



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Thurnham Glasson Christ Church, Church Of England Primary School

School Lane
Glasson Dock
Lancaster
LA2 0AR

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 22 April 2016

Date of last inspection: 13 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 119543

Headteacher: Gillian Thomas

Inspector's name and number: Tracy Heys 831

School context

Thurnham Glasson Christ Church, Church of England Primary school is a small voluntary aided primary school serving Glasson Dock and South Lancaster. There are currently 37 pupils on roll who are taught in two mixed age classes. The head teacher has a 75% teaching commitment enabling the Key Stage 2 class to be taught in two smaller groups for much of the time. A short OFSTED inspection in February 2016 found that the school 'continues to be good'.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Thurnham Glasson Christ Church as a Church of England school are good.

- The strong leadership of an inspirational head teacher supported and challenged by an effective governing body, enables the Christian character of the school to consistently inform its approach to all aspects of school life.
- A caring and supportive Christian environment has been established so that everyone is valued as a unique child of God and all are stimulated to achieve their full potential.
- The Christian ethos evident in the school makes a significant contribution to the excellent behaviour of the pupils.

Areas to improve

- Involve the whole school community in the monitoring and evaluation of worship to identify where improvement is needed.
- Raise the profile of prayer in the daily life of the school enabling all to understand the value of prayer on their own spiritual journey.

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

Christian values are at the centre of all the school's work. Those values on which the school focuses most have recently been reviewed. Pupils are beginning to understand the Christian teaching and beliefs underpinning these values. The Christian character of the school makes a significant impact on attendance. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to this loving and supportive church school. The head teacher's approach of caring for and encouraging each child because 'they are written on God's hand and my service is to do the best for Him' shines through the whole school. The drive for high attainment is steered by the belief of both the leadership of the school and staff at all levels that each pupil is 'a unique child of God'. Data indicates that many pupils achieve above national expectations. Through the provision of a tailored curriculum the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil are identified and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced. The pupils feel valued, safe and secure and this enables them to question and wonder about themselves and the world in which they live without the fear of getting things wrong. Older pupils readily support their younger peers and there is excellent behaviour both in and out of school. The local community comment on the good behaviour of pupils from the school. One local resident said 'they are so polite and helpful, they really live out what Christians should do.' Through their work of raising funds for charities such as Christian Aid and Water Aid the pupils have some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. The religious education (RE) curriculum facilitates pupils' spiritual awareness and understanding of the Christian faith and other religions studied. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and recognise that people have different beliefs but 'that should not stop us all being kind to each other' said a Year 6 pupil.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The rich and varied daily acts of worship are central to school life and are highly valued by the whole school community. Pupils say that they enjoy worship and can talk about how worship helps them with other aspects of their lives. They particularly enjoy worshipping outside. A Year 2 pupil said 'it is good to have collective worship outside in the sunshine where you can see and hear everything God has made, although He didn't make the boats.' The content of collective worship has a clear influence on the school day with the messages introduced having a positive impact on the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. The pupils are very familiar with the use of the Bible in worship. Pupils were able to name some of the characters in the Bible who showed endurance, one of the school's values. They can link this to times when they endure, a year 4 pupil saying, 'I keep trying when my spellings are hard.' The vicar plays an integral role in the worship of the school community. He leads worship on a weekly basis in the school and the pupils are regular visitors to the church. Candles are used regularly to help the pupils remember that worship is a very special time. Pupils are aware of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Key Stage 2 pupils used the imagery of a tree with roots, trunk and branches to explain that each element was part of the same thing. Pupils are gradually taking increased responsibility for different aspects of worship. Sometimes pupils lead worship and often contribute their own prayers during worship led by others. Prayer is used at lunchtime and the end of the school day. There is a Bible garden in the school and pupils are taken here for moments of reflection and contemplation. There is little evidence of pupils making use of prayer in their own lives and there are few prayer spaces in the school. The evaluation of worship is mainly carried out by the head teacher and there is evidence that this is used to make improvements to worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Most pupils make good progress in RE and the standards attained are in line with national expectations and sometimes above. There is a clear balance between learning about and learning from RE. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the good teaching across the school enables them to develop effective questioning, analysis and interpretation skills. A wide range of

teaching strategies are used to engage and motivate pupils. The youngest pupils particularly enjoy acting out stories from the Bible and some can identify the important parts of the story. When acting out the Last Supper a pupil said 'when Jesus broke the bread it was because His body was going to be broken'. Pupils can make the links between belief and practice. Many are able to clearly articulate why Christians act as they do. There is an effective assessment procedure in place which is understood by even the youngest pupils. Older pupils are able to articulate how they could make their work better. A year 6 boy said 'if you describe how people feel and not just what they do you will move higher up the ladder.' There is evidence that the RE curriculum contributes to the Christian values of the school. When discussing the work of some Christian charities that they had been taught about in RE pupils could make the link between this and compassion, which is one of the school's chosen values. The head teacher both teaches RE and monitors the teaching of her colleagues. There is now an appropriate RE curriculum in place which enables pupils to explore and experience a range of cultures and faiths.

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

The leaders of the school have established a distinctively Christian vision which is evident in all aspects of school life. The governing body knows the school well because of both the effective sharing of information by the head teacher and their insightful challenge. There is a clear focus for improvement which is underpinned by the Christian ethos of the school. Every child is challenged and supported to achieve the best they can be. The pupils have a good understanding of 'what would Jesus do?' This approach ensures that their behaviour is of a very high standard and they know how to repair relationships when things go wrong. One pupil said 'Not many children get to red because we are given chances to make things better if we do something wrong'. A creative approach ensures that the curriculum is broad and balanced. The planning in Key Stage 1 is particularly strong in making links between the themes introduced in collective worship and other aspects of the curriculum. This enables the distinctively Christian nature of the school to be deeply rooted and lived out in every part of the school day. Many parents choose to travel some distance to this school initially because of its small size. Once the pupils are in school parents say that the leadership of the head teacher in creating the Christian ethos in the school is one of the school's many strengths. One parent said, 'She treats everyone as you would expect Jesus to'. The excellent links between the church and the school are mutually beneficial. Members of the congregation are regularly involved in the life of the school for example through the community lunches held in school. The vicar and other clergy are much-valued members of the school community and pupils comment on the good relationships. The school has made effective provision for professional development of the staff in school including the support for those who may aspire to becoming future leaders of church schools. The head teacher is a very positive role model as the leader of both collective worship and RE. Support from the Diocese and links with local school enable her to keep up to date with current developments. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed.

SIAMS report April 2016 Thurnham Glasson Christ Church, C of E Primary School LA2 0AR