



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Luke & St Philip's Church of England Primary A Church of England Academy

Hancock Street
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB2 2LZ

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 16 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 19 January 2012

School's unique reference number: 140559

Headteacher: Samantha O'Connell

Inspector's name and number: David Thorpe 461

School context

St Luke and St Philip's Primary School converted to academy status in May 2014 as part of Blackburn Diocesan Multi Academy Trust (MAT) CIDARI. Prior to that it had moved from a judgement of inadequate by OFSTED to requiring improvement (RI). The school serves an area of severe deprivation with the vast majority of children coming from areas in the top 5% of national deprivation. 20 different languages are spoken in the school. There is a high level of child mobility within the school. The acting head teacher and the acting deputy head teacher have been in their roles since November 2015, both having worked at the school for some time. Several staff, including the RE coordinator, have recently left the school.

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

- The acting head and acting deputy head, along with the governors, have a very clear vision for the school and this has led to rapid improvements in the management of the school.
- The adoption of five core Christian values has had a positive impact on all aspects of school life which are now directly related to these values.
- There are excellent relationships throughout the school. This has led to a place of learning and work that one parent described as 'a blessing'.
- Links with the local church are strong and effective, especially so in the pastoral support given to children, staff and families. This has had a significant impact.

Areas to improve

- To ensure that teaching about faith places greater focus on learning from religion rather than simply learning about religion, in order to enable the children to become more reflective and deepen their spiritual development.
- To review the long term Religious Education (RE) overview to provide more opportunities for the study of non-Christian faiths, so as to enhance the children's

understanding of Christianity one of the major global religions.

- To embed the work of the recently established worship team so that they have more opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate worship, enhancing the children's spiritual development.

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

A commitment to realise children's God-given potential is at the heart of this inclusive school. The core Christian values of trust, truth, love, peace and thankfulness are the language of the school, demonstrated in everyone's attitudes and actions. One parent acknowledged the importance of the school's values, 'This school is a family and I wouldn't change the Christian values for anyone'. The vicar's pastoral care for the school community, as well as her practical support, is greatly valued by adults and children alike. The Christian character of the school is clearly evident in both communal areas and classrooms through well-planned reflective displays which are valued by the children. The whole school community demonstrates great respect for those of different faiths and regularly celebrates the diversity within the school and local community with events such as 'The Diversity Day'. This day is a celebration through which children and parents gain deeper awareness and understanding of different faiths and cultures. The recently re-designed school newsletter leaves the reader in no doubt that this is a Christian school. It includes the worship theme for the week alongside questions to be discussed at home along with Bible verses to both encourage and challenge. Staff are seen as Christian role models. Children respond with good behaviour, politeness and enthusiasm for learning. They feel safe and valued. Attendance is improving, reflecting children's enjoyment of school. Attainment and progress for all children are inconsistent, although recent action taken to address these concerns is having a positive impact. RE makes a good contribution to the school's Christian character. It enables children to increase their knowledge of Christian belief and teaching but the amount of curriculum time allocated to the study of other faiths is insufficient overall. The excellent work that has been undertaken by the school community during this school year must now be embedded.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is explicitly Christian, whilst, through skilful management and planning, is accessible to those of other faiths or none. It is engaging, reflective and joyful. The recently formed worship group of children evaluate worship on a daily basis and, as a group, have a clear understanding of their role. They are honoured to be involved and wear their worship group badges with great pride. They can see that they are making a difference but realise that, as they have only just been formed they still have 'A lot of learning to do so that we can get better' as one child put it. Throughout the week children experience a variety of worship styles and this helps to enrich their understanding of what worship is and why we worship. The children have a developing understanding of The Trinity, they talk about God as a good father, and likewise, Jesus as the Son of God, however most are not as clear about the person and role of the Holy Spirit. Worship extends beyond daily school gatherings. Children attend Christian festivals at church. This enables them to feel part of the wider worshipping community. During times of worship the children openly and confidently share their feelings. When talking about courage one year 3 described a time when she was frightened on the ghost train and 'I needed a lot of courage.' This was followed by a spontaneous round of applause indicating the children's understanding of how courage is needed in a variety of circumstances. Year 6 children articulated well the courage that Daniel needed when in the den of lions and compared it to the courage needed in recent times by Syrian refugees. They then thoughtfully linked it to faith with one Year 6 girl commenting 'Faith does not make things easy but it makes things possible.' Central to the school's worship is prayer, with children often writing their own as well as learning traditional ones such as The Lord's Prayer. They value times of prayer and reflection and several children agreed that it makes them feel close to God.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The school has a strong commitment to developing all aspects of teaching and learning in RE using the diocesan syllabus. The school leaders have accurately acknowledged that there needs to be a better balance in teaching so that learning from religion is given more prominence. The aim is to enhance the children's spiritual development. Standards in RE, for the majority of children, are in line with national expectations. Children make reasonable progress and this is improving. They are actively involved in their learning. The children state that they enjoy RE 'especially when it's linked to art or drama', as a Year 6 girl said. They talk with confidence about topics they have enjoyed and what they have learned. There is a strong emphasis on developing Christian values within each lesson and this has helped embed the core values in a short period of time. Teachers' understanding and implementation of high quality RE needs to be embedded so that this subject will flourish. Non-Christian faiths are less well covered in the long-term overview. As a result, opportunities to enrich the curriculum by learning about and from other faiths are limited. The recently appointed RE coordinator has identified this issue. After a very short time in post she is having a significant and positive impact on teaching and learning across the school in RE as well as other subjects. RE makes a positive contribution to the Christian ethos of the school and in particular to the moral development of the children.

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

There have been substantial changes in the leadership of the school during this academic year. The acting head teacher, ably assisted by the acting deputy, share a very clear and unshakeable vision that the school will 'ensure excellence is encouraged, minds are opened, diversity is embraced, respect is expected and talents are nurtured under the umbrella of God's love.' This enables them to be clear about where the school should be and how they intend to get there. This has been shared with, and is supported by, the governing body, who receive accurate and timely information about the school's performance. This enables them to make the right strategic decisions that will see the vision come to fruition. The vision is inspiring everyone to seek to provide the very best for the children. The positive influence of leadership and management is seen in the creation of a strong culture of improvement. The issues raised from the last inspection have been effectively addressed. Through excellent professional development and support from the diocese, the school is now equipping staff to be future leaders of church schools. The children are becoming ambitious and resilient learners whose achievements are celebrated frequently. RE and collective worship development are now well led with dedication and vision. This is a school which is beginning to know itself well. Self-evaluation is becoming more focused and robust. It is starting to inform development planning. The vicar provides exceptional support, practically, spiritually and pastorally and this has enabled the creation of a harmonious environment for learning and working. The worship group are taking their leadership role very seriously and have undertaken a learning walk which resulted in feedback to a staff meeting and an action plan that they are working through. The school is regarded as an oasis of Christian love and witness in the community. The school knows and nurtures its families extremely well through its Christ-centred approach. Parents are very supportive of what the school is achieving, one stated, 'This school is like a best friend, especially when you think there's no one there for you'.

SIAMS report, June 2016, St Luke & St Philip's, Blackburn BB2 2IZ