoking displays seen around school. Children are particularly proud of their 'pebble cairn' which is composed of decorated pebbles belonging to each member of the pupil community. RE contributes to the Christian character of the school and one child expressed enjoyment in being 'challenged to think.' Through RE, the children gain some understanding of Christianity as a multi-world faith. They have a growing knowledge of other faiths and cultures but this is, as yet, not fully developed. School leaders are keen to forge links with other national and overseas schools.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is firmly at the core of daily school life and is enjoyed by the school community. A child stated, 'It is a time for me to think about important things.' At the heart of collective worship are Christian values, the person of Jesus Christ and Bible teachings with a value focused on half-termly. Children know to ask themselves, 'What would Jesus do?' when faced with dilemmas. The vicar and worship co-ordinator are involved in planning of the worship with the growing involvement of the worship group. As a result, provision is more varied. Delivery is good and all teaching staff lead worship with one stating, 'I really enjoy this part of my role.' Children are increasingly involved in acts of worship increasing their ability to promote the Gospel values. The school council, worship group and classes lead worship and the children feel that their suggestions are being increasingly valued. Children are beginning to develop strategies to evaluate worship with the introduction of worship record books. However, this requires more rigor to allow children's views to impact on future developments. The Christian values and Anglican traditions of the school are a major focus of worship but the understanding of global Christianity requires further development. Children are able to relate the three candles on the worship table in the school hall with the Trinity. A pupil explained, 'We change the colours of the altar cloth at different times of the year so it helps us remember special times.' Worship is held in school, church (at special times such as Easter and Harvest) and outside with children enjoying the variety of settings. Behaviour is exemplary and children are attentive and keen to participate. They sing with enthusiasm and are particularly enjoying the lively hymns introduced recently. The vicar leads worship each week and thinks that worship 'is respectful.' The school is a prayerful place with many areas around school having spirituality areas where they can reflect and be still. The Peace Garden is seen by children as a place to go to reflect and pray outside.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupil attitudes to RE are positive. 'I learn to think about the Bible, Jesus and other faiths. The teachers make it interesting,' commented one child. In RE lessons, children are attentive learners, are respectful of others and give thoughtful responses. RE is taught discretely and attainment is in line with national expectations. This is reflected in the RE scrapbooks which show evidence of a range of skills. The books stimulate enthusiasm for the subject amongst pupils and the children are proud of them. Progress is good as a result of good teaching. Lessons are linked to clear learning objectives which are shared and discussed with pupils. Pupils feel that teachers help them in RE by telling them how to improve with effective marking and feedback. The recently appointed RE leader is enthusiastic, works closely with the RE governor and is committed to further improvement. She has set up systems for planning, monitoring and assessment. However, these systems must now be applied with rigor. She is aware of current developments within the subject and regularly attends Diocesan cluster meetings. RE is used to nurture strong spiritual development and the children write reflective and sensitive entries in their individual spiritual books. Following a lesson on being a super Christian, a child reflected, 'If you have faith it changes how you live your life.' RE has become more creative and children enjoy the variety of experiences provided such as lessons from the vicar and drama involving the life of Jeremiah. The children's understanding of other faiths and cultures has improved through the delivery of RE and children are able to explain non-Christian festivals such as Sukkot. Children feel, however, that they would like to learn more about other faiths. 'If you don't know about the beliefs of others, how can you ever understand each other?' remarked one child. RE themed displays are visible around the school and the children are able to talk about them with confidence. A child was able to clearly explain the journeys undertaken by those of many faiths in response to a display on 'Pilgrimages'.

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

The caring, dedicated Christian headteacher has ensured that the Christian vision for the school is lived out across the whole school community. Her faith shines 'through everything she does.' She is ably supported by staff and governors. The governing body is fully aware of the distinctive nature of the school, has received governor training on school improvement planning and is increasingly becoming involved in self-evaluation. They are enthusiastically led by the chair of governors who ensures that they are well informed and provide effective support and challenge. The chair stated, 'Christianity is brought to life here.' The professional development of staff is a priority and the staff team is effective. They appreciate how the Christian values have a positive effect upon all school relationships. 'It is such a happy place to work,' remarked a teacher. The school has good systems for self-evaluation which ensure high levels of achievement and outcomes for pupils. Worship and RE are central to the life of the school and meet statutory requirements. However, RE requires closer monitoring and evaluation by school leaders to ensure further improvement. The behaviour of the children is excellent supported by the behaviour policy based on 'love your neighbour as yourself'. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the child is well developed with the children being given a voice through the school council and the worship group. Extra-curricular provision is good and is described as, 'brilliant fun.' Parents feel welcome and describe school as 'a lovely, nurturing place.' The Parent, Teacher and Friends Association is very proactive and links with the community are strong. School is involved in activities such as the community tea dance and variety performances. Relationships with church have become strengthened and the majority of pupils now worship each Sunday. The two Blackburn Diocesan 'Church School Distinctiveness Awards' received reflect the improved leadership of this church school. There are links with a local school through the Lord's prayer themed 'Labyrinth Project'. Efforts have been made to foster national and global links (by fund raising for charitable works such as Samaritan's Purse and Cancer Care). However, the area does require further focus to embed this understanding further. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.