

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Longridge Church of England Primary School	Berry Lane Longridge Preston Lancashire PR3 3JA
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese/Methodist District	Blackburn Diocese
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	13 October 2016
Date of last inspection	23 February 2012
School's unique reference number	119568
Headteacher	Janet Cooper
Inspector's name and number	Carol Berry 324

School context

Longridge is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school of 198 children. Children come from very varied socio-economic backgrounds and 95% are of White British ethnicity. The number of children with special educational needs and disabilities (9%) is below the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged children for whom the school receives the pupil premium is 17%. The incumbent, who was also the chair of governors, left earlier this year. Neither role has yet been replaced by permanent appointments, but the school is served by a local vicar during the interregnum and by a temporary chair of governors.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Longridge as a Church of England school are good

- Vibrant and inspirational collective worship is at the heart of the life of the school. Children respond enthusiastically to worship. They reflect on Bible stories, Christian values and beliefs, applying them to their own lives and relationships.
- Christian values are evident in all aspects of the life of the school. As a result, the school is a Christian family where the love of Jesus is evident in the concern which children and staff demonstrate for each other's well-being. The school is a happy place to learn and work.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) about Christian beliefs, values and worship is excellent. Sound assessment procedures and exciting lessons help to secure progress.
- There are strong and mutually beneficial links with the church and local community, with the result that many children retain a sense of belonging to this Christian family long after they have left the school.

Areas to improve

- To ensure that the school's self-evaluation procedures take full account of the views of children, so that there is an accurate understanding of the impact of the school's Christian vision, collective worship and RE which informs development planning.
- To ensure that all governors access training regarding their role in a church school. This is so that they are equipped to support the school effectively and understand fully the issues for which they may need to provide challenge.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to engage with people of other religions through a programme of visits and visitors, so that pupils gain a sound understanding of other faiths.

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

The school is a warm and caring Christian family, where Christian values underpin all relationships and decision making. Parents say the school helps children to develop as 'caring individuals who are thoughtful for others'. As a result, the school provides a safe and secure learning environment where children are able to achieve well and enjoy their education. The school's Christian values are understood as distinctive Christian values by all members of the community. Children readily link Christian values to Biblical teaching. They explain the qualities of being a good friend by talking about trust in the story of David and Goliath or linking loyalty to the story of Ruth and Naomi. They explain their care for the environment in terms of caring for the world God made. There is a positive and effective approach to managing attendance. Behaviour is excellent. The behaviour policy is founded on the principles of forgiveness and reconciliation. Good use is made of a restorative justice programme. RE contributes well to children's understanding of Christian values and to spiritual development. Teachers often make good use of opportunities for spiritual development when they arise during lessons in the wider curriculum beyond RE. However, at present there is no routine planning for spiritual development and there is only limited consideration of Christian values in subjects other than RE. This means that some opportunities for revisiting Christian values or developing spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are lost. Consequently children are less confident about explaining values which have not been dealt with in recent acts of worship. Children have excellent attitudes to diversity and a profound respect for people who are different to themselves. However, there are few opportunities for them to engage with people of other cultures or to gain understanding of Christianity as a world-wide church. The school environment makes an excellent contribution to spiritual development through displays which celebrate the value of each individual, prompt children to think deeply and provide quiet focus places where they take time to be reflective.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Children are very enthusiastic about collective worship. It engages children through a mix of fun, thought-provoking challenge and time for quiet reflection. They sing with delight and say they love the action songs. The rich variety of activities in worship helps them to understand a range of Bible stories. Children readily apply Bible stories to their decision making and behaviour. They see the relevance of worship to their own lives and talk about the way worship challenges and inspires them. A parent explained how thinking about Christian values contributes to children being more tolerant of others and how this had helped her daughter at secondary school. The school have made an excellent response to the focus from the last SIAS inspection regarding the development of children's use of prayer. Children now have an excellent understanding of the importance of prayer and have developed in confidence in praying themselves. One child said prayer matters because, 'When you can't do something, God will help you,' and another that 'God is always there for you.' The focus areas in each classroom and the many prayer trees around school support children in understanding prayer. Planning for collective worship ensures that children encounter a balanced range of themes, including Christian values, important beliefs and festivals. Children are able to explain important beliefs about the Trinity, for example, a child said, 'Describing God as Father means he is like a parent who is always there to help you.' Another child explained the Holy Spirit in terms of God providing guidance. The local church makes an excellent contribution to collective worship by supporting planning and through the weekly leadership of worship by the incumbent. The school are appreciative of the way this has been maintained during the interregnum. Parents look forward to the special services held in the church every month. These are well-attended. They result in school and church having a sense of being part of one Christian family. Children participate in worship with joyful enthusiasm, taking responsibility for practical arrangements and reading on a daily basis. They also contribute to the monthly service in church and help to lead class worship. They say they particularly enjoy worship when they are contributing to it. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is very effective. Children's views are considered carefully as part of the self-evaluation process and this has helped to secure the school's excellent practice.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Achievement in RE is good. Progress with regard to the study of Christianity is excellent. Children engage with a rich variety of activities to explore challenging questions. Procedures for assessment are very effective. Children regularly carry out self-assessment using helpful 'I can...' statements with the result that they have a very sound understanding of what they are doing well and how to improve. The school use the Blackburn diocesan syllabus and this supports progression in important skills across the key stages. Children visit a variety of different churches as part of their RE course and so have a good understanding of diversity within Christianity. They have excellent attitudes to diversity and a great interest in exploring different beliefs and practices. However, children's understanding of different religions is poor. Learning objectives for lessons about other faiths often lack the challenge of those for lessons about Christianity. Reception children enjoyed a day spent exploring Diwali with a Hindu parent, but most children have not had the opportunity to engage with members of other faiths or to visit their places of worship. Consequently, their learning has not been enriched by personal experiences. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is creative and draws on children's own experiences of the world. In a Key Stage 1 class, children explored their own creative talents in order to gain understanding of God as a creator. The routine use of collaborative learning means that children develop excellent reasoning skills and learn to respect diverse views. Children recognise that RE is relevant to them and they often identify their own questions about a topic. Year 2 children produced many challenging questions for the incumbent as part of their study of the Bible. RE makes an excellent contribution to spiritual development through the time which is regularly set aside for reflection. Children are used to being still and thinking about what they have learnt. As a result they apply their learning in RE to their own lives. There is a regular programme of monitoring and evaluation of RE. However, detailed consideration of the views of children has not been taken into account in self-evaluation.

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

The Christian vision for the school to work together as a caring Christian family has an excellent impact on all aspects of school life. Consequently children develop into caring individuals who are concerned for the needs of others and have excellent respect for diversity. The headteacher lives the Christian vision and is greatly respected by all members of the school community. Collective worship and RE are very important to the school and meet statutory requirements. The school's self-evaluation cycle ensures that self-evaluation informs planning for these areas in the school's management plan. Consultations with children have been rigorous regarding collective worship and have led to excellent outcomes. However, self-evaluation of RE, whilst moving the subject forward, has not taken full-account of children's views. Governors provide dedicated support and service. They have played a significant role in the development of school's very special Christian character. However, governors have not had training to support them in their role in a church school. The response to the focus for development from the last SIAS inspection is varied. It has resulted in excellent development of the understanding of prayer. However, there has been only a limited response to the focus regarding provision of a programme of visits and visitors from other faiths. Governors have not challenged the school regarding this issue. Although their regular programme of monitoring visits includes collective worship and RE, the RE focus of these visits has been limited to teaching about Christianity. Good support for staff contributes to good practice in RE and the school has plans to secure leadership training for staff considering leadership in a church school. Links with the local church and community are excellent. Community links have a very positive impact on children's social development. By providing music for the elderly and meeting people through the knitting club, children engage well with people of different ages. Children love going to church and often retain their close links with the church beyond their time at school.