

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Blackburn St. Barnabas and St. Paul's Church of England Primary School	Oakenhurst Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 1SN
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese/Methodist District	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Date of inspection	27 October 2016
Date of last inspection	15 September 2011
School's unique reference number	119499
Headteacher	Carla Martini
Inspector's name and number	Anne B Woodcock 445

School context

The school serves an ethnically diverse community near the centre of Blackburn. It is an area of high deprivation. The vast majority of the 344 pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although most are of Asian heritage, the proportion of children from Eastern European and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds is increasing. 82% are Muslim and over 90% have English as an additional language. The school supports an above average proportion of pupils with additional needs. The proportion of children known to receive the pupil premium grant is well-above average. The school has grown significantly since the last inspection. Accommodation has been extended to provide additional classrooms and office spaces and the building programme continues.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Barnabas and St. Paul's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Pupils' excellent behaviour and extremely positive attitudes to life and learning are clearly linked to their understanding of the school's core Christian values.
- The distinctly Christian leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team, ably supported by dedicated staff and governors, direct and inspire all aspects of school improvement.
- Outstanding nurturing relationships, based on Christian hope and respect, support all pupils and their families and impact strongly on pupils' excellent progress and achievement.
- Extremely effective religious education (RE) contributes significantly to the school's Christian character and to pupils' spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Provide regular occasions for pupils to plan and lead acts of collective worship so that they can fully demonstrate their understanding of the nature of worship.
- Establish an effective link with a school or community in a different country to broaden pupils' understanding of wider world issues and awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith.

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

The school's six core Christian values are extremely well-understood and used by all members of the school family. A Year 4 pupil explained, 'Our values are very important to us. They come from Jesus and they help you improve and become a better person.' Christian hope, friendship, trust and respect are reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and extremely positive attitudes. Children thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life. They are extremely polite and very cheerful. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school because they feel that they can trust staff to provide the best for their children. The school's prime purpose, 'to truly care for each and every child as a unique child of God' is reflected through the high quality of teaching and effective support strategies. This ensures that all pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. The recent appointment of a Family Support Worker demonstrates the school's commitment to meeting the needs of all children. Barriers to learning are broken down through the support provided for pupils and their families. Pupils with additional needs of all kinds are extremely well-supported so many make exceptionally rapid progress. Children are eager, confident learners who collaborate well and are inspired to achieve. They take great pride in their work and standards of attainment are extremely high. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is highly effective. Teachers strive to provide frequent, meaningful experiences through which children explore God's world. For example, the 4D tent is used to provide sensory experiences and bring the wider world into school. Pupils express their ideas creatively using dance, art, drama and prose. They are reflective learners who value the use of their classroom reflective areas. 'We use them to get nearer to God or for when you need a bit of peace,' explained a Year 5 pupil. Children are highly respectful of each other's beliefs and cultures. They have an extremely good understanding of the similarities and difference between the faiths represented in school and studied in RE. They talk confidently about key features of religions, focusing on similarities and respecting differences. As a result, the school's distinctive and inclusive Christian character is consistently reflected.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a valued feature of the daily life of the school. Children enjoy worship, saying that it provides a time for the school to be together as a family and to reflect on God. Worship experiences are inclusive and affirming for pupils, staff and parents. Children particularly enjoy helping to act out or read a story. Themes are based on Christian values and Bible teaching. As a result, children have a good knowledge of Bible stories and of the life and teaching of Jesus. For example, a Year 6 pupil explained that the story of Zacchaeus shows how Jesus changed peoples' lives. They know that Jesus used parables to teach about the values they strive to use every day. Pupils talk about God as a creator who is always there, able to show you the right path. 'God has the world in his hands. He will forgive those who say sorry,' explained a Year 3 pupil. Their understanding of God as Holy Spirit is at an early stage. Links with the church have been strengthened since the last inspection. The vicar is a regular visitor and his telling of Bible stories is enjoyed by all. A church worker is a frequent visitor, supporting worship and prayer. The church is used for services at festival times. Children are familiar with some Anglican traditions. They know the Lord's Prayer and graces. They write and use their own prayers, some of which are displayed in classroom reflection areas. Parents value the regular occasions given for them to share in school worship, particularly the class-led and celebration worship. Older pupils help to set up the worship space and the recently formed worship group is taking responsibility for some aspects of worship. Children help to plan class-led worship. However, the school recognises that the next step is for pupils to regularly plan and lead acts of worship independently. Worship is effectively monitored and evaluated by staff, pupils and governors. Feedback is used to assess impact and inform future planning. For example, when evaluating worship about friendship, some Year 4 pupils wrote, 'We've learned you shouldn't talk about people behind their backs because it is not respectful or friendly.'

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Children really enjoy RE because they are challenged and inspired by their lessons. 'The best things about RE are the different activities we do to help us understand meanings,' explained a Year 6 pupil. Consistently good, often outstanding teaching ensures that all children are able to learn well and make very good progress. Lessons are planned to meet the different needs of all children. The varied approaches excite and support pupils. The enquiry-based approach stimulates independent thinking and promotes the use of key skills, such as investigation and analysis. As a result, standards are high and are in line with those achieved in other core areas. This is reflected in the high quality of pupils' work seen in their work books and class scrapbooks. Their extended writing

in RE is exemplary. Their knowledge of Bible stories is impressive and children refer to Christian values consistently. Through the study of Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, children gain a very well-developed understanding of different cultures and beliefs. 'We accept and respect other people's beliefs and faiths because we know quite a lot about them,' stated a Year 5 pupil. RE is exceptionally well-led. Staff confidence is high because they feel well-supported and resourced. Significant changes made since the last inspection have maintained the high profile of RE and substantially raised standards. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensures that RE continues to improve. Assessment processes are robust and thorough. Pupils are engaged in self and peer assessment. Effective marking shows pupils how to improve their work. Pupil progress is tracked and gaps in learning are identified so that future planning is well-informed. Effective use is made of visits to the cathedral and local church. Visitors from the multi-faith forum support learning during the annual multi-faith weeks, so that pupils gain some first-hand experience of different places of worship and spiritual journeys. RE therefore makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development.

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

The school is exceptionally well-led by the headteacher and senior leaders. They inspire and support staff extremely well, sharing their passion and vision to provide the best possible Christian environment in which children can achieve and 'be the best they can be'. The school provides outstanding support for pupils and their families, exemplifying Christian hope and trust and extending learning for all. This is recognised by parents as being a key feature. One parent explained, 'We are made to feel part of the school and of our children's learning. Everyone is there to help.' Governors know the school well. They visit regularly, meeting children, teachers and parents. They monitor and evaluate the work of the school robustly. Feedback informs school improvement planning and leads to ongoing improvement in all aspects of church school improvement. Governors have secured excellent leadership for RE and collective worship, which are both well supported, resourced and meet statutory requirements. Governors ensure that the needs of all pupils are met through the effective use of financial and human resources. Issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed and the impact of changes has raised standards and enhanced the school's Christian character. Links with the local church, cathedral and multi-faith community are positive and supportive. The strategic development of the school is secure because staff are extremely well-supported and trained. Partnerships with the diocese and the local school improvement group support staff and governor training and curriculum development. Pupils are confident that their opinions are valued and acted upon. They relish their responsibilities and take pride in their charitable activities. 'We help people who are struggling with life because that is what God wants us to do, to show friendship and love to others,' explained a Year 5 pupil. They talk maturely about issues such as war in Syria and the need for food banks. Although pupils are fully aware of the diverse nature of their community, they have limited understanding of global communities. The school recognises that an effective link with a school or community elsewhere would enhance provision in this area.

SIAMS report October 2016 St. Barnabas & St. Paul's Church of England Primary School, Blackburn BB2 1SN