



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

### Leyland St James' Church of England Primary School

Slater Lane  
Leyland  
Lancashire  
PR26 7SH

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015

Date of last inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009

School's unique reference number: 119476

Headteacher: Lilian Taylor-Bell

Inspector's name and number: David Thorpe 461

#### School context

St James' is a growing primary school which is currently moving from being a one form entry school to a temporary two form entry and is undergoing major building work. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the number of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant is below average. The school operates a nurture facility and inclusion unit for children with a variety of emotional and behavioural needs. All pupils experience a wide variety of planned outdoor learning activities each week through the Forest Scheme initiative.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Leyland St James' as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inclusive nature of the school is a response to the Christian values adopted by the school and enables the strong personal development of each child.
- The commitment of leaders, including governors and children, means that the school is continually looking at ways that it can improve as a Church of England school.
- Very strong links exist between the school and the church resulting in a harmonious and vibrant worshipping community where the love of God is shared widely.
- The outstanding behaviour of the children, and their care for each other, reflects their understanding of Christian trust, justice and hope.

#### Areas to improve

- Improve the theological understanding behind each of the school's Christian values in order to
  - a. Increase teacher confidence when linking values to the RE units of work
  - b. Further develop the children's understanding of the distinctive Christian nature of each value
- Develop the outdoor environment as an additional place for worship, thus enriching the

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

Leyland St James' is clearly a Christian school where the children achieve well and when compared to similar schools make good progress. The children are happy and feel very safe. This is a result of the adopted Christian values being fully lived out in all areas of school life. The Christian nature of the school clearly informs its approach to behaviour resulting in high levels of attendance and no exclusions. The school actively promotes, and successfully manages, a very inclusive ethos where children know that they will receive a second chance should the need arise. As a result of this the children speak with great confidence about what it means to forgive and be forgiven. The excellent behaviour of the children enhances relationships with pupils genuinely caring for each other and living out the values of friendship, peace and trust. The children are very aware that they attend a Church of England school and speak with enthusiasm and confidence about the difference that belonging to a Christian school makes. One pupil states, 'We're different because we value everyone, we show this by including everyone no matter who they are or what they believe.' Parents are very supportive of the school and its distinctly Christian character with one parent commenting that, 'I deliberately chose the school because it was a Christian school.' Another parent stated that she had three children at the school and had 'never had any problems'. She put this down to the fact that, 'the school's Christian values are lived out by everyone on a daily basis.' The children are taught about different faiths and denominations and the school arranges visits to other places of worship in order that children may meet people of a different faith and culture. As a result they develop a good understanding of and respect for other diverse communities.

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

Acts of worship at Leyland St James are outstanding because they allow the children to understand the way in which faith is central to how a person leads their life and the difference that their faith can make. All staff, including teaching assistants lead worship, with the vicar leading worship each week. Collective worship is very well planned by the head, deputy and the vicar. By providing a common focus and structure it allows for individual worship leaders to interpret the theme and add their own individuality. The themes selected follow the church calendar and link in particularly well with the school's core values. The worship leaders, which includes the children, appreciate this and as a result all members of the school experience a rich and varied diet of worship experiences. The children enjoy worshipping in the church regularly throughout the year and this leads to a clear understanding of Anglican tradition and practice. The outdoor environment is well used although it is not utilised for worship. Worship underpins the high aspirations that the school has for its pupils and inspires high levels of moral and spiritual development. A pertinent example being on the day of the inspection, the collective worship challenged the children to consider that God is the one who can be trusted all the time whilst humans can let others down. Since the previous inspection children are taking an increasing role in the leading and evaluation of worship, which has led to the worship being a more meaningful experience for them. A good example being that of Education Sunday 2015 where the children planned and led the Sunday service in church. They are very keen to do more and know that their teachers will welcome this and encourage them. During worship the children sing beautifully and with enthusiasm. The adults engage particularly well with the worship being excellent role models. Collective worship is recognised as 'the bedrock' on which future school improvement will be built. The children confidently explain why worship is such an important part of their lives, one child commented that 'Worship helps us to be faithful to what we believe as Christians.' The school and church have identified common songs and liturgy that are used in both places of worship. This has led to relevant and accessible worship being enjoyed and valued by the school and church community. The school promotes an understanding of the Trinity and children speak confidently about the three aspects of God and the Biblical events that have revealed them. Following the church seasons allows each part of

the Trinity to be given a clear focus. Worship is monitored regularly by governors through the Ethos and Distinctiveness committee and this is reported to the full governing body. As a result foundation governors have a clear understanding of recent developments in worship and the plans to enhance it further.

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

Standards in RE, for the vast majority of children, are good and there is an effective balance between teacher-led and child-centred activities. RE is led and managed effectively. The diocesan syllabus provides the children with a varied and engaging curriculum that they appreciate and enjoy and the school has benefitted from high quality support from the Blackburn Diocesan Education Department. The syllabus is supplemented with other resources that focus on Christianity and the understanding of other faiths. One child said, 'often in RE we also do drama or art or poetry and this makes it more interesting and fun.' The teaching of RE is good and as a result the children make good progress. One example being in Year 3 where the children were finding out about food laws in Judaism. The children, through the careful questioning of the teacher were engaged and eager to complete their research tasks. Standards of attainment for the large majority of children are comparable with other core subjects. Senior leaders are relentless in monitoring the children's work leading to a clear picture of the standards within the subject. This has given teaching staff greater confidence in assessing children's attainment and progress. The children respond positively to the feedback of their work that teachers provide. This helps the children make good progress because they know what they need to do to improve their work. One reception child, while making a very detailed observational drawing of a flower, commented 'God made every flower in the world different.' Whilst in a Forest School session, where the children were planting seeds, they were challenged to answer the question, 'Who put the information in the seed so that it would grow?' This question helped the children to demonstrate their spiritual understanding. The theological understanding behind each of the school's values is not yet fully developed and this limits the contribution of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the children. The contribution of Religious Education (RE) is having a positive impact on the language skills of the children as they are becoming more confident in their use of religious language.

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

Leaders at all levels are determined to ensure that the adopted core values impact on all areas of school life. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met and governors regularly discuss the impact that these have on the school community. Foundation governors clearly challenge the school to continually improve in its Christian distinctiveness. They visit school regularly to monitor a wide variety of aspects of the school. Their findings are shared with the Distinctiveness and Ethos Committee, who in turn report to the full governing body. This has resulted in the school's vision being understood by all involved and, as a result, the school is rapidly developing into a self-improving Church school. Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate picture of where the school is currently at in relation to the inspection schedule. They have identified where they want to be in the future. Effective plans are in place to achieve the vision and are an integral part of the overall School Improvement Plan (SIP). Part of the SIP identifies training and support to prepare future church school leaders. One example being the attendance of the deputy head on the year long Christian Leadership Course run jointly by the five north western dioceses. Leyland St James' is an inclusive place of learning which reflects the school's mission statement, 'A Christian family where everyone is valued, children achieve and the future begins.' Governors and children speak confidently about the impact of Christian values on the life of the school, and the wider community. One governor stated that since Christian values were adopted it has "given a clear Christian focus to each class and the school as a whole that was missing before." The responsibility for the writing of the self-evaluation toolkit is shared between relevant staff and coupled with appropriate training, has enabled school leaders, including governors to gain a thorough understanding of church school leadership. Parents hold the school in very high

regard. Their views on its effectiveness and character are sought, respected and where appropriate acted upon. They speak enthusiastically of how they see their children cared for individually and, as a result, grow academically, morally and spiritually. The relationship between school and church is excellent, they share expertise, resources and buildings. They could be described as a 'split site church', or a 'split site school' such is their closeness of working together for the community that they serve.

SIAMS report July 2015 Leyland St James, Slater Lane, Lancashire PR26 7SH