



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Preston St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School**

South Meadow Lane,  
Preston,  
Lancashire.  
PR1 8JN

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

#### **Diocese: Blackburn**

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 18 June 2015

Date of last inspection: 5 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 119358

Headteacher: David Sharkey

Inspector's name and number: Anne B. Woodcock 445

#### **School context**

St. Stephen's is a large voluntary controlled primary school near the centre of Preston. It serves a multi-culturally diverse community in an area of significant socio-economic deprivation. 67% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and over half have English as an additional language. Children from a variety of faith groups attend the school. An above average number of pupils attract the Pupil Premium grant. The school benefits from an extensive environmental learning area.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- Excellent leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders promotes the school's distinctly Christian character and witness within a culturally diverse community.
- Highly effective nurturing relationships, based on Christian values, support pupils and their families. This results in consistently outstanding pupil progress and behaviour.
- Strong, purposeful links with the church and local faith groups make a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' spiritual development.
- Outstanding collective worship, together with excellent multi-cultural education, contribute significantly to pupils' personal and spiritual development.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Develop the way in which governors monitor RE and collective worship to uphold self-evaluation and ensure continued improvement.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship, so that they further develop their understanding of the nature of worship.

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

Children's understanding of Christian values is exceptional. They recognise that Jesus taught people about values, showing how to live and treat others using parables. They also recognise that values are shared across faiths and cultures. Children's outstanding behaviour and sense of personal worth is closely related to the school's well-embedded and explicitly expressed Christian character. Strong, nurturing relationships ably support pupils and their families, helping to overcome barriers and promote active learning. Robust tracking and assessment systems ensure that individual pupil needs are met. Pupils are highly motivated and eager learners. They say that they enjoy their work because teachers make learning fun and are always there to help them. As a result, all pupils make very good progress from their starting points, and standards of attainment are good. Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Older children speak with great confidence and maturity. A Year 6 pupil wrote, 'Help us to have the ability to forgive, even if in the past, we haven't been forgiven. Help us to make the right decision.' The faiths and cultures represented in the school provide an excellent resource for learning about diversity, which the school utilises extremely well. The way in which children share their beliefs and cultures is remarkable. During a lesson about prayer, Muslim pupils acted as experts to demonstrate how Muslims pray. Religious education (RE) makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Lessons challenge and excite pupils. They investigate and reflect, saying that they often talk about things which 'are difficult to get your head around'. They know that Christians worship God in different ways and have a high degree of understanding about diversity and difference. Children recognise their responsibilities to care for God's world and to consider the needs of those who have less than themselves. They are proud of the way in which they raise money to support charities such as Comic Relief.

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

Collective worship is highly valued and enjoyed by pupils and staff of all faiths, because they feel included and inspired. 'It really makes me think about Jesus and God,' stated one older pupil. Worship is firmly based on Christian values and Bible teaching. One Year 6 pupil explained, 'We talk about our values and learn about Jesus and God, but we also know that the values are similar in all our religions.' Children make positive connections between faiths because quotes from the Bible are sometimes matched with verses from other holy texts. 'It doesn't matter which religion you belong to because you always feel included. I'm an atheist but I still get something from worship,' explained an older pupil. Children express their understanding of God as a caring father who loves everyone, no matter what they have done. During worship, one child explained, 'Jesus died for us all and the Holy Spirit is the helper sent by God.' Pupils participate actively in delivering worship, saying that acting out stories helps them to understand and remember the message. Children help to plan the class-led worship attended and valued by parents. The school recognises that the next step is for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship more independently. Worship supports spiritual development extremely well. Children are reflective thinkers and they view prayer as a key feature of daily life. Classroom reflective areas are very well used. Children write and use prayers, many of which are displayed around school. They understand that in praying they talk to God, expressing their thanks and praise. Clergy support the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship. They lead worship regularly and run the weekly Bible club. Children visit the church regularly and have experience of traditional Anglican practices, such as the Eucharist. Collective worship is monitored and evaluated well. Feedback from pupils, staff and visitors leads to ongoing improvement because it focuses on impact. As one pupil wrote, 'Worship changes some of the ways I think and act. I am kinder.'

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

The school is exceptionally well-led. The headteacher and senior leaders inspire and support all members of the school family, ensuring that the school's shared core Christian values are 'lived daily'. Insightful self-evaluation involving staff, governors, pupils and parents informs school improvement planning. As a result, the school has an accurate knowledge of the impact its Christian character has on pupils. Governors challenge and support the work of the school through visits and discussions. However, at present governors do not focus and formally report on, the impact of RE and collective worship. Issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed and the impact of the changes is consistently evaluated. Governors have secured high quality Christian leadership at all levels. The leadership of RE and collective worship is excellent and focuses strongly in continued improvement. Leaders ensure that the curriculum and other provision, such as that of a Learning Mentor, meets the needs of all children, raises aspirations and leads to rising levels of attainment. Staff and governors benefit from purposeful professional development which supports all aspects of school improvement and leadership. Partnerships with the diocese support governor and staff training. The school has extremely positive links with local faith communities. As a result, pupils develop a clear understanding of their place within a culturally diverse community. The respect and trust they have in each other is remarkable. Pupils know that their opinions are valued. They are proud of their achievements and enjoy helping to make decisions. The curriculum supports children's understanding of global issues, such as war and poverty. Parents are highly supportive of the school. They say that their children's personal development is very well-supported by the school's nurturing Christian ethos. One parent explained, 'This school is very inclusive. Christian values are shared with us and the multi-cultural work makes our children more empathetic.'

SIAMS report June 2015 St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School, Preston, Lancashire PR1 8JN