



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Livesey Saint Francis' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Cherry Tree Lane  
Cherry Tree  
Blackburn  
BB2 5NX

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Blackburn**

Local authority: Blackburn with Darwen

Date of inspection: 9 July 2015

Date of last inspection: January 2010

School's unique reference number: 119423

Headteacher: Sharon Thomas

Inspector's name and number: Tracy Heys 831

#### **School context**

Livesey St Francis Church of England Primary school is a single form entry primary school situated on the outskirts of Blackburn. 14.1 % of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium, which is below national averages. The number of pupils with special educational needs is higher than the national average. Roles did fall some years ago but now all Key Stage One classes are full and the Reception class is heavily oversubscribed.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Francis as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The strong leadership of the head teacher, supported by staff, governors and parents, ensures that the distinctively Christian values are embedded in the life of the school.
- A dedicated Religious Education (RE) and collective worship coordinator inspires staff and pupils to achieve high standards.
- Relationships within the school community are exemplary and are characterised by Christian care, respect and concern.
- There is a tangible family atmosphere that is inclusive, ensuring all feel cared for and safe.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Ensure that the effectiveness of teaching faiths other than Christianity is as strong as the teaching of Christianity.
- To provide effective, strategic development for all staff and governors as leaders in church schools.

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

The core values chosen by the whole school community are distinctively Christian and can be articulated by all. The values pervade every aspect of the school and make a significant contribution to the excellent behaviour of the pupils and standards of attainment. One parent commented that 'the values mean so much because they are lived out every day'. A teacher commented that 'the Christian values thread their way throughout the school and are an important part of my faith journey'. The spiritual development of the pupils is central to the daily life of the school. They are encouraged to take part in a wide range of spiritually stimulating experiences, such as the choir's recent involvement in evensong at Blackburn cathedral. The whole school 'Easter Outdoors' gave each child an opportunity to reflect on the Easter story at a very personal level. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent with issues being dealt with quickly and effectively. Strong teamwork with very effective communication allows for individual needs to be met in a supportive and caring Christian way. This is evident both through academic outcomes and also through the opportunities provided for personal development. The school is a fully inclusive community and pupils with special educational needs or from other faith backgrounds are wholly integrated into all aspects of school life. Pupils comment with confidence that they always feel safe and valued, and have someone to talk to. Furthermore, they were especially keen to demonstrate how they were encouraged to deal with issues between themselves if at all possible. Pupils are able to identify and talk about Christian values and these are linked to teachings from the Bible. The school has links with a Christian project in Tanzania and pupils from this project have visited St Francis. This has given the pupils first-hand experience of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

In collective worship the whole school family shares, celebrates and reflects on the Christian values that underpin the ethos and life of the school. The very enthusiastic coordinator inspires staff and pupils to provide a range of high quality worship planned around a consistent format. Collective worship engages all pupils and staff. The use of the core values clearly makes the link between worship and the daily life of the school. Displays in the hall celebrate some of the themes used in collective worship such as Trinity and justice and give pupils further time for reflection in the quiet area in the hall. The ethos group are taking more responsibility for planning, leading and evaluating worship and this involvement is increasing their confidence and developing self-esteem. On-going monitoring by the coordinator, pupil evaluation and comments from governors inform development. A range of appropriate visitors lead worship in school. The pupils also visit the church for worship which gives them some experience of the rich diversity of worship. At the beginning of worship three candles are lit and the pupils understand that this represents God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. RE teaching gives pupils a deeper knowledge and understanding of the triune nature of God. Pupils sing well and their enthusiasm clearly demonstrates the joy they experience. Prayer is a prominent feature of the school and ensures that worship goes beyond the gathering in the hall with each class having an area for prayer. Pupils understand how to use the intercession box in the hall and a year 6 child commented that the prayer tree 'lets us pray for each other.' One reception child could explain how a prayer stone helps him to concentrate on talking to God; 'I just hold it tight and my prayer goes up to God'. Older pupils can describe how they use prayer to help them through a range of experiences. A year 5 girl said 'I pray when I feel sad and it helps me know things will get better'.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Religious education is regarded as a core subject and given a high status. The coordinator is passionate about RE and provides inspirational professional development for those who teach RE. Pupils of other faiths and often their parents are encouraged to make an informed contribution to teaching about their own faith. This enriches the work and develops respect between faith groups. Assessment shows that achievement is in line with, or above, national expectations. The rich and varied learning activities enable the pupils to acquire a wide range of high level skills. There is an appropriate balance of learning about and learning from religion which helps pupils on their own faith journey. One Year 6 child described how Florence Nightingale felt she had been called by God to serve others and it was her faith that enabled her to show compassion and endurance. Lesson observations recently carried out by the head teacher support the judgement that the majority of teaching in RE is outstanding. Teaching of faiths other than Christianity is however not as strong as the teaching of Christianity. The recent development of the 'Faith Club', which was the pupils' idea, enables Year 6 pupils to plan and deliver activities focussed on a particular religious story. The younger pupils listened attentively to a retelling of the story of Noah and then engaged in various activities planned by the older pupils. There was obvious delight and enjoyment for all the pupils. One of the Year 6 pupils said it made him feel 'warm inside' when the younger pupils enjoyed the Faith Club. RE makes a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the school community. A parent commented that she loved sharing her young sons 'buzz' when he tells her about what he has been learning in RE. Rigorous and extensive monitoring by an outstanding RE coordinator ensures that well focused action plans lead to further improvement.

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

The Christian purpose of the school is clearly identified in the mission statement and underpinned by the core values which help to create the distinctive ethos. The head teacher models strong Christian leadership and is highly valued by the whole school community. She articulates her personal vision for the school, based on Christian values, and these are lived out by pupils, staff and governors alike. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to the school and is extremely proactive in developing the Christian vision. Some pupils particularly enjoy 'Messy Church' and 'Praise Night' led by the chair of governors in the church. These services strengthen the link between school and church. There are good relationships between the church and the school. Each community supports the other through prayer and in practical and mutually beneficial ways. Governors are involved in the self-evaluation of the school and new governors are currently receiving training and support from the school and the Diocese. Succession planning for church school leadership is underdeveloped. The school's RE syllabus helps to impact on Christian distinctiveness by fostering understanding and respect towards the different faith perspectives. The school has connections with an orphanage in Africa and is involved with various charitable causes. These are beneficial links for the pupils' global awareness. The school celebrates the achievements of the pupils in the local community. One child won a local hero award which became a whole school celebration too. The links with parents are excellent. They know that their children are nurtured and supported sensitively with Christian love and care. Parents give good examples of how the school has responded when they have encountered difficulties. One parent commented 'my child knows that forgiving and being forgiven are part of a strong relationship.'

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