



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Raglan Road, Burnley, Lancashire, BB11 4LB

Diocese: Blackburn

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 12 February 2015

Date of last inspection: December 2009

School's unique reference number: 119485

Associate Headteacher: Sally Smith

Inspector's name and number: Mike Graham 286

School context

The school is of below average size and is situated in a very disadvantaged area of urban Burnley. The number of children with special educational needs is above average. The proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The headteacher, deputy and chair of governors have been replaced during the last 6 months.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The associate headteacher is giving outstanding Christian leadership and is supported wholeheartedly by all the staff and governors. The best possible achievement and spiritual development for the children are being pursued with renewed vigour.
- Christian values are lived out in the excellent relationships in the school family. This results in exemplary behaviour.
- Worship is central to the spiritual life of the school. It is sincere, varied and vibrant and has a positive effect on the spiritual development of the whole community.
- Religious education (RE) includes excellent teaching from the Bible and the children have a deep understanding of Christianity and Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Expand and develop the portfolios of work and general assessment of RE so as to give the children and teachers more informed targets for further improvement.
- Involve the whole school family in devising a child-friendly mission statement that summarises the school's Christ-centred approach, and celebrates the way in which all members live out Christian values.
- Devise a structured system for the evaluation of worship so as to stimulate informed improvement.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good 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. Christian values are exemplified and taught by the staff. The values on which they focus include love, respect, friendship, forgiveness and trust. These values are lived out at Holy Trinity and are far more than just ideas in documents and on displays. There is therefore no fear of failure, and the enthusiasm with which the children tackle their work and life in school leads to good to outstanding academic and personal achievement. The rate of progress for children of all abilities is generally good and improving. There are however a few children whose achievement is not maximised, as recent data shows. The leadership team are well aware of this and urgent steps are being taken to address the issues. An example of this is the more effective deployment of the learning mentor. Current trends in the tracking of children's progress indicate improvement. The Christian character of the school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the children to excellent effect. Their spiritual maturity is clear. A Year 4 girl, discussing prayer as evidence for Christian distinctiveness, commented straightforwardly, 'I feel God's inside me and I can always talk to Him'. All are warmly welcomed, and a Christ-like openness and love are present. The contribution of RE to the Christian character of the school is significant. Displays and notices are full of stimulating Christian images and ideas, drawing eye and imagination in towards reflection and potential spiritual growth. Teaching about non-Christian faiths is vigorous and includes visits from faith members, for example the Burnley faith centre leader, who is a Muslim. Children and adults are polite and respectful, yet full of life and joy in learning. The children's behaviour is impeccable, and relationships amongst all members of the school community demonstrate Christian values superbly. One child said, 'If anyone feels left out people will come and help'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship takes pride of place in the life of the school. The variety of content and leadership supports a vibrant and appealing mix of worship experiences. Leaders of worship include the vicar, all the teaching staff, children, the lay reader from St Matthew's and a youth worker from the local Methodist circuit. A Year 6 child said of the vicar, 'He does cool things, and acts out stories.' Christian values, Bible stories and readings, reflection, prayer, drama, humour and excellent singing all contribute. The worship is distinctively Christian, with Jesus at the centre. His life and teachings are the basis for the values chosen as themes for worship and for the whole of school life. Personal spiritual development of adults and children is enhanced through the high quality and breadth of worship generally and by a strong focus on prayer. Prayer trees and class worship encourage children to write their own prayers. Reflective, prayerful times are not limited to morning worship, but occur naturally through the day. The children's understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is impressive in its maturity. They have a sense of the awe and wonder of God the Creator and Father, Jesus the Saviour and Son, and the Holy Spirit. He 'gave the disciples courage and strength at Pentecost', as a Year 6 girl explained. A Year 6 boy added, 'When you pray, and open your heart to the Holy Spirit, He gives you knowledge'. Worship brings the whole community together at key points in the church calendar. The impact in terms of the building of mutually beneficial relationships between the local area, school and church communities is significant. The children have a clear understanding of the wider Christian family as a result of these joint worship services. Children in the developing worship team and staff plan and lead worship, which has added depth and variety, but systematic evaluation of worship does not yet occur.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The achievement of the children in RE is good overall, with some children making outstanding progress. 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 good progress since the last inspection. Teaching is inventive, well planned and resourced, and all teachers play their part with enthusiasm and love of the subject. The co-ordinator is an experienced and inspiring leader and is passionate about her work. The impact of RE on the children is clear and highly significant. The learning is good or better throughout the school as a result of good to outstanding 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. This helps all children to become fully involved and to understand the lessons. Good examples include a dramatised retelling of Jesus' feeding of the five thousand, when a Year 1 boy, having been offered some bread by 'Jesus', said, 'Please can I have some fish?' In Year 6, discussions, teamwork and insightful expressions of ideas about the relative importance of nine elements of the Eucharist demonstrated remarkable maturity and depth of understanding. Monitoring and assessment are thorough and developmental, but the portfolios for levelling are not fully operational as yet. Children's understanding of Christianity is excellent. A Year 5 girl said that Jesus' message from the parable of The Good Samaritan was that 'God will always forgive you'.

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

The associate 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 are foremost in the drive to improve the school. Success has been achieved through exemplary teamwork, with the whole staff group, before during and since the recent changes. All staff are united with the headteacher and governors to bring Christian values into every aspect of school life. Governors and clergy are fully involved in supporting the school's work and activities, often in practical terms. Systematic and thorough reviews of the school's Christian distinctiveness are in place, a step forward since the last inspection, but not all the governors are involved. There are already plans to offer training to the governors to correct this omission. 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 churches, diocese and the wider community are strong and mutually beneficial. The school council lead the way in raising money for local and international charities, demonstrating Christian compassion in action. The parents are very appreciative of the Christian care demonstrated in ensuring that the wellbeing of every child and every family is paramount. Parents are proud of their school, and are increasingly involved. Comments about the school include, the vicar 'is brilliant with children' and 'we've never had a problem. It's a great school'.

SIAMS report February 2015, Holy Trinity VA CofE Primary, Burnley, BB11 4LB