

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Langho and Billington St Leonard's Church of England Primary School

Whalley Road
Langho
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB6 8AB

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	10 November 2016
Date of last inspection	February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	119417
Headteacher Acting headteacher	Kathryn Pym Stephen Gaughan
Inspector's name and number	David Thorpe 461

School context

The school serves a semi-rural community in the Ribble Valley of Lancashire. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. It is a popular and growing school. Attainment and attendance are both well above national averages, whilst the number for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below average. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and vicar are new to the school since the previous denominational inspection. The headteacher is currently seconded to an academy within the diocesan family, but was at school throughout the inspection day.

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

- The inspiring Christian leadership of the headteacher, fully supported by the deputy headteacher, governors, staff and parents, ensures that the school is continually improving and that outcomes for pupils are at the highest possible levels.
- The core Christian values, jointly shared with the church, are instrumental in creating a school where everyone knows that they are cared for, resulting in each pupil flourishing and reaching their potential.
- Collective worship is an inspiring time for the whole school community. It provides daily opportunities for pupils and staff alike to praise, pray and learn more about the Christian faith through well-planned, biblically based, times of worship.
- Religious education (RE) is highly effective in developing the pupils' use of religious vocabulary. This results in pupils who are very confident and articulate when talking about their faith or the faith of others.
- The governing body provides highly effective support and challenge through their commitment and appropriate expertise. This results in strong Christian leadership and accurate self-evaluation.

Areas to improve

- Plan opportunities for spirituality to be developed through, for example, the religious education (RE) curriculum, in order to enhance pupils' understanding of prayer and reflection.

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

St Leonard's is highly effective in achieving its mission of 'nurturing happy and confident children who grow and learn together in the footsteps of Jesus'. Coupled with this are the core Christian values, jointly shared with the church. These include perseverance, respect, peace, forgiveness and love and enable the school and church to work together in providing a rich and exciting curriculum. As a result all pupils flourish and make academic progress that is consistently above national averages. The school's 'Primary Guarantee' ensures that all pupils, have many opportunities to experience a wide variety of learning, and life experiences. This enriches and enhances their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development which is a strength of the school. There is a deep commitment to the responsibility Christians have in supporting others who are less fortunate. This has resulted in a wide range of charities being supported and is a powerful contributing factor to the pupils' SMSC development. All members of the school community know that they are valued and the ethos of Christian trust is clearly evident in all areas of school life. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and confident. This is a result of strong partnerships between home and school and the excellent role models that staff provide. Pupils demonstrate great understanding of their Christian values through the confident way in which they talk about them. One Year 1 pupil spoke with great awareness, and sensitivity, about how soldiers in World War I had to show perseverance, whilst another one talked about the values of justice and peace with great sensitivity. RE makes an outstanding contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' appreciation of difference and diversity. Pupils are rightly proud of the Christian foundation of their school and the part that they play in making it a safe and exciting place to learn. Consequently, their behaviour is exemplary and exclusions are very rare (only one in the last four years). The school's Christian care and commitment to every pupil, and their family, plays a significant part in creating a truly inclusive place of learning. Pupils enjoy being at school and this is shown in attendance rates that are above the national average. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. This results in every member of the school community 'going the extra mile'. It ensures that St Leonard's is a place where the presence of Christ can be felt.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a strength of the school. Adults and pupils alike enjoy and engage deeply in worship and articulate why worship is important to them. As one pupil said, 'Worship gives me the opportunity to sing out loud but then be quiet with God'. Worship enables the school to keep the profile of the core Christian values at the forefront of its life on a daily basis. Anglican prayers and responses are used in all acts of worship. As a result the pupils know that their school is part of a much bigger Christian family. All major Christian festivals are celebrated. This is appreciated by parents with one Muslim parent complimenting the school on 'not watering down their nativity play as it's a central truth in my faith too'. Pupils plan, lead and evaluate worship with great confidence and sensitivity. This results in pupil-led worship that is inspiring and transformational and, in turn, enhances relationships and attitudes within the school community. Prayer is central to school life with pupils and staff alike speaking of how it has helped them during difficult times. There is a growing amount of spontaneous prayer, particularly when pupils are in smaller settings such as class-based worship. Collective worship enables pupils of all ages to understand how the teaching of Jesus guides Christians. The school is very true to its trust deed, which states that the Bible must be used each day. The Bible, a cross and three candles form the visual focus for worship. As each candle is put on the table an appropriate hymn is sung. This effectively supports pupils' understanding that Christians worship God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The singing of the whole school community is of the highest quality. Pupils not only enjoy singing but demonstrate through intonation and phrasing excellent understanding of the lyrics. As a result of this, the school choir was invited to help lead the sung Evensong at Blackburn Cathedral. This was warmly received by members of the congregation and gave the pupils the experience of working with the cathedral choir and choir master. This in turn further enhanced their choral singing skills and inspired them to lead worship on a more regular basis. The vicar often worships with the school community and leads staff Eucharist at regular intervals. The staff appreciate this opportunity of worshipping together, finding that it helps them to reflect on the school's Christian character. The school has effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate worship. This results in positive developments that extend pupils' experiences in the variety of worship styles offered during the course of the school year.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The extremely positive attitudes of both pupils and staff lead to the enjoyment of RE and contribute to very good progress and attainment within the subject. The school uses the diocesan RE syllabus which the governors adopted. The standards in RE are at least in line with other core subjects and often exceed them. They are above national expectations. This has been achieved through excellent teaching and effective use of a wide range of resources. The teaching of RE is never less than good. It is clearly instrumental in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding which includes their highly developed use of religious vocabulary. Pupils value RE, with one commenting, 'It helps me talk about my beliefs and the beliefs of others'. Another said 'You learn things in RE that you wouldn't learn anywhere else'. The subject leader is highly effective in leading and monitoring the subject and all staff meet each term to assess pupils' attainment and progress through work scrutiny. This ensures high expectations and consistency in teaching and learning. Moderation of RE work with other church schools in the diocesan cluster provides positive opportunities to work co-operatively on raising standards and ensures consistency of approach. The feedback given to pupils in RE is helpful in developing their thinking further. The class RE reflection books provide excellent examples of the high standards of work in RE. They also demonstrate the pride both pupils and staff take in their work. Parents too, comment on how RE enables their children to 'make better sense of the multi-faith society that they are growing up in'. The RE curriculum is broad and balanced. It is enhanced by visits to places of worship and the contributions of parents from a range of faiths helps develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious belief and practice. Pupils also benefit from, the annual multi-faith week that the school holds, in addition to the recently introduced Christianity Around the World week. Both of these initiatives contribute effectively to pupils' very good understanding of Christianity as a global faith. RE successfully helps the school live out its strapline of: Faith, Learning, Respect and Partnership.

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

This is a school that knows itself very well. The issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The headteacher has a very clear and strong Christian vision which is commendably supported by governors, staff and parents. As a result, this guides the school community and enables pupils and staff to flourish and reach their potential. The deputy headteacher is an exceptional example of Christian support, effectively leading the school during the headteacher's secondment. Every opportunity is taken to promote the school's distinctive Christian character. Governors are knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of their strategic role. They support the school and provide a high level of appropriate challenge. This means that they are fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a Christian place of learning. Their positive involvement has resulted in a school that is continually striving to develop further its Christian character. The governors live out their Christian values. This has been demonstrated in their willingness to help out another diocesan school through the secondment of the headteacher. Pupils monitor and evaluate the Christian distinctiveness and have used the same evaluation format as the governors and staff to record their findings. This is an excellent example of pupils as leaders with their results being an integral part of the school's evaluation process. The school is outward looking and works with other church schools in matters of teaching, learning and school improvement. These initiatives strengthen its resolve to provide the very best education for its pupils and opportunities for all staff to develop their expertise. As a result of the school's distinctly Christian foundation, relationships with parents are strong. One parent commented that the school 'is not just focussed on results but on the whole child'. Other parents speak very highly of the school as a place that reaches out to the whole family at every opportunity. One parent commented, 'I've experienced it for myself, the care is there for the family as a whole, not just the children'. The school engages at every opportunity with the Diocese. Staff have attended the Christian Leadership Course run by the North West Dioceses. This is effectively preparing staff for leading in church schools. Since taking up her post the headteacher has recognised and released the gifts of all staff. This has resulted in the creation of a church school where each member is very well supported and highly valued.

SIAMS report (November 2016) St Leonard's CE (VA), Langho, Blackburn, BB6 8AB