



**[National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report**

**St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Burnley Road

Cliviger

Burnley

BB10 4SU

**Diocese:** **Blackburn**

Local authority: Blackburn

Dates of inspection: 20th June 2014

Date of last inspection: February 2009

School's unique reference number: 119432

Headteacher: Naomi Healey

Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall (548)

**School context**

St. John's is a smaller than average size primary school with 193 children on roll. The majority of children come from the local community, although some travel from further afield. The percentage of children with special education needs is below the national average. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals is well below average. Since the last inspection, there have been significant staffing changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- Effective Christian leadership and a committed staff team who demonstrate Christian values in the way they live and work.
- Relationships with St John's Church are very strong in promoting a shared Christian vision for development and learning.
- The children's very positive attitudes to religious education (RE) and collective worship.

**Areas to improve**

- Develop the moderation of levelled work in RE in order to improve teachers' understanding of the levels and help them plan work that enables children to make progress.
- Provide experiences to broaden children's knowledge and understanding of faiths, other than Christianity, including visits to their places of worship.

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

The school's very distinctive Christian mission statement was produced in consultation with the school community. It shapes the thinking of the school and is understood, articulated and embraced by all members of the school community. Children created the logo: 'Learn, Pray, Care & Play'. Parents agree that, 'The school teaches our children good Christian values'. Behaviour is very good and the school and parents attribute this to the focus on the eight values chosen by the school which are displayed all round the school. Teachers explained, 'From Reception the children become very familiar with the Christian values', and, 'in all areas of the curriculum children are encouraged to reflect on which of these values to focus on'. The school is highly effective in developing and expanding spiritual experiences that support learning. Children benefit from a rich and varied creative curriculum that goes beyond the classroom. For example, Year 6 children speak enthusiastically about their week at the 'Christian Mountain Centre' in Wales where, the headteacher explained, 'they not only explore the outdoors but their own personal faith too'. The school's Christian character results in a secure and caring environment where achievement is good and children are progressing well. These strengths within the school's Christian character are also at the heart of all relationships. Pastoral care is evident, not only for the children, but for the staff. A recently appointed teacher said that she had been 'overwhelmed by the kindness and consideration' shown to her which had helped her on her own spiritual journey. Through a range of activities, including their involvement in the Tanzanian Bethany Project, children are made aware that Christianity is a global world faith. They understand the need to help others less fortunate than themselves through their Christian service. The school is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity. This is a highly cohesive community in which all feel valued regardless of differences.

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

Collective worship is well planned and covers Christian themes with a strong emphasis on Christian values and on important Christian festivals. This enables children to have a very good understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and practice. Children benefit from a varied experience of worship led by a range of people. They say that the teachers 'do good ones which are all different'. The Burnley Evangelical Schools' Team (BEST) lead worship regularly and children agreed that they are 'well fun'. Children in the worship group respond with maturity to their responsibility in taking an active role in leading and evaluating acts of worship. This group are highly effective in organising charity events. At the present time they are linking the school's Christian values to bible references and quotes which they put in the school's newsletter. In the Key Stage 2 worship observed, children listened attentively as the teacher discussed the often negative feelings and attitudes of individuals in opposing sports teams. The teacher explained that 'Jesus shows us a different way, to love each another' even when it is difficult. Through reflection, children showed their understanding of the school's Christian values of 'Love' and 'Respect'. The school community values the regular input from the vicar in worship. Children say, 'He's entertaining and uses different voices when he's telling stories from the Bible'. The prominent place of prayer across the school ensures that worship is a spiritual experience of real significance. This happens naturally throughout the school day as demonstrated by children tying a ribbon on the prayer net, in the school entrance, as a token of prayer for a friend in need. Parents respond to their welcome to special services. They particularly enjoy the weekly Golden Book worship where they see their children receive awards for achievement and for demonstrating Christian values.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is good**

Children make good progress in RE, as is evidenced in portfolios and written work. Standards are in line with those attained in other core subjects. There is a clear purpose and sense of direction in leading initiatives to continually raise standards of attainment. Lesson observations

and scrutiny of books help to identify areas for improvement. Teachers have a shared commitment to improving standards and recognise RE as a core subject. The school's monitoring and evaluation show that a balance is achieved between learning about and learning from religion. Children have a good knowledge of the Bible and the life of Jesus. They speak very positively about their enjoyment of RE. One child explained, 'learning about different faiths is important. It helps us understand better'. Leaders acknowledge that children's knowledge and understanding of faiths, other than Christianity, would be further enhanced by visits to their places of worship. In the Key Stage 2 lesson observed, a calm atmosphere was created as children considered how the biblical '10 Commandments' would be different if they were given in today's world. Good teaching and challenging questioning encouraged children to think deeply about the Christian values a 'super hero' could display. One child reflected on how this linked with the message in collective worship of 'loving our enemies'. RE makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual development. This includes the whole-school 'Values Day' where specially designed activities helped children in their understanding of Christian values. It was described by teachers as 'a most successful RE day'. The link governor for RE has accessed training for the new syllabus and is now involved in monitoring and evaluation with the subject leader. Leaders acknowledge the need for teachers to moderate children's work together to give them a clearer understanding of all the attainment levels.

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

The headteacher is an inspirational leader with a strong personal faith and a clear vision for the development of the school. She is very well supported by the school community. Governors work in partnership with senior leaders to monitor and evaluate the work of the school, ensuring that church school issues are identified and addressed through the school's improvement planning. Governors are highly effective in articulating the Christian ethos and in promoting and establishing that ethos throughout the school and beyond to the community. All issues raised during the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The strong link with St John's Church contributes a valuable dimension to the school's Christian ethos and it is a mutually supportive relationship. The school hall is being used by the church during their extensive renovation work and the vicar and church community provide a much valued service for families, which includes the very popular 'Messy Church' activities and 'Wednesday Church'. Collective worship and RE are led with commitment and a genuine desire to continue to seek ways to improve further. Leaders and governors strive continually to ensure that the academic needs of the children are met. In doing so they have recognised the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. The school values its relationship with parents and keeps them very well informed. Parents say that the staff are always approachable. Leaders recognise the need to seek parents' views more formally on specific church school issues through the annual questionnaire. The school is supported very effectively by the diocese through training programmes for staff and governors. The professional development of the staff is a high priority. Children value their role in decision making through the school council and the worship group. They speak with pride about their current plans to raise money for the church through their 'Whacky Wig Wednesday' initiative.

SIAMS report June 2014 St John's, Cliviger Church of England Primary School, Burnley BB10 4SU

