



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chorley St. George's Church of England Primary School	Carr Lane Chorley Lancashire PR7 3JU
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese/Methodist District	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	6 October 2016
Date of last inspection	21 May 2012
School's unique reference number	119466
Headteacher	Andrew Purcell
Inspector's name and number	Anne B. Woodcock 445

School context

The school serves a mixed socio-economic community in Chorley, south Lancashire. The vast majority of the 256 pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is lower than average. Although the school supports an above average number of pupils with an educational health care plan, the proportion of pupils with additional needs is lower than average. St. George's is a teaching school. It leads the Yarrow Alliance, a large group of church and community schools in the area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chorley St. George's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding Christian leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team, ably supported by skilled governors and dedicated staff, direct and inspire all aspects of school improvement.
- Pupils' exceptionally good behaviour and attitudes to life and learning are closely attributed to their understanding of the school's shared Christian values.
- Exceptionally strong and purposeful links with the church make a very substantial contribution to the school's Christian character and to the spiritual growth of all members of the school family.
- The caring, inclusive nature of the school nurtures and supports all pupils. It actively promotes their very good spiritual and personal development and well-being.

Areas to improve

- Involve pupils in assessing their own work and progress in religious education (RE) so that they can more clearly identify their personal achievement and skills.

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

Extremely well-established Christian values are clearly expressed and understood by all members of the school family. 'We believe in God and try to follow Jesus and show his values every day,' stated a member of the ethos group. As a result, pupils show genuine compassion and trust. They support each other, working together in the calm, purposeful working atmosphere which is immediately apparent to visitors. Behaviour is excellent and relationships across the school are extremely strong and nurturing. Parents state categorically that these nurturing relationships have a very positive impact on their children's attitudes, behaviour and progress. The school's declared prime purpose 'to provide a school in which all children can thrive and become the very best they can be with the guidance of God' is fully achieved. Pupils are highly motivated and eager learners. They thoroughly enjoy learning because they are challenged and inspired by their teachers. They are confident, reflective learners who express their ideas within an accepting atmosphere. The strong focus on high quality teaching and learning ensures that all pupils, including those with additional needs, make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points. Standards of attainment are consistently high and well-above national levels. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is extremely good. The effective use of the school's grounds for outdoor learning, together with inspiring educational visits and extra-curricular activities, provide pupils with regular and varied experiences in which they explore God's world. They express their ideas through art, prose and prayer. Reflecting on one experience, a Year 6 pupil reflected, 'It made me have different emotions. It made me really think about what happens in the world and all the amazing things God created.' Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and the needs of the wider world. The link with a Christian school in Kenya supports their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith very well. RE supports pupils' understanding of diversity and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) extremely well. Through their work in RE, pupils explore faiths and cultures, learn to respect the beliefs of others and discuss important moral issues, such as the refugee crisis.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a much valued feature of the daily life of the school. 'We learn new things as a school. It's a time to be together and to reflect on what God means to us,' stated a Year 6 pupil. Themes are founded on Bible teaching and Christian values. Children learn 'memory verses' to match each theme and they use Bibles during worship to read and follow passages. As a result, pupils' knowledge of the Bible is impressive. For example, a Year 5 pupil explained Paul's purpose for writing the current memory verse, from the second letter to the Corinthians. Many pupils are able to make clear links between Jesus' teaching and their own attitudes and beliefs. When talking about the parable of the lost sheep, a Year 6 pupil explained, 'We are the sheep, all important to God. Jesus is the shepherd who wants everyone to be safe with him. He will not ignore anyone.' Pupils respond willingly and participate actively in worship. They particularly enjoy the worship led by the ethos group, vicar and the Inspire team, a local faith outreach group. The ethos group lead worship each week. Children worship in church regularly, participating in weekday Eucharist services alongside members of the church. The impact of this is that a substantial number of Year 6 pupils present themselves for confirmation. They are very familiar with traditional Anglican practices and prayers. The church is also used for special festival services led by pupils. These are much valued and well-attended by parents who see their importance to their children and to school life. Pupils have a remarkably well-developed understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit because references are made consistently, using Christian symbols to emphasise the Trinity. Prayer, stillness and reflection are key features of worship. Children write and use their own prayers confidently. They know the Lord's Prayer and graces. All children sign the school prayer, so that those with additional needs are fully included. The monitoring and evaluation of worship is highly effective. Pupils and staff provide regular feedback and governors monitor the planning and delivery of worship through frequent visits and meetings with staff and pupils. As a result, worship continues to evolve and inspire.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils have an enthusiastic approach to RE because it challenges and inspires them. A Year 6 pupil explained, 'It definitely makes you think hard about God and what you personally believe'. High quality, often outstanding teaching ensures that all pupils can participate and make progress. As a result, almost all children meet expectations, making very good progress from their starting points. Standards of attainment are at least equal, and sometimes surpass, those achieved in other core subjects. The quality of pupil work is reflected in their work books, displays and exemplary class scrapbooks. All demonstrate the variety of creative approaches used to develop key skills, such as enquiry and interpretation. Effective use is made of visits to local churches and a mosque, so that pupils gain first-hand experience of different places of worship. Pupils demonstrate respect for different faiths through their work. For example, whilst researching religious pilgrimages in the Holy Land, Year 6 pupils added to their understanding of the relationship between Christianity, Judaism and Islam. 'They all want to be closer to God,' explained one pupil, 'but Christians want to see and follow Jesus' life journey'. Pupils have a good knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus which starts in the early years. 'Jesus helped his friends catch fish for their tea,' stated a Reception child. Since the previous denominational inspection, the RE leader has continued to raise the high profile of RE and ensured that teachers are well-informed and supported. She has developed a highly efficient and effective assessment procedure which is used across the school to identify gaps in learning, track pupil progress and inform future planning. However, at present, pupils have limited involvement in assessing their own work and progress. Governors monitor RE rigorously and effectively through regular visits and meetings with staff and pupils. This informs accurate action planning and secures continued improvements which make learning in RE vibrant and meaningful and actively supports pupils' SMSC development.

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

The school is exceptionally well-led by the headteacher and senior leaders whose commitment to provide all children with the very best possible Christian environment and learning is profound. Staff are inspired and extremely well-supported by their leaders and morale is high. Governors and leaders ensure that staff, pupils and parents are engaged in the school self-evaluation process and in making decisions which affect them all. The review of the mission statement and motto 'Learn, care and share through work, play and prayer' involved all members of the school family. As a result, all strive to fulfil the mission. Governors carry out their role very effectively. Robust monitoring and evaluation systems ensure that church school issues are prioritised within school improvement planning. The pattern of 'governor days' and visits ensure that governors meet staff and pupils regularly, sharing in looking at pupils' work and agreeing action planning. Governors have secured very high quality leadership for RE and collective worship, supporting and resourcing the development of both to ensure continued improvement. All issues from the previous denominational inspection have been fully addressed and the impact of changes continues to be monitored. The needs of all pupils are met through the effective use of financial and human resources. As the leading teaching school within the Yarrow Alliance, the school has extremely strong links with many other church and community schools. Senior leaders and staff support curriculum development, teaching and leadership in these schools. These partnerships, together with purposeful links with the Diocese and local authority, impact very strongly on the school's capacity to continue to improve. Governors and staff benefit from continued professional development which impacts strongly on the school's strategic development. The outstanding partnership between the school and church is extremely powerful. Church and school work very closely together, supporting children, their families and staff on their spiritual journey. The impact on the school's Christian character and the spiritual journey of staff, pupils and parents is palpable.

SIAMS report (October 2016) St. George's Church of England Primary School, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 3JU