



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Kirkham St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane

Kirkham

Preston

PR4 2SL

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 30 June 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 119550

Headteacher: Margaret Long

Inspector's name and number: Gail Goodman (571)

School context

Kirkham St Michael's is a slightly smaller than average size primary school of 154 pupils in the market town of Kirkham. There are seven classes and an independently run breakfast and after school club. Most of the pupils are White European. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the Lancashire average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. The headteacher has been in post for seven years. St Michael's Church is situated directly across the road from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirkham St Michael's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian values and ethos, and the demonstration of God's love, through care and compassion, guide all aspects of school life.
- Children of all faiths and none are fully engaged in both worship and religious education (RE). Highly effective teaching leads to outstanding levels of spiritual development.
- The headteacher and staff, supported effectively by the governors, use a system of self evaluation based on a distinctive Christian vision. This leads directly to effective planning and school improvement.
- Links with the parish church are strong, so families value the care, support and guidance that school and church offer.

Areas to improve

- Provide experiences within the school building, and grounds, to promote the Christian distinctiveness of the school and places for pupils to pray and reflect.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting

the needs of all learners

The school places great emphasis on Christian values which are deeply embedded in the life of the school. All members are highly aware of these values, such as compassion, forgiveness and tolerance, and how they make the outstanding educational provision at this school so exciting. Staff and children respect each other, are cared for and nurtured to reach their full potential. Exemplary relationships between all learners demonstrate the key role that Christian values play within school. Pupils comment that, 'we are like a big family and look after each other'. This is evident in the use of peer mentoring roles where older pupils have responsibilities for others, and also for practical jobs, such as church assistants. Christian distinctiveness has a significant impact on personal, health and social education, (PHSE). As a result, pupils excel in academic achievement and in their own personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. The impact of this is seen in exceptionally high results in all pupils. One parent comments, 'the school reaches out to the community like a family and is dedicated to the children – this is a happy school'. This is borne out by the high levels of attendance and excellent behaviour, which confirms the distinctively Christian characteristics of the school's values. Indeed, the vice chair of governors explains, 'we turn out well-adjusted children who are prepared for a wider community of different faiths...the staff are very caring and engaged with parents and families'. RE has a significant impact on all learners' spiritual development. This is evidenced in active discussion and willingness to ask questions, demonstrating insight and deepening faith issues. The school is developing a link with a local missionary serving in an African school. Pupils are aware of differences and diversity within their faith community. This is seen in their engaging and respectful displays in school. Local school links involve a school in Oldham where pupils are of the Islamic faith, and pupils are building strong relationships through ongoing and proactive communication. Pupils enjoy many extra-curricular activities, such as choir, sport, music and dance. Children are proud to be chosen as members of the school council and a highly effective eco council, helping others both in and outside of school. This includes the many charities which have benefitted through the school's generosity such as, The Children's Society, Air Ambulance and Comic Relief. Pupils recognise the importance of the school's logo and mention the importance of, 'Jesus dying on the cross for others'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Inspirational and inclusive collective worship is an important focal point of this school community, permeating all aspects of school life. Worship themes which influence spiritual reflection are used in planning. Full account is taken of the Christian calendar and the significance of practising Christian values. This enables all worshippers to encounter a wide range of Anglican tradition and practice, such as bidding prayers and responses. Children, staff and governors take an active part in the daily act of praise and speak very positively of its significant value in school. Children reflect, 'our values in school are kindness, respect, compassion and humility. We know this through the prayers we say, our worship, displays around the school and prayer week'. Monitoring, evaluation and self assessment is rigorous and well structured, thereby keeping worship fresh and stimulating. Pupils and parents attend worship in church on a monthly basis and also for celebrations, such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Links with the church community are strong. The parish priest conducts a weekly service in school for parents and children which is well attended. Parents say they 'value the close links with the church'. One Year 6 child explains, 'we enjoy our minister's stories – he teaches us about Jesus and the friendships we share in and out of school'. Staff and children celebrate a half termly Eucharist. An annual prayer week, assisted by a visiting Sister from a Christian Order, this year, involved church presentations by the children. They reported that they enjoyed doing the research and 'expressed a wish to look more at different religions and cultures'. Children enjoy leading and taking part in worship, demonstrating how they have moved on from the last inspection. Weekly class worship continues from the parish priest's service the previous day, involving the story of The Widow's Mite. Pupils reflect upon the question, 'do you have to have lots of money to be rich inside', and 'what do you value the most?' Children offer instances of family, friends and the importance of love and compassion.

This is seen in the children's work and play in school. Indeed, one Year 6 child explains the context of the weekly awards collective worship in that, 'because we value each other we have Star of the Week on a Friday'. There is a strong link with St Michael's Church. The parish priest demonstrates the close relationship within the community, in his comments, 'Staff are working as a team toward a good, meaningful, Christian spirituality, of which they have taken ownership'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a high profile within the school's curriculum. Outstanding teaching and rigorous assessment ensure standards are exceptionally high in line with core subjects. RE is given full status, as a core subject, with high levels of attainment and progress. Pupils reflect upon the thoughts, feelings and actions during RE and worship. The teaching of Christianity is given prominence, following the Diocesan syllabus well. Many interactive thought-provoking displays around school emphasise the impact and structure of other world-wide faiths. Year 3 study the meaning of the Five Pillars of Islam. They consider the meaning of prayer and reflect upon what might be the rules for Christians were they to adopt five pillars of Christianity. Pupils respond with such values as tolerance, friendship, love and forgiveness, including empathy. One child describes empathy as, 'feeling what someone else feels'. Children are able to apply their knowledge and skills to think more clearly. Year 1 pupils experience a Baptism in the Church, and are able to fully engage in the role play. They ask searching questions of the minister, and recognise the blessing, 'God loves you and will never let you go'. Teachers use innovative techniques to make learning fun, as well as challenging for all learners. Planning, monitoring and assessment are well organised by the co-ordinator. She plans a rich and varied curriculum which meets statutory requirements. A week devoted to prayer recently involved pupils considering the impact of Christians who live their lives for others, including Mother Theresa, Pope John II, and Martin Luther King. One child reported that the values displayed by these Christians, 'help us to be the kind of person that God made us'.

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

The explicit Christian vision that is articulated so well by the leadership team, including governors, is demonstrated by all staff, who live out the Christian vision daily. They readily articulate the impact of explicit Christian values on the life of the whole school community. The leadership of RE and worship is given high priority, and these areas of school life fully comply with statutory requirements. The mission statement, 'Following Jesus Together, Learning, Growing and Living', is played out daily resulting in high standards and pupils' wellbeing. This is reflected in annual parents' surveys where, recently, all parents cited the school as having a 'caring attitude... and that their child is treated fairly and well cared for'. Parents are very proud of the school, and joint events with the church are well attended, enriching the life of both. There is a regular link with the Diocesan clergy and visitors of world faiths. Through regular visits, the parish priest and governors show their commitment in supporting the explicit Christian ethos. Highly experienced governors monitor performance and achievement and challenge and support the headteacher and staff. Strategic and successive planning ensures highly effective leadership in both staff and governors. All issues raised have been successfully addressed. These include evaluation and assessment by all learners, and rigorous tracking. This is evidenced by a clear cycle of school improvement, including regular pupil progress interviews. The school has accurate self evaluation in place which fully informs future development. Kirkham St Michael's Church of England Primary School has worked hard, and very successfully, to put children at the heart of its mission.

SIAMS report, June 2016, Kirkham St Michael's CE (VA) School, Kirkham, PR4 2SL

