



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Hoole St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	Liverpool Old Road Much Hoole Preston, PR4 5JQ
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese/Methodist District</b>	<b>Blackburn</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Lancashire
Date/s of inspection	6 October 2016
Date of last inspection	March 2012
School's unique reference number	119570
Headteacher	Jo Duckworth
Inspector's name and number	Gail Fullbrook 530

### School context

Hoole St Michael's is a smaller than average primary school serving a rural community. Most children come to the school from the local area. The majority are of White British heritage and nearly all speak English as their first language. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is significantly lower than the national average. The proportion of children with special education needs is slightly above the national average. In the last two years the staffing structure changed as 3 teachers reduced their contracts to teach part time and a new teacher joined the staff.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hoole St Michael's as a Church of England school are good

- School leaders ensure that Christian principles and practice support a community in which every person is valued and can flourish.
- Children are treated fairly and know that they are precious in the eyes of God and of their school community. As a result, they develop respectful and caring attitudes towards others.
- Christian values lie at the heart of all aspects of school life and make a considerable contribution to the wellbeing of the children.

### Areas to improve

- Formalise and embed a robust process of school self-evaluation of Christian distinctiveness that involves governors, parents, children and staff. This will support the school in celebrating its success as a church school and will guide future developments.
- Develop the monitoring of religious education (RE) to ensure that all units of study are thoroughly and well taught.
- Increase the involvement of children in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship to deepen their understanding of worship and extend opportunities for spiritual development.

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

At St Michael's the wellbeing of the children and their families is central to the school's distinctively Christian ethos and vision. Reflecting the school's mission statement that, 'Christ's love is in everything we do', staff and governors prioritise the wellbeing of the children. They recognise that when children are happy and healthy they learn well, and consequently achievement is good and progress is in line with national expectations. The school's Christian foundation ensures that where there is a concern relating to learning or wellbeing, the response is always to help and support. Issues with absence, punctuality or behaviour are dealt with sensitively and with understanding. Children talk freely about the ways in which the Christian values such as endurance and perseverance support them in their learning. For example, one child spoke of the importance of perseverance in lessons and likened it to the perseverance shown by the disciples as they followed Jesus. Teachers routinely include opportunities to develop understanding of Christian values within lessons. This ensures that spirituality, and the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, are recognised as being as important as academic achievement. The excellent Guardian Angels system, whereby older children befriend and look after younger children, reflects the high level of care that runs through this happy church school. Parents say that their children thrive as a result. Children have a secure understanding of the ways in which Christian values guide their attitudes and very good behaviour. They recognise the links between the values and the stories they hear in worship and RE. Mutually supportive relationships reflect the commitment within the school's mission statement to, 'Building good relationships and friendship through respect, tolerance and understanding.' Children enjoy relating the choices they make to the question, 'What would Jesus do?' They show great respect for one another and talk with enthusiasm about the experience of Christians from other cultures. RE contributes significantly to pupils' understanding of Christian beliefs and effectively supports the school's Christian character and ethos. SMSC, and a respect for diversity and difference, are integral to RE lessons, as is the focus on developing the children's religious literacy. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 2, children talk about Christian themes in an informed and confident way.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is a valued and important part of each school day. It is well planned and has considerable impact on the children's knowledge of Christian teaching. Understanding of the school's Christian values is enhanced through the children's knowledge of a wide range of biblical stories. They reflect thoughtfully on links between the teaching of Jesus and their attitudes, behaviour and relationships with each other. Children speak knowledgeably about Jesus' teaching on judgement, the importance of not bearing grudges and knowing that it is wrong to boast. Spiritual development is nurtured through well-chosen songs and times of prayer and stillness. The children are familiar with a number of traditional prayers and greetings and talk sensitively about the importance of the words in their school prayer. They enjoy writing personal prayers and many speak of the importance of prayer within their daily lives. The children have an age appropriate understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They speak of the importance of the candle lit during worship, saying that it reminds them that Jesus is the light of the world and that he is present with them. Children are encouraged to make contributions within worship, often through drama, but opportunities for children to plan and lead worship are rare. Parents enjoy attending the weekly celebration worship and there is often standing room only when services are held in church. Major Christian festivals and important school occasions are celebrated in church. The link between school and church is seamless and one parent talked of the school, 'Opening doors to faith in such a way that the children want to find out more'. The vicar is a frequent and popular visitor to the school. He leads worship each week and supports school leaders in worship planning. The school is currently trialling a number of ways of involving children and adults in monitoring and evaluating worship. The information gained is then used to support future planning.

## **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Children enjoy RE lessons and make good progress through the school. This leads to standards that are mostly in line with those of other subject areas at the end of Key Stage 2. An enquiry based approach is used which

supports the development of key skills such as interpretation, evaluation and analysis. As a result, children are eager to share their knowledge and understanding of Christianity. However, the children's knowledge and understanding of faiths other than Christianity is not as well developed. This was also a focus for development at inspection in 2012. Teaching is usually good and RE is taught in a creative and interesting way. Children talk with confidence about the importance of special books to believers of a number of different faiths. They have a well-developed understanding of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. In class 2, children are able to differentiate between stories about Jesus and the stories Jesus would have heard as a child. They reflect on the feelings of Biblical characters and use drama to explore why people behaved as they did. During a study of different church buildings, children in class 3 share ideas such as the importance of a welcome team and of places to relax and talk about the stories of Jesus. RE supports the children's understanding of the distinctiveness of their school as a church school. SMSC development and understanding of the school's core Christian values are a key feature of many lessons. Through discussion with children and the monitoring of workbooks and lessons, the coordinator is developing a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are in place although they are not used to track individual progress nor to inform future planning. The subject coordinator gives good support to colleagues and governors are kept informed about key developments and changes to teaching and learning in RE. Where monitoring is effective, it supports teachers in their planning and delivery of RE. However, it sometimes lacks scope and rigour and is then less effective.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors effectively promote the school's Christian foundation. Parents welcome its prominence and talk of Christian understanding as being the, 'everyday language of the school.' One parent commented that, 'this school acts as a Christian school in the care it shows for all the children.' Worship, RE and the school curriculum are all founded on the school's Christian foundation. The impact of Christian values on the children's attainment and personal wellbeing is widely recognised. Children behave well and know that if they make mistakes they will be treated fairly and with love. They in turn are forgiving of others and talk of a new start every day. SMSC development is woven through all aspects of school life. The children raise funds for nominated charities each year and recognise the importance of giving to others. They know that they are valued members of the school and church communities and are keen to talk of the ways in which they support church and school events. School self-evaluation is not sufficiently robust to provide governors with informed and accurate information about the Christian character of the school. As a result, the focus for development identified at the previous SIAS inspection, have not yet been fully addressed. The school has good links with Blackburn Diocese. Members of staff regularly attend local church school briefings and diocesan meetings to ensure that they are well informed about current developments in church school education. Teachers new to working in a church school are given support to understand the importance of Christian values to school life. Children visit Blackburn Cathedral and, through a developing link with a Christian community in Uganda, are learning of the different ways in which God is worshipped across the world. Leadership of RE and worship are given high priority and are led by the newly appointed deputy headteacher. Both areas meet statutory requirements. The professional development of teachers relating to their work in a church school is effective and opportunities are given to all staff to develop their roles and responsibilities.

SIAMS report    October 2016    Hoole St Michael's CE VA Primary School, Much Hoole, Preston    PR4 5JQ