



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Philip's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Leeds Road Nelson Lancashire
BB9 9TQ

Previous SIAS grade:	Satisfactory
Current inspection grade:	Good
Diocese:	Blackburn
Local authority:	Lancashire
Date of inspection:	3 December 2015
Date of last inspection:	October 2011
School's unique reference number:	119437
Headteacher:	Kathryn Ellidge
Inspector's name and number:	Ruth Wall (548)

School context

St Philip's is a below average-sized primary school with 140 children on roll. It is situated in an urban area, just outside the town centre of Nelson. Most children are of Pakistani heritage. The percentage of children who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. The proportion of children who are known to be eligible for free school meals and receive the pupil premium is below the national average. The proportion of children with a statement of special educational needs is also below average. The local parish church (St John's) is situated a 20 minute walk away. St Philip's Church building, nearby, is no longer a church but functions as a community centre.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Philip's as a Church of England school are good

- The commitment of senior leaders, governors and staff to provide an inclusive education, based on Christian values, underpins the very good relationships between all members of the school community.
- The distinctive Christian ethos very effectively nourishes and encourages the high standard of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.
- The strong relationship with the parish church promotes a shared Christian vision for spiritual development and learning.

Areas to improve

- Develop children's confidence and skills to make challenging, evaluative comments that will lead to school improvement in collective worship.
- Build on good practice in religious education (RE) planning to ensure that children gain a more meaningful understanding of religion through the development of analysis and interpretation, enquiry and reflection skills.
- Develop the role of the governors in embedding a more structured approach to self-evaluation and monitoring of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school.

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

'We love to learn. We learn to love. With Christ as our guide, we love and learn together', is the mission statement that shapes the thinking of the school. Firmly established Christian values influence all aspects of school life. Ongoing encouragement and reward is proving successful in improving the rates of attendance. Behaviour management is consistently linked to the school's core Christian values. Parents affirm that this helps to influence children's attitudes at home. Pupils know that any issues are dealt with promptly and fairly and, as a result, they are confident and feel valued. In this secure and happy environment children have positive attitudes to learning. The school is effective in using data to track children's achievement and put in place intervention strategies to ensure they achieve their targets. From lower than average starting points, their overall progress is good. The school demonstrates that it is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity. A Muslim member of staff said, 'Christian values are demonstrated well with balanced consideration for other faiths'. Children are made aware that Christianity is a global world faith through the involvement of the Pais organisation. Christian students from different parts of the world, and from different denominations, regularly lead collective worship and a popular interactive lunchtime club. A student commented, 'We have found openness, interest and respect among the children'. RE makes a valuable contribution to the Christian character of the school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good as a result of the focused Christian perspective given to planning across the curriculum. This includes appreciating the awe and wonder of God's creation and their responsibility in caring for it. Colourful displays and Christian signs and symbols, inside and outside the school, emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support the children's spiritual awareness and development very well. The emphasis placed on fundraising for those less fortunate is an important focus for the school and prepares children to become responsible citizens. They link their care for others to the way Jesus demonstrated the values of service and compassion.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship holds an important place in the life of the school. It is inclusive and valued by all. The school community benefits from a varied experience of worship led by a range of people. With their sister school, Great Marsden, St John's, leaders plan themes around Christian values, the Bible and major Christian festivals. Worship provides the opportunity for quiet reflection and prayer, and children respond well and respectfully to this. The quality of singing is excellent and enhances the worship experience. Children have a good understanding of the nature of worship and Christian traditions and practice. Worship enables children to develop an understanding of the qualities of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the themes, songs and stories included in the planning cycle. The children's worship group are enjoying developing their skills in planning and leading whole school worship. Evaluations made by staff and governors have initiated change and led to school improvement. Children contribute their thoughts in a journal. However, they have not yet developed the confidence and skills to make challenging, evaluative comments that will lead to school improvement. Reflection and prayer are important aspects of worship. Formal prayers are said, including 'The Lord's Prayer' and the school prayer written by the worship group. There are examples of children's personal prayers and those written together in class worship. These include one written by Reception children asking that God would help the school council make the right decisions. The close partnership with the local parish church enriches worship. A Year 6 girl said of the vicar, 'She's really interesting and kind'. The children also enjoy the regular input from the church youth leader who, one Year 6 boy said 'teaches us lots, in a fun way'. There is positive feedback from parents who respond to the invitation to join their children in special services in St John's Church and the weekly celebration services.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Children speak positively about their enjoyment of RE. A variety of effective teaching and learning strategies are used, including role play, art and craft, sensory activities and multi-media resources. An open and affirming teaching style was demonstrated by a Key Stage 2 teacher. He successfully encouraged children to express their thoughts orally and in their own poetry, on the true meaning of

Christmas. In a Key Stage 1 lesson children were guided in developing skills to show empathy for Jesus and Mary as they travelled to Bethlehem. Early Years children benefit from using the Chatter-box resources to help them learn about the significance of Bible stories. The new subject leader, supported by a senior leader, monitors RE using observations, book scrutiny and cross-checking of standards. The RE link governor is involved in monitoring and evaluating of standards and practice in RE. This includes learning walks to assess the quality of classroom RE displays. Children make good progress, as is evidenced in portfolios, written work and in their oral responses. The RE action plan correctly identifies that the next step for improvement is to introduce additional opportunities for children to gain a deeper understanding of religion. The subject leader is supporting teachers in developing children's understanding of the impact of religion on believers through enquiry, analysis and interpretation, evaluation and reflection skills. There is a timetable for on-going monitoring and evaluation of this school improvement action. A system for assessing children's achievements is now used effectively to track progress and determine next steps in learning. Marking gives children a clear indication of how their work can be improved and they respond appropriately in the 'fix-it time' given to do this. The school has benefitted from the RE diocesan adviser's support in affirming good practice. Children have a good knowledge of Christianity and the life and work of Jesus. They make links between the beliefs and practices of faiths, other than Christianity, through units of work and visits from people of other faiths. As children progress through the school their knowledge and understanding deepens as they learn about a different faith in each class. Each year the whole school takes part in an RE day of activities which enables them to share learning about other faiths together. Pupils record in their own RE books and additional good quality class portfolios contain evidence of group work, visitors, photographs, questions and reflective comments.

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

The headteacher's Christian vision is supported by the school community and lived out in action. She is committed to developing the staff team who work hard to ensure that distinctive Christian values permeate all areas of school life. The mission statement has recently been thoughtfully revised and, together with high quality policies, emphasises the Christian character of the school extremely well. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and use their various skills to very good effect. However, they have not developed formal procedures for self-evaluation and strategic planning of the school as a church school. Issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed through effective school development. Provision is made for staff to attend training in order to support the Christian character of the school and to help build leadership skills for the future. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian qualities of the school and speak highly of the respect with which they and their children are treated. One parent summed up the thoughts of many, 'This school goes above and beyond for any child, no matter what religion they are'. Parents appreciate the school involving them in special Christian services and school activities. These include 'Friday Friends' where they enjoy sharing activities with the children and other parents. There are numerous examples of how the parental liaison officer provides invaluable support of a practical and pastoral nature to individuals and families. Her work is rooted in the Christian ethos of the school. Older children take their responsibilities seriously, including their important decision-making and actions through the school council and Pendle Pupil Parliament. Children speak with pride about working with the local council and the police in a task to improve road safety outside their school. The input from the parish church makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school and presents a positive image of the church. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. The high level of pastoral care is rooted in Christian love and has had a significant impact on the school community who have united together during challenging times.

SIAMS report, December 2015, St Philip's Church of England Primary School, Nelson, BB99TQ