



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Standish Lower Ground, St. Anne's Church of England Primary School

Wigan Lower Road
Wigan
WN6 8JP

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Wigan

Dates of inspection: 21 January 2016

Date of last inspection: 8 July 2011

School's unique reference number: 106468

Headteacher: Lynne France

Inspector's name and number: Maggie Eldridge-Mrotzek

Quality assurance: Lyn Field 151

School context

The school is a smaller than average primary school, currently there are 134 pupils on roll. A significant number of pupils join and leave the school other than at normal times. Recently this has included asylum seekers. The school has more than double the national average of pupils with special educational needs and an above average number of pupils who are categorized as disadvantaged. Since the last inspection there has been a change of headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lower Standish St. Anne's as a Church of England school are good

- The drive and passion of the headteacher to develop a new Christian vision has reinvigorated the Christian distinctiveness and character of the school
- The very strong partnership with St. Anne's church provides a wealth of opportunities for spiritual and emotional development as well as practical support
- A varied and rich prayer life contributes significantly to the spiritual journey of the whole school community
- Relationships between all members of the school community are exemplary and are underpinned by distinctively Christian values

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' knowledge of other faiths to enable an understanding of diverse communities
- Provide opportunities for pupils to respond to written feedback in order to develop deeper learning in religious education
- Involve the whole community in evaluating worship to help leaders gain insight into where improvement is needed

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

The school's distinctive Christian character ensures that every pupil feels valued, makes good progress and achieves well. Teachers are ambitious for all pupils. Attendance for all groups of pupils is now good due to staff taking extra time to identify problems and develop personalised care. A recent appointment of a family support worker and mentor has enabled trust to be built up between families and the school. Parents particularly value the opportunity to talk to staff about their concerns. A parent commented that both medical and emotional support for her and her child was 'exemplary'. The small holding cross, given to her child at a difficult time, had facilitated spiritual comfort. The school's Christian values particularly of justice, service, compassion and friendship underpin these actions.

Distinctively Christian values have the greatest impact through the supportive relationships between all members of the school community. Staff support each other exceptionally well with personal and professional concerns. Parents value the 'stay and chat' class coffee mornings. This has enabled new families to the school to quickly feel part of the school community. Pupils display compassion, spiritual, social and moral awareness for others through their prayers and in their interactions with each other in their classrooms and in playtime. No one is isolated or left to struggle alone. A parent particularly appreciated a 'buddy' system that supported her child. Asylum seekers are welcomed and pupils have taken time to assist with translation and practical activities such as explaining about different food. Pupils are able to relate learning from their religious education (RE) lessons to how they should behave. Very young pupils are able to identify Christian teachings that underpin actions. Pupil's commented 'Jesus was kind, helped and healed other people. Jesus loved everyone even if they were different'. Pupils recognise the importance of RE in their lives. Pupils have some awareness about Christianity in other countries and the worldwide church but they are not fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. Pupil's understanding and knowledge of other faith communities and cultures is limited.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

A varied and rich prayer life contributes significantly to the spiritual journey of the whole school community. In every classroom there is a distinct place where pupils can be quiet, reflect and pray. Pupils are encouraged to write prayers in creative ways such as on paper hands, acrostically, on a cross or to place prayers in a prayer box in order to develop their own spiritual awareness. Pupils' prayers reflect their concern and care for others as well as praise to God. From time to time, at the end of a lesson, a pupil will stop in at break or lunch to pray on their own or ask the teacher to pray with them. These experiences enable prayer to be a focus of daily life. Members of the local St. Anne's church hold a weekly prayer meeting in the school to pray for the school and the community. Parents often ask to be remembered in prayer and take great comfort in knowing that they are prayed for. Staff commented that their faith had grown due to worship and 'sharing their faith in an open Christian environment'. Prayer and reflection are central to the whole school community.

Worship is highly valued. Whole school worship is carefully planned around Christian values, the liturgical year and celebrations. Worship promotes a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The development points from the previous inspection have been addressed. Pupils, members from the local church and staff all take part in planning worship that combines a variety of engaging and inspirational activities involving singing, games, pupils' prayers and symbols. The use of technology in worship has been incorporated into a well-used bank of resources. Members of the school's weekly 'Christians In Drama' (CID) club, led by the local incumbent, regularly lead worship based around a Bible story. Parents particularly welcome the variety of opportunities to worship in different settings. A recent initiative has been the leading and planning by pupils of worship each term in the local church. As the church is over two miles away, pupils are taken by coach to the church. This illustrates the great value that is placed on worship in the life of the school. Self-evaluation of the impact of worship by the

whole school community is at an early stage of development and therefore insight on its influence is lacking.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils achieve well and make good progress in RE. Moderation is undertaken with the diocese and in school with all staff to ensure assessment is accurate. The curriculum leader of RE is very effective. She monitors closely standards of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that, despite recent changes in staff, good standards are consistently maintained. The Blackburn Diocesan Syllabus is used by the team to provide a range of imaginative opportunities for pupils to encounter religious ideas and respond to them. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were debating their theological interpretations of artwork by John Reilly and then reflecting on the symbolism of the different colours. Younger pupils in Year 1 and 2 were discussing their own special places and learning about the special religious objects in a synagogue. Pupils make links between actions and belief in RE lessons. A recent class discussion with older pupils explored '*what would Jesus do*' about the events in Syria. Pupils' views were deliberated and they reconsidered their perspectives. Christianity is predominately taught but knowledge and understanding of other faiths is being developed.

Staff are very competent in their use of technical language. Marking is detailed, and feedback often has clear specific points for development. Pupils are not, however, always given the opportunity to respond to feedback to develop their deeper thinking and critical analysis skills.

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

The new headteacher models Christian values and her faith in all that she does. Under her guidance all the stakeholders took part in developing a new mission statement. The new statement '*With God and each other: Aiming high to achieve our best*', is central to the life and the vision of the school. It clearly states that the school has a strong Christian ethos and high expectations for pupils. In order to raise the distinctive Christian profile of the school, this statement was launched with parents by governors in September. It is visually evident throughout the building and on school policies and newsletters. A recently formed ethos group representing all members of the school community is seeking new opportunities to further embed Christian values. The headteacher empowers and provides opportunities to develop Christian leadership for all staff. The members of the senior leadership team regularly attend diocesan training events to enable them to further the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Governors provide good support and challenge to the headteacher to ensure the development of the Christian character of the school remains a high priority. The governors regularly attend worship and visit RE lessons to monitor standards. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous and as a result the previous good result has been consolidated.

A greater involvement of parents in the life of the school since the last inspection is welcomed. Parents value the encouragement and open-door approach of the new headteacher. They appreciate the opportunity to attend activities such as messy church in the school and delight to see their children take part in the new special family services in church. Wider opportunities to help out in school, such as with cooking, are reaching out to involve more parents. Due to improved communication parents have a far better understanding of what it means be part of a church school family. The development point from the previous inspection has been addressed. The partnership with St Anne's church is an aspect of the school that is now outstanding. Members and clergy fully support and contribute to school life. The whole school community deeply appreciates the commitment of the local church team, which includes the incumbent, chaplain and youth worker. Members of the church are governors, lead worship, assist with clubs and regularly pray for the school. Pupils enjoy the different '*fun*' worship activities and parents are very pleased when they are invited to partake in Christian events. Staff feel very supported by the church. The partnership has a mutual benefit.