

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Oswaldtwistle Saint Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Springfield Street, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 3LG

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Lancashire
Date/s of inspection	17 November 2016
Date of last inspection	22 March 2012
School's unique reference number	119413
Headteacher	Christina Wilkinson
Inspector's name and number	Lesley Brookbanks 771

School context

Saint Andrew's is an average sized primary school with 270 children on roll. The school has recently expanded with four new classrooms accommodating additional children. The proportion of children eligible for pupil premium is average. The number of children with SEN is below the average. A higher than average number of children are Roma, Gypsy and Traveller. The majority of children are of White British backgrounds. Since the last inspection there has been a change of senior leadership with two assistant headteachers replacing a deputy headteacher. The school is currently without an incumbent following the recent retirement of the vicar.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are good

- Distinctively Christian values are at the heart of the school's life and embedded in all aspects of its work. They are clearly understood and articulated by the whole school community.
- The strong Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher is well supported by staff and governors and highly valued by parents.
- The school supports the well-being of its children and families exceptionally well through its caring, supportive Christian ethos and effective pastoral care. This results in a school community who work very well together to make sure that children achieve their best and are happy.

Areas to improve

- Involve governors in the formal process of self-evaluation and monitoring of the school's church school distinctiveness so that they are fully informed about priorities for development of the school's Christian character.
- Develop children's spirituality through the development of indoor and outdoor prayer spaces and creative approaches to prayer.
- Involve children in planning and leading their own acts of worship to deepen their understanding of worship and enhance their spiritual experience.

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

The Christian character of the school is identified in the tangible warmth of relationships between all members of its community. The school provides a learning environment rooted in Christian love where children are motivated to achieve well and feel successful. End of year data shows that children make good progress and that their achievement has improved rapidly. Attendance is good because children enjoy coming to school and are happy. The school actively lives out its Christian ethos. There is a strong sense that the school meets people at their point of need, especially in difficult times. Children feel safe, understood and valued because the well-being of children and families is given a high priority. Communication between the school and parents is excellent. The school is welcoming, open and supportive. Children are very proud of their school and especially their identified core Christian values of trust, friendship, compassion and forgiveness. All members of the community are involved in reviewing these. The result is a set of inclusive and child friendly values. These are owned and understood by everyone and celebrated through a set of permanent motivating displays in the hall. Children have an informed understanding of these values which they readily apply to their relationships and their behaviour choices. They give examples of gospel stories they know and how these explain the roots of their Christian values. For example, they see the good Samaritan as a role model for compassion. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is promoted effectively through worship, religious education (RE) as well as the wider curriculum. The school has prioritised asking deeper questions to further develop children's understanding in RE. This is having a good impact on the development of SMSC. Older children enthusiastically debate whether a character in *Oliver Twist* is a good Christian. They demonstrate a strong sense of social justice as they discuss the Christian values he should adopt to regulate his behaviour.

Prayer is important to children. They identify times when prayer helps them, 'when we are sad or in trouble or people are ill', as one child put it. They identify spaces indoors and outdoors where they sometimes go to pray and reflect. Children know that learning about other world faiths is important so that they understand and respect other people. They can readily name different world faiths although they are less confident talking about what they learn about them. The school has regular visitors who enhance children's understanding of the different ways in which God is worshipped across the world. This includes visiting students from the Bethany Family, Tanzania. Children learn directly about their life, Christian faith and culture as they train within the school to become a teacher. The school, often led by children, actively supports a range of charities including the local food bank. These activities enable children to express compassion for other people both locally and globally in practical ways.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is valued and enjoyed by all members of the school community. The school's core values are firmly embedded within worship themes which are carefully planned around the church year. Children articulate how Christian values are related to Bible texts and stories they know. Worship includes a variety of approaches which engage children and help them to reflect thoughtfully on their daily life. Children enjoy sharing their understanding of Christian values when talking about their work or behaviour. A range of worship leaders ensure that worship is fun and thought provoking for children. Children look forward to worship and explain how it makes a difference to what they choose to say and do. One child commented, 'worship helps us reflect on our actions and how we can change, like making wrong things right'. In circle time, the learning mentor enables children to identify issues they want to pray about and bring to worship. In this way, prayer becomes alive and meaningful as it relates to children's day to day experience. During adult led worship, children share prayers and participate in drama and role play. Older children are responsible for preparing the worship space, operating technology and selecting songs. An area for development from the previous inspection was to seek ways to involve children in leading acts of worship. Although they are involved in leading some aspects of worship, the planning and leading of worship by children is not a regular event.

The subject leader keeps records of worship including monitoring events and evaluations. She discusses worship with small groups of children each term to evaluate its impact and plan next steps. However, children of all ages are not sufficiently involved with the formal evaluation of worship. Through school worship and church services children are familiar with a range of Anglican traditions. They know the Lord's Prayer and explain the meaning of Christian symbols such as the cross, candle and dove. An apple is the symbol chosen by the children to represent their core Christian values as well as the Trinity. They readily explain how this relates to Father, Son and Holy

Spirit, through its peel, flesh and pips. They also see the pips as seeds from the Holy Spirit, which they help to grow through their living out of the Christian values. Children place great importance on the reflection spaces in their classrooms, both pastorally and spiritually. These excellent spaces are carefully presented although practical activities and focus to engage children in individual prayer are insufficiently developed. They are regarded as places of reconciliation where children can discuss together or reflect individually on day to day issues. Children say that sometimes they are a place to pray. For example, a child spoke of the importance of using his class area to pray for forgiveness when he felt angry.

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

The headteacher promotes a distinctively Christian vision which is for children to know God and to have high aspirations. Her leadership is driven by her strong Christian faith and underpinned by core Christian values. The assistant headteachers, staff and governors support the Christian foundation of the school. Everyone involved with St Andrew's has worked hard to successfully raise standards of achievement for all groups of children. The leadership focus for development from the previous inspection has been addressed. Governors are now well informed about the school's work through meetings, regular visits and discussions with the headteacher, staff and children. Their active involvement in the formal self-evaluation of the school's Christian character is, however, not sufficiently developed to enable them to have an informed and accurate assessment of the school's Christian distinctiveness. An assistant head is currently leading worship as the subject leader is on maternity leave. She gives this area high priority and has identified next steps for continued development. Worship meets statutory requirements.

Discussions with parents reflect the high regard that parents have for the school. One parent summarised the views of many, 'We see the impact of Christian values on behaviour. Children really respect each other here'. They give numerous examples of how positively the school has responded when they have been in need of support. Children behave well. They know that if they make mistakes they will be treated fairly and compassionately with reference to Christian values. The school engages very well with its local community. There are good relationships between the school and the three local Anglican churches as well as the Methodist church. Children are encouraged to attend church and participate in community events out of school and at weekends. The school choir sings in many church services and concerts. Children take part in a local act of remembrance, placing their own poppies and prayers at the war memorial. In this way, the children are effective ambassadors for the Christian foundation of their school. The children develop understanding of global issues through support for the Bethany project. They initiate their own fund raising for this charity and are aware of the importance of Christian giving. Through professional development and diocesan training the school equips staff to become leaders in other church schools. Two previous deputy headteachers are now headteachers of church schools. A Year 6 child summarised her view of St Andrew's as a church school. She explained, 'Instead of being just a school, it's a family where everyone supports and respects one another'.

SIAMS report, November 2016, Oswaldtwistle St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, BB5 3LG