



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Singleton CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road

Singleton

Lancashire

FY6 8LN

Diocese: Blackburn

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 13 November 2014

Date of last inspection: January 2010

School's unique reference number: 119560

Headteacher: Amanda Clayton

Inspector's name and number: Mike Graham 286

School context

The school is of below average size and is situated in the rural village of Singleton, close to the church of St Anne's. Most of the children travel to school from surrounding villages. The number of children with Special Educational needs is about average. The proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. A new school hall has been added since the last inspection, and the headteacher has been in post for four years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Singleton Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher gives outstanding Christian leadership and is supported wholeheartedly by all the staff. Attainment as well as spiritual development has improved significantly during recent years.
- Christian values are lived out in the excellent relationships in the school family which results in exemplary behaviour.
- Worship is central to the spiritual life of the school. It is sincere, varied and relevant and has a deep impact on the whole community.
- The co-ordinator for Religious Education (RE) leads with commitment, passion and careful planning. The children's understanding of faith and its impact is outstanding.

Areas to improve

- Extend the prayer life of the school so that individuals are enabled to deepen this area of their lives.
- Improve the children's understanding of the breadth and variety of Christian worship worldwide, in order to encourage them to lead in worship with depth and to bring in new ideas.

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

The school's loving and caring Christian ethos creates a secure and joyful context within which all the children are enabled to give of their best. The Christian values of love, endurance, friendship, trust, caring and wisdom are lived out here, and are far more than ideas in the mission statement. There is therefore no fear of failure, and the enthusiasm with which the children tackle their work and life in school leads to outstanding academic and personal development. Attainment is remarkable, with statistics showing that this school is in the top 20% in the country. The rate of progress for children of all abilities is exceptional, and a closer look at the data shows that the overall results for English and mathematics places them in the top 2%. The fact that each child is seen as 'a unique gift from God' is significant. From a child's perspective, security comes from knowing 'that Jesus is always with you'. The Christian character of the school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the children extremely well. Excellent teaching and role modelling from all the staff lead to outstanding maturity and growth in these areas. All are warmly welcomed and fully included. RE teaching on diverse faiths is thorough and inventive, and the children understand the value of this work. A Year 6 boy commented 'It helps us understand them. There are so many different people, we're all unique'. Children and adults are polite and respectful, yet full of life and joy in learning and growing together. The children's behaviour is impeccable, and one girl commented 'we do what the values tell us to do!' Relationships amongst all members of the school community demonstrate Christian values superbly. Parents readily attribute this to the close links with St Anne's Church and the Christian values at the heart of the school's life. One said that these links and the values '...are more important than I had imagined!'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship takes pride of place in the life of the school. It is inspiring, sincere and relevant, with variety in content, style and leadership. Everyone in the school community places great value on the acts of worship, readily acknowledging the impact it makes on their lives. A Year 5 girl said that during an act of worship on the 'Stations of the Cross' she '...felt connected to God and Jesus'. Christian values, Bible stories and readings, reflection, prayer, drama and wonderful singing all contribute. The worship is distinctively Christian, with Jesus at the centre. His life and teachings are the basis for the values chosen each half term as themes for worship and for the whole of school life. Personal spiritual development is enhanced through a strong focus on prayer. Prayer tree, class prayer books and class worship all encourage children to write their own prayers. Reflective, prayerful times are not limited to morning worship, but are sprinkled through the day as appropriate. Children pray during lessons when encouraged to do so, but spontaneous prayer from children is rare. The children's understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is impressive in its maturity. They have a sense of the wonder of 'God in three Persons'. They speak easily and with reverence of God the Creator and Father, Jesus the Saviour and Son, and the Holy Spirit who 'hovered over the deep' at creation and 'who is our guide'. Worship brings the whole community of Singleton together at key points in the church calendar. The impact in terms of the building of mutually beneficial relationships between the village, school and church communities is significant. The vicar plays a key role here, leading worship weekly with vigour. He brings theological yet accessible teaching and elements of the Anglican tradition to the children, staff and parents. He is without doubt a key strength in the faith life of the school. His pastoral role is valued by all members of the school family, and the

Junior Church monthly meetings are linked effectively with the 'RE Club'. This supports the spiritual development of the large number of children involved. Children, staff and the lay reader also plan, lead and evaluate worship, giving vitality and a constant desire for further improvement and development. There is, however, a lack of breadth in the children's understanding of the variety of Christian worship worldwide.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The achievement of the children in RE is exceptional. The outstanding results in mathematics and English are echoed, with most children exceeding national expectations. There is a welcome emphasis on the impact of faith on a believer, leading to deep spiritual understanding. The reflective approach that is used demonstrates the excellent progress made by the school following the last inspection, when responsive and reflective writing were said to be lacking. Teaching is inventive, well planned and resourced, and all teachers play their part with enthusiasm and love of the subject. The co-ordinator is experienced, an inspiring leader and is passionate about her work. The headteacher commented that she brings 'care and love' to the role. The impact of RE on the children is clear and highly significant. A Year 5 boy reflected on a lesson five years previously about the creation of the world, stating with conviction that it had '...started me off believing in Jesus!' The learning is outstanding throughout the school as a result of consistently excellent teaching. RE sessions are lively and progressive, with teamwork, impressive use of technology, drama and role-play to reinforce the teaching. There is sensitive use of open questions and gentle support when needed to help all children to become fully involved and to understand the lessons. During a lesson on 'Christmas light – the light of Jesus' a Year 4 child said in response to the question, 'How do you know He's there?', that 'God is part of our family'. Christianity is taught thoroughly and effectively, and other world faiths are introduced systematically and with diligence. The children understand and appreciate the worth of such study. One Year 6 boy commenting, 'Learning what others do in their faith we can understand, compare and learn about the differences'. Impressively, they can also debate the similarities within different faiths. Monitoring and assessment is thorough and developmental, leading to continuous improvements and developments in the curriculum.

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

The headteacher, leadership team, staff and governors are united in striving to live out the Christian vision for the school. The headteacher's Christian faith shines out in every aspect of her leadership, and the academic and personal achievements of the children have improved dramatically over the last four years. These successes have been achieved through exemplary teamwork, with the whole staff group united with the headteacher and governors to bring Christian values into every aspect of school life. These values have been promoted vigorously, yet with sensitivity. The learning mentor has made significant contributions in supporting not just the children with special needs but also the wider families. She is confident that she is able, when appropriate, to prayerfully 'bring Jesus into the situation'. The vision is secured by careful evaluation and very thorough strategic planning. The attention to detail is remarkable, and demonstrates the passionate striving for constant improvement. Leaders prepare for future leadership in this and other church schools through excellent in-service training, teamwork, delegation and coaching. RE and worship fully comply with statutory requirements. Partnerships with the local church, the deanery, diocese and the wider community, including parents, are strong and mutually beneficial. The wellbeing of every child and every family is paramount. Parents are immensely proud of 'their' school, giving excellent support, including fund-raising. They feel fully included, and comments about the school included, 'The vicar is great! He's always ready to help' and, referring to the impact on a shy reception child, 'It's a nurturing environment. It's really brought her confidence out'.

