



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. James' Church of England (VA) Primary School	Greenacre Street Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 1ED
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local Authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	6 October 2016
Date of last inspection	1 February 2012
School's unique reference number	119419
Headteacher	Fiona Pattison
Inspector's name and number	Mark Hamblett 864

School context

St. James' CE School is a larger than average, one and a half form entry primary school serving the town of Clitheroe. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion of disadvantaged children, those supported through the pupil premium, is above the national average and the proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Clitheroe St. James' as a Church of England school are outstanding

- A clear Christian vision is at the heart of all that the school does. The conviction with which this vision is promoted by senior leaders and shared by all members of the school community ensures the school's success in meeting the academic and spiritual needs of all children.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) are central to and effective in supporting children's spiritual development.
- Relationships with the church are very strong and promote a shared Christian vision for development and learning.
- The visionary leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders ensures that the school's Christian character makes an outstanding impact on children's academic achievement and social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that staff, governors, children and their parents are fully engaged in driving forward future developments of the school's distinctively Christian vision and explicitly Christian values.
- Improve prayer and reflection opportunities by developing outdoor worship and reflection areas to complement the high standard of those available indoors and to deepen the children's prayer lives.
- Provide experiences to broaden children's knowledge and understanding of faiths, other than Christianity, through visits to their places of worship.

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

The school's inclusive Christian ethos successfully underpins pupil welfare, exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes to learning and to each other. The school is built on a bedrock of distinctively Christian values and these values are at the heart of all the school does, lavishing Christian love, care and compassion on the whole school family. Children's work and religious symbols are displayed attractively throughout the school. They celebrate the Christian foundation of the school and enhance all aspects of the indoor environment, extending opportunities for prayer, reflection and worship. The Christian character of the school creates a positive, welcoming and supportive atmosphere across the school. Christian values are exemplified by the staff and children and lived out by all. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the education their children receive. This applies particularly with the determination of the school to develop the personal and spiritual development as well as promoting a high level of academic achievement. One parent commented, 'the Christian love and care shown is very impressive.' Children speak very positively about their school and understand the importance of demonstrating Christian values in all aspects of their lives. A Year 5 boy spoke very positively about his prayerful experiences in school, 'This school has taught me to think about how I pray, I enjoy it, talking to God is relaxing and there's always a lot to think about.' The school's deeply Christian character successfully underpins the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children irrespective of their faith background. Behaviour is outstanding and there is a very calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Children are encouraged to show concern for local and world issues as part of the school's Christian service. An example of this is the extensive charity work carried out by the school which supports local and international causes. There are excellent relationships throughout the school community, which is likened to a family, coming together in times of celebration as well as tragedy. Strong pastoral care has clearly had a significant impact on school life, further strengthening links with the Parish Church of St. James. An excellent example is the 'TLG' partnership which supports vulnerable children and their families. School policies, including those for behaviour and anti-bullying strongly reflect the school's Christian ethos and values. Through very high quality RE provision, children possess a high degree of understanding and respect for Christians world-wide, as well as respecting other faiths. Work of this nature readily contributes to children's secure understanding of diversity both locally and globally.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a central feature of school life and is respected and enjoyed by all members of the school community. Children and adults recognise its relevance to their own lives and that of their school. Collective worship is extremely well-led, characterised by strong planning and delivery. It is thoroughly evaluated and is firmly based on Christian values, the church calendar and Bible teaching. Children enjoy and value their worship experiences, both in school and in the local parish church. One child stated, 'There is always a great theme which is guaranteed to make you think.' The worship programme is appropriately extended through regular worship in church, particularly at principal festival times. Collective worship takes a variety of forms and is led by members of staff as well as local clergy and a range of visitors. This variety helps maintain interest and supports the planned programme very well. The support provided by the local church is excellent. This includes the vicar being regularly involved in planning and delivering worship. Children are deeply engaged in worship through reading prayers, answering questions or participating in drama and interactive elements. Children clearly love singing and do so well. They show respect during worship, expressing their joy through their responses and enthusiastic involvement. Children enjoy the opportunity they have to deliver class workshops, however their involvement in planning, leading and evaluating worship is somewhat limited. Children know, understand and use traditional Anglican responses and prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, which is displayed in each classroom. Staff and children are encouraged to write their own prayers, some of which are collected in the school hall on the prayer wall, as well as in individual prayer books in classrooms. This helps the children to understand the value of prayer and reflection. Worship spaces in classrooms are also well used and extend the opportunities for children to think and reflect spiritually. However, dedicated space for outdoor worship and spiritual reflection is somewhat under-utilised. Children understand the threefold nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one child explaining 'I see the Holy Spirit being like a candle. Once we blow out the candle, Jesus' light is still shining, we feel it but we can't see it anymore.' Regular monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is undertaken to drive future improvements and keep themes relevant, interesting and dynamic.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education is afforded great value throughout the school, being planned for and treated as a 'core subject'. Children make extremely good progress in RE and experience a high level of challenge in their learning, as is evidenced in portfolios and children's written work. As a result, standards for all groups of children are in line with those achieved in other core subjects and are high in relation to national expectations. RE impacts on children's personal development and religious and spiritual development positively. Children are actively encouraged to relate the taught subject content to their own lives, with periods of quiet reflective time built into lessons to promote this. Open-ended questions are pondered during RE lessons which extend thinking and reflection effectively. The quality of teaching in RE is outstanding with activities being relevant, varied and inspirational. Consequently children of all ability levels are very well engaged. Written and oral work is of a high standard and participation in activities effective. For example, Year 3 and 4 children can reflect on characters from the Old Testament and their calling from God. Rather than only recounting the stories they are able to discuss the effect on their own lives if they too were to be called by God. Lessons are planned systematically based on diocesan guidelines. Thus there is a correct balance in learning between the teaching of Christianity and other world faiths. Children's understanding of Christian values is hugely enhanced through high-quality RE teaching. Children in Reception are able to talk about why it is important for Christians to share and be generous. With the story of the Feeding of the 5000, the children can link this miraculous act to the school's forthcoming Harvest Festival and are able to discuss the importance of Christian giving, sharing and thankfulness. Similar activities that help children explore the significance of religion for their own lives and in the world are well-balanced. Consistent marking in RE is of high quality, equal to that found in other subjects such as English and mathematics. Responsive feedback challenges pupils to think deeply and provides clear next steps for improvement. 'Fix it Time' is timetabled in order to allow further progress to be made. RE is excellently led and managed with effective support, monitoring and evaluation in place. Clear plans for continued improvement are in place. Leaders accurately acknowledge that children's knowledge and understanding of faiths, other than Christianity, would be further enhanced by visits to their places of worship.

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

The effective and passionate leadership of the headteacher provides a clear vision for sustaining the very strong Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. This is well shared and supported by other leaders, including governors. It is lived out across the school family. The headteacher's Christian faith is evident in all aspects of her leadership. The school community works collaboratively together to ensure the very best outcomes for children. Issues from the previous report have been fully addressed. Staff are well-prepared for working in the church school sector and for future leadership in this and other church schools through excellent in-service training, teamwork, delegation and coaching. The headteacher sees her children as 'the next generation of Church school leaders.' Opportunities are provided to enable the children to contribute to whole-school decisions, through the children's school and worship councils. This contributes very effectively to children's attitudes and behaviour. The school supports and benefits from strong and effective partnerships with parents, the local community and the diocese. There is mutual support and common purpose between the local church and the school, recently enhanced by the employment of a family worker. This important pastoral link is seen as a vital resource and provides a strong and effective link between school and the families it serves. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive, one of them commenting how the headteacher and her staff are prepared to 'go the extra mile, in order to support each and every member of the school family socially, academically and spiritually'. Governors are rightly proud of their school and the rich Christian tradition associated with it. They see the school as the church's 'foot on the ground, transforming the community, constantly building on strong Christian foundations,' as one governor put it. Through their appropriate involvement with school, governors have contributed well to securing a high quality education based on sound Christian values. School leaders including governors value the range of monitoring activities that take place, particularly in relation to collective worship. This means that they have first-hand experience of the work being done to build the spiritual understanding and the academic progress of the children. The school has recognised the need to continue to drive forward future developments based on its Christian vision and values. In keeping with this it has accurately identified the need to extend monitoring and evaluation to involve parents and children.